Teacher Education Quarterly

A publication of the California Council on Teacher Education

Hallman, H.L. (2010). Investigating Curriculum: Preservice teachers use of video records of practice. *Teacher Education Quarterly, Special Online Edition*. Retrieved from http://teqjournal.org/hallman.html

Investigating Curriculum:

Preservice Teachers' Use of Video Records of Practice

By Heidi L. Hallman

Abstract

This article discusses the ways in which video records of practice (VRPs) afford opportunities for preservice teachers to contemplate the nature of curriculum in their respective disciplinary field. Documenting analysis of data over the course of two student teaching semesters, the article presents three cases of preservice English teachers' teaching practices and use of VRPs. Findings suggest that VRPs are not neutral documentations of beginning teachers' practices but rather sites for investigating nuanced matters of curriculum. Implications point toward the potential benefits of including video records of practice in preservice teacher education, specifically as a way to assist beginning teachers in understanding matters of curriculum "in action" in classrooms.

Investigating Curriculum:

Preservice Teachers' Use of Video Records of Practice

By Heidi L. Hallman

Preservice teachers' documentation of teaching through the use of video records of practice (VRPs) has become a standard component of many teacher education programs (Brophy, 2004). Several scholars, including Lampert and Ball (1998), have stressed that video records of practice (also referred to under the general term "records of practice") can positively influence beginning teachers' development of teaching, including both increased reflection on one's practice as well as the promotion of new and innovative work with one's students. As new technologies continue to influence beginning teachers' processes of learning to teach, the use of VRPs has firmly claimed a space within new technologies as a way of promoting heightened visibility of the practice of teaching. Digital video, the "newest" form of video technology, has been called a "lasting record"—meaning that it can be collected, edited and watched multiple times for a fine-grained analysis of teaching (Sherin, 2004). Digital video is also what Miller (2007) recently coined a "quintessential multimodal literacy," for it allows for possibilities of composing scenes through importing video into computer software (such as iMovie or MovieMaker) and editing images and sounds. These new capabilities of VRPs further expand the possibilities for what beginning teachers are able to do with video documentation of their teaching.

Video records of practice, in their broadest conception, include all types of video recordings (whether these are recorded digitally, on DVDs or mini-DVDs, or on VHS tapes). Though this broad definition of VRPs spans many manifestations of video itself, this article is interested in understanding how beginning teachers' use of any of these forms of video records of practice within teacher education programs fosters an understanding of curriculum and curricular choices within teachers' respective disciplinary fields. As the January 2009 themed issue of the *Journal of Teacher*

Education emphasizes, new technologies, including the use of video records of practice, have become increasingly prominent in teacher education programs and will continue to shape the preparation of beginning teachers. Therefore, understanding the impact that these technologies have on preservice teachers' understanding of curriculum and pedagogy is important.

Despite the prominence of new technologies, preservice teachers' use of video records of practice has been primarily studied in relationship to teaching in the context of "new times." The term "new times," as described by scholars in literacy studies, including Gee (2000, 2004), Lankshear and Knobel (2003), and Luke and Elkins (1998), is used to characterize the changing social, economic, and technological conditions of our current era. Although undeniably important that new technologies be studied within the context of a current and changing world, it is also critical to study how these new technologies influence teachers' understandings of a disciplinary field's past—a past that has been shaped, in part, by the curricular models defining the field of English-language arts education. To study how VRPs can have an impact on beginning teachers' understanding of curriculum, this article argues that VRPs offer preservice English teachers not only a unique way to view their teaching practices, but a means by which to understand English-language arts curriculum "in action," thereby tracing a history of curriculum in this particular disciplinary field. The following two questions frame this article's inquiry:

> 1) In what ways do preservice English-language arts teachers reflect on curriculum after viewing their teaching through video records of practice (VRPs)? How do their reflections reference curricular models in the field of English-language arts education?
>
> 2) When characterizing curricular choices within video records of practice, what knowledge of curriculum do preservice English-language arts teachers generate and draw upon?

Literature Review

The field of English-language arts education (ELA) has been guided by three dominant models of curriculum since the 1960s: the *skills* model, focusing on the acquisition of "correct" grammar, vocabulary, and spelling; the *cultural heritage* model,

focusing on the transmission of shared cultural knowledge; and the *personal experience* model, focusing on the use of students' experiences as springboards for school-based inquiry. These models, guided by disparate theoretical stances, have produced competing models of curriculum that are all viewed as viable pathways in characterizing the teaching of English language arts.

Over the recent past two decades, conversations have ensued about the nature of curriculum in the field of English-language arts education. A coalition of associations, including NCTE, CCCC, MLA, and others, met during the summer of 1987 to assert the importance of process in learning language and responding to literature (Squire, 2003). In the following two decades, scholars in the field of English-language arts education, including Applebee (1996), Marshall (1993), and Bickmore, Smagorinsky, and O'Donnell-Allen (2005) have addressed ELA curricular models in their respective work and have argued for new conceptualizations when thinking about curriculum and the teaching of English language arts. Specifically, these scholars have cited that the models guiding the field (outlined above) have produced, over time, a nexus of theoretically competing curricular paradigms. Bickmore et al. (2005) call this nexus a "tension between traditions" and emphasize the difficulty of beginning teachers' apprenticeship into such a model.

Despite existing tensions, the models guiding curriculum in ELA have established approaches to curriculum that remain salient today. This history has greatly influenced the training of preservice English teachers and methods classes in the subject area of English language arts, for example, have generally continued to frame curriculum through these curricular models (Smagorinsky, 2008). Further, professional materials available to teachers of English continue to resonate with these models. However, little investigation has been conducted that aims to uncover ways to better assist beginning teachers with thinking through the implications of adopting particular curricular models within their teaching. The dilemma that Bickmore et al. (2005) name the "tension between traditions" continues to shape beginning teachers' entrance into the field.

Matters of curriculum in the teaching of English-language arts, as in all disciplines, are inherently tied to matters of instruction (Applebee, 1996; Eisner, 1982). Applebee (1996) states that curriculum is what "provides domains for conversation, and

the conversations that take place within those domains are the primary means of teaching and learning" (p. 37). Curriculum and instruction, then, are always intertwined and instruction, at its core, is driven by curricular theory. Therefore, teachers' instructional decisions are always undergirded by curricular theories and models.

In subscribing to a conceptualization of curriculum that is in dialogue with instructional practices, acknowledgement of the "tension between traditions" that Bickmore et al. (2005) speak of is imperative in order to gain a sense of one's purpose in teaching. Though the three curricular models described earlier (the *skills* model, the *cultural heritage* model, and the *personal experience* model) are often linked to various manifestations of teaching and learning (e.g., the *cultural heritage* model is often linked to core knowledge curricula), it is preservice teachers' processes of learning to recognize and interrogate such curricular models that is the feature within the confines of this article.

Studying preservice English teachers' use of VRPs with respect to their understanding of curriculum, then, exhibits a method for beginning teachers to consider the link between curriculum and instruction in their own classrooms. As a result, beginning teachers of English are better able to deconstruct the "tension between traditions" that Bickmore et al. (2005) discuss. Through the presentation of three cases of preservice English teachers, this article illustrates that VRPs have the unique capability to capture the nuances of how curriculum is "played out" in the classroom. As a result, preservice teachers are urged to more carefully examine the models of curriculum that appear within their teaching and review the implications of adopting such models in their own classrooms.

Methods

The context of the research study[i] on which this article is based is Green State University's secondary English-language arts teacher education program. This program is housed within the state's flagship institution, a large, research-oriented university in the Midwest United States. Green State University is located in a community of 80,000 people yet is only 45 miles from Marshall City, a large metropolitan area of just over 2 million. The relative proximity of Marshall City to Green State University offers teacher education students the ability to attend the state's flagship institution yet, if they wish,

complete their student teaching experience in schools located in the state's largest metropolitan center. Green State's teacher education program includes an additional year beyond the undergraduate year to become a licensed teacher, and this additional year, often referred to as the "professional year" or "fifth year," is comprised of two distinct student teaching experiences and fifteen credits of post-baccalaureate coursework. The first student teaching experience, occurring in the fall semester of the professional year, includes eight weeks of student teaching. The second student teaching experience, occurring in the spring semester of the same professional year, includes thirteen weeks of student teaching.

The year 2009 marks the 100th year anniversary of Green State University's School of Education. Though the professional year component of the elementary and secondary teacher education programs has existed since 1984, the program has been increasingly under pressure by state officials, university administration, parents, and community members to revise its professional year component, thus revising its current program. In the current context of teacher education reform, the School of Education at Green State has been encouraged to provide longitudinal data as a way of documenting the necessity of training teachers beyond a traditional four-year model. The secondary English-language arts education program at Green State University, a licensure area within the secondary education program, is currently constituted through a two-year sequence of courses prior to the professional year that are designed to prompt preservice teachers to understand the context of schooling in the United States; the relationships between schools, society, and families; knowledge about curriculum and pedagogy within the field of English language arts; and knowledge about oneself as a teacher.

This article draws from data that are part of a larger study investigating how preservice English-language arts teachers conceptualize curriculum in their preservice teacher education training. Seventeen preservice English-language arts teachers participated in the larger study over the duration of one academic year. This article, however, specifically focuses on three participants from the larger study through a case study approach (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995). Through case study, this article is able to attend to the interplay between video records of practice, preservice teachers'

considerations of curriculum, curricular models in the field of English-language arts, and the larger context of the teacher education program at Green State University.

Data Generation

Carmen Kelly, Houa Xiong, and Daniel Martin, all preservice teachers in English-language arts education at Green State University, were selected as cases for studying the use of VRPs in teacher preparation programs. These three beginning teachers were followed throughout their professional year and were selected as cases because they represent the spectrum of experiences preservice English-language arts teachers bring to Green State University's secondary teacher education program. Though all three are native to Green State, the three case study participants vary in terms of their demographic background; this is discussed in detail within the introduction to each case. To represent these three cases, data generation included the collection of artifacts, interviews, and video records of practice. The following artifacts were specifically used throughout the data analysis process in exploring these three preservice teachers' use of VRPs:

- Artifacts related to the courses the students were enrolled in (syllabi, student teaching handbook, assignment guidelines)
- Minimum of two video records of practice during each of two semesters of student teaching, accompanied by students' written reflections of each videotaped lesson (these records of practice were recorded on DVD, mini-DVD, or digitally)
- Audiotaped focus group interviews
- Weekly reflections throughout both semesters of student teaching ("open-ended," journal format)

As the researcher, I assumed an active role throughout the study as a participant observer (Geertz, 1973), reading all participants' journal entries and watching videotaped records of their teaching. I also engaged in continuous conversation with participants' field supervisors throughout the preservice teachers' student teaching experiences.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was both inductive and deductive (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). First, an inductive data analysis process was employed by reading all the weekly journal reflections written by the case study participants. After this, participants'

written reflections that were responses to video records of practice (VRPs) were read and coded for themes pertaining to models of curriculum in the field of English-language arts education. VRPs (recorded digitally, on DVDs, or on mini-DVDs) were also viewed alongside of reading participants' reflections, and the researcher created memos for each video record of practice that noted the content of the videotaped lesson. This process was recursive and the researcher moved between coding the participants' written reflections of their video records of practice and creating memos while viewing the video records of practice. Following this recursive data analysis procedure, focus group interviews were conducted in small group format (focus group participants also included participants involved in the larger research study) by the researcher. After conducting and audio recording these focus group interviews, interview transcripts were coded for themes.

It is important to note that much of the data collected for analysis throughout this article can be considered as students' reflections on their own teaching practices (Schön, 1983, 1987). Current emphasis in teacher education programs throughout the United States on beginning teachers' use of reflective practice, therefore, has already established an imperative for students' evaluation of teaching practices through a reflective framework. However, there has been much confusion in educational contexts about what constitutes meaningful reflection (Fendler, 2003; Kinsella, 2007). Fendler (2003) notes that over the past several decades, the area of teacher reflection has grown to include scholarship dedicated to exploring facets of reflective practice. Scholarship on reflective practice can be thought about as fitting into categories such as "how to" manuals explaining the steps for making teachers into reflective practitioners (Black, 2001), descriptions concerning the ways in which teachers reflect on their practice (Zeichner & Liston, 1990; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1991), and meta-surveys of the ways that reflective is categorized (Feiman-Nemser, 1990). Clearly, the result of this body of work is broad-reaching and instructive. However, as evidenced in the literature outlined above, accounts of reflection and reflective practice with teachers have seldom aimed to connect inquiry about curriculum and curriculum theory to reflective practice. Therefore, this article initiates such a connection.

The connections those students' reflections had to their video records of practice assisted the researcher in attending more fully to the question of how VRPs served as

reflective tools about curriculum. Throughout the remainder of the article, the three cases are positioned as what Ellen (1984) calls "telling cases," as they demonstrate different aspects of how preservice English-language arts teachers may use video records of practice to understand curriculum in the field of English-language arts education.

Three Cases of Preservice English-language arts Teachers' Use of Video Records of Practice

Carmen Kelly: Using video records of practice to question characterizations of "traditional" and "contemporary" curricular approaches to the teaching of English-language arts

Carmen Kelly, a student in her early 20s and a native of the state in which Green State University was located, could be considered representative of the majority of Green State University's preservice teachers in several ways. Carmen was white and well prepared in her content area, English, and her plans for post-graduation from the teacher education program included residing within a one-hour driving proximity to both Green State University and the Marshall City metropolitan area. She also intended to continue pursuing graduate coursework that would lead to the completion of her master's degree while beginning her first English teaching position the year following her professional year. When asked how long she might reside in the state, Carmen thought that she may only remain long enough to gain experience during her first years of teaching and would eventually pursue her career in another region of the United States. As of June 2009, Carmen's intent was to teach middle or high school English and she was, at this time, interviewing for available positions in the Marshall City metropolitan area.

Carmen's first student-teaching experience took place in an urban middle school, Parker Middle School, located in the heart of Marshall City. It was here at Parker Middle that Carmen gained experience working with a diverse group of seventh graders, a significant portion of whom were classified as English language learners. Marshall City's urban district, different in demographics from the surrounding districts due to a significant minority student enrollment and English as a second language (ESL) population, used curriculum built upon benchmarking, a method of aligning curricular objectives and tasks with what students would encounter on standardized tests. Benchmarks, as Carmen noted in one of her reflection papers, "are very important to this

district. Students' grades are based solely on their benchmarks and they are not graded on anything else but mastery of the benchmarks." (Journal entry, 9/2008)

Over the course of her semester at Parker Middle School, Carmen videotaped herself for five days of student teaching in a Read 180 class. Read 180 is a program based on what its publisher calls an "intensive reading intervention program that helps educators confront the problem of adolescent illiteracy and special needs reading on multiple fronts, using technology, print, and professional development" (see http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/read180/overview/). After watching each of these five days of teaching, she composed written reflections that discussed what she saw. One of Carmen's reflections questioned the split between what Carmen called "traditional" and "contemporary" curricular approaches to teaching language arts. Specifically, Carmen's reflection questioned whether using skills-based learning techniques with an ESL population was serving a purpose in the Read 180 class. Below is an excerpt from Carmen's journal entry:

> As I watched myself on video help students with the computer portion of the Read 180 program, I thought, if this program is supposed to interest students then it is going about it the wrong way. For example, there was a reading about Kobe Bryant from the Lakers that was somewhat interesting but then the comprehension questions that followed on the computer were just boring and meaningless. I could see that this curriculum was not really about getting students interested but it was just the same skill and drill only with a new face. (Journal entry, 10/2008)

After watching herself on video (recorded on DVD) assist students with comprehension questions, Carmen also noted later in her journal entry that,

> I didn't feel like I was really teaching at all but just going through the motions. Watching myself on video made me see that we have to be careful of what we call "traditional" curriculum and what we call "contemporary" curriculum. Sure, the subjects students read about in Read 180 might be contemporary but the curriculum is very much like the "traditional" curriculum in English. (Journal entry, 10/2008)

After completing her experience at Parker Middle School, Carmen participated in an interview with three of her peers. One of the topics pursued in the interview was students' use of VRPs during their student teaching experience. When I broached the subject of how VRPs specifically assisted students in recognizing what curricular models were drawn upon on in their student teaching sites, Carmen again referenced her work in the Read 180 classroom and said,

> Read 180 was eye-opening to me. Before I was in that classroom and before I did my videotaping, I didn't realize that the Read 180 curriculum is actually really traditional. I mean, it is very focused on basic comprehension of texts even though the texts the students read are about people and things that supposedly would interest them. (Interview, 1/2009)

Carmen's comments directly reference the "tension between traditions" that Bickmore et al. (2005) discuss as structuring English-language arts curriculum. While she recognizes that Read 180 is "contemporary" in the way it includes contemporary references, Carmen also asserts that the methods by which this curriculum teaches students fits much more into a curricular model that resonates with a mastery of skills. As a follow-up to Carmen's assertions about contemporary and traditional ELA curriculum, I questioned her about how this realization related to her use of VRPs.

> Heidi: You were required to videotape lessons you taught in your Read 180 class. Do you think doing this assisted you in naming curriculum, or curricular models, in the ways you just did?

> Carmen: Yes. The video made me see how disjointed this curriculum [Read 180] was. Like, I probably just would have thought it was great that a program was contemporary and tried to draw on students' interests. But when I watched the video it made me see that even though the subjects studied were contemporary the way the curriculum was built was not. I saw how, in my opinion, this content

> was being taught in a wrong way. Well, in a way that was not very meaningful. (Interview, 1/2009)

Carmen Kelly's experience using VRPs allowed for her articulation of curricular models "in action" in the classroom. VRPs helped make visible the disjointedness that existed within her perceptions of the English-language arts curriculum as well as called her attention to thinking through the labels she placed on models of curriculum present in her school site.

> Houa Xiong: Using video records of practice to problematize the notion of "student-centered" and "teacher-centered" curriculum

Houa Xiong, a student in her mid-20s, was selected as a case for investigation because of her position as a "non-traditional" student at Green State University. Houa began her college career at Green State in the early 2000s and had not yet finished her bachelor's degree by the time of the beginning of her professional year. With permission, Green State University allowed some students, like Houa, to proceed with their professional year even though some of their undergraduate credits were not yet completed. Houa, with permission from the administration of the School of Education, began her professional year at the same time as she completed her final three credits of undergraduate coursework.

Unlike many of the students enrolled in the teacher preparation program at Green State, Houa, a married Hmong student who lived with her extended family, husband, and two young children, had taken semesters off from pursuing her college degree in the years she was enrolled as a student. Houa had a dual-interest in teaching English and teaching English as a second language and had been accumulating coursework while enrolled at Green State that would lead her to certification in both these areas. An endorsement in teaching English as a second language, Houa believed, would allow her to pursue future teaching experiences in middle/secondary English-language arts classrooms with significant English as second language student populations. As of June 2009, Houa was still searching for a full-time teaching position in the Marshall City

metropolitan area and intended to find a position before the beginning of the fall 2009 semester.

Houa was placed in an eighth-grade language arts class at a suburban middle school during her first student teaching experience of her professional year. During this experience, Houa worked with several "advanced English" classes and in her journal entries, Houa characterized the students enrolled in these classes as high achievers. Her first written reflection during this semester of student teaching, composed after viewing a videotaped session of her teaching (50 minutes of an "advanced English" class recorded on a VHS tape) prompted her to elaborate on the type of student achievement she was witnessing in the classes she was teaching. The following excerpt from her journal entry characterizes Houa's view of "student-centered" curriculum.

> When watching the videotape of my teaching of this class (advanced English), I saw that when the students were in groups they were excited about talking. I started to believe that "student-centered" curriculum could work in my classroom because the students were all on task, talking about the lesson. Since I can't hear all the small groups talk, I was pleased to see that they were really discussing the book we had read (not their weekend or something outside of school). But now I am thinking that this lesson worked because they are all highly motivated students. (Journal entry, 9/2008)

Houa's viewing of her videotaped lesson in the advanced English class made visible aspects of the classroom environment that were previously invisible to her, namely, her videotaped lesson affirmed her belief that "student-centered" curriculum would work in her classroom. Though Houa does not attribute the success of student-centered curriculum to the broader context of her school's environment, she does believe that this type of curriculum was successful because she was teaching within a context of highly motivated students.

In the second videotaped lesson of her advanced English class, a lesson she taught at her student teaching site approximately two weeks after the first videotaped lesson, Houa expanded on her prior discussion of student-centered curriculum by noting that:

> Overall, I saw on the videotape that the lesson went well and though a lot of it was focused on sharing in small groups and partners, there were some classroom management problems such as students talking while others were sharing. It was like we were still doing student-centered learning, but then when I wanted them to switch back to a more teacher-centered classroom and tell me what they had learned from the lesson, they didn't want to do that. I guess I need to change my lessons so that I can have more management of my classroom and maybe more structure although the students still like to discuss their ideas with each other. I need to have them tell me what they've learned so I know they are building their skills. (Journal entry, 10/2008)

Though Houa characterizes the issues she is facing in her class sessions as instructional and management issues, she also is relying on an understanding of curricular models in English-language arts education to make sense of what is happening in her classroom. For example, when discussing student-centered curriculum, Houa draws on a number of assumptions about the teaching of English and articulates a vision of the English classroom that asks students to respond to curriculum in various ways despite the tensions inherent within these multiple paradigms. Specifically, Houa wishes to employ a model of curriculum that focuses on students' iteration of facts while simultaneously adhering to a model of curriculum where students can apply their personal experience to their learning, thereby using their experiences as springboards for school-based inquiry.

Prior to interviewing Houa, I noticed that this tension ran throughout several of her journal entries during her first semester of student teaching. I was able to respond to this tension in the interview with her by asking whether she desired to create lessons that were both focused on skills and focused on eliciting students' experiences. Houa responded to my question by saying, "Yes, I found that my students could be on task for awhile while talking about their experiences but then I usually needed to bring them back to me and get them to really tell me what those experiences meant."

I then wanted to know how Houa thought about the methods of doing this. I asked her if she had an example from one of her videotaped lessons. Houa said, "I taught a group of students who were in advanced English and they could usually be on-task

without me having to do much. I mean, I would just make sure they were on-task. Once they were off-task, though, I'd have to bring some structure back to the class and have them really tell me what the point of their experiences was. They usually got pretty quiet and they knew that I expected something different from them when we were back in the large group."

After hearing this response I asked Houa whether she found this transition to be smooth. I anticipated that Houa would say, 'yes,' but instead she responded by saying, "it was always awkward because I felt like once I brought them back to structure they were no longer engaged. I never knew how to get them to have that same energy they had when they were talking in small groups."

During the interview, Houa was still attempting to articulate a movement between two curricular models: a model in which students were freely conversing and drawing on their experiences and a model where students were focused on teacher evaluation. Houa clearly wanted her students to stay engaged with the curriculum yet didn't validate the work they are doing in small groups as meeting this goal.

During our interview, another preservice English-language arts teacher involved in the study prompted Houa to re-examine her teaching through looking closely at her videotaped lessons. This beginning teacher claimed that it may be possible that Houa's students were already doing the work Houa expected of them while they were in small groups and Houa might look again at her videotaped lessons to find evidence of this.

Houa responded a bit skeptically but thoughtfully. She said, "[Hmmm.] Like my students telling me about their experiences might be more about me wanting control than about their learning." Houa took her peer's advice in the sense that her peer helped her reconsider what was occurring in her classroom. Rather than assuming that students were "off-task" when the classroom was organized in small group format, a fellow preservice teacher challenged Houa by encouraging her to review her videotaped lesson, looking for evidence of whether her claims had merit. Houa's final consideration pushes her to reflect on her role in the classroom and how this is implicated in the way she views her teaching and her students' learning.

It is significant that a fellow preservice teacher is the one who points Houa to the use of VRPs as sources of information about curriculum. Rather than rely on me, the

instructor, for ways to address thinking about curriculum, Houa shows interest in how her peer prompts her to use VRPs as sources of information to think through the choices she makes in the classroom.

> *Daniel Martin: Using video records of practice to view the "tension between traditions" in the teaching of English-language arts as a productive site for decision-making about curriculum.*

Daniel Martin, a student in his early 20s, was also a native of the state in which Green State University was located. Unlike Carmen, though, Daniel traced his family's roots specifically to the state and felt committed to residing in the state throughout the duration of his future teaching career. Daniel also frequently stated that he understood the unique needs of the rural population who lived in the state and felt just as committed to serving this group of students as he did the students residing in suburban districts. As of June 2009, Daniel had accepted a position teaching high school English at a rural high school on the outskirts of the Marshall City metropolitan area.

Daniel's orientation toward teaching diverse groups of students led him to be open to a variety of experiences within his student teaching experiences. Stating that he understood where a variety of students were coming from, he student taught during his first semester of student teaching at a high school in a district that was often noted as one of the less affluent suburbs of the Marshall City metropolitan area. Daniel's goal, stated in one of his journal entries, was to "get all kids to enjoy English and show them that you don't have to love the classics to excel in English class" (Journal, 9/2008). The orientation toward teaching that Daniel possessed assisted him in continuously questioning which paradigms guiding the teaching of English were best for his students. Being very open to students' diverse sets of life experiences, Daniel was frequently willing to incorporate "non-traditional" texts (song lyrics, for example) into his curriculum.

Of the three individuals featured in this article, Daniel is the teacher who is most able to view how his video records of practice display multiple curricular models of teaching English language arts. His written reflections accompanying his VRPs focused

specifically on the teaching of poetry and documented how the process of watching his video records of practice assisted him in viewing the "tension between traditions" (Bickmore et al., 2005) as a productive site of knowledge-making about curriculum. Daniel's VRP reflections largely exhibited recognition that "the teaching of English is filled with multiple perspectives—including the way we teach our subject of English" (Journal entry, 10/2008). In the following journal entry, written as a response to viewing his VRP (recorded on mini-VHS tape) focusing on the poetry of Emily Dickinson's, Daniel elaborates on this point:

> On my video I saw how it was good for students to learn about slant rhyme because it appears in music they listen to every single day. Many of the students are very into music and when I explained some of the examples as related to song lyrics students became much more interested in the concept. I think it helped that we learned about facts—facts in Dickinson's poems and in her life—but at the same time I got students to relate the curriculum to their lives. I think you need both things in the teaching of English. You need both facts and you need activities based on your own life experiences. (Journal entry, 10/2008)

Rather than viewing the two approaches to teaching English as antithetical, Daniel viewed multiple paradigms, or curricular models, as essential to the teaching of English language arts. In reading through his journal entries, one senses that Daniel feels as though he can move fluidly back and forth between different curricular models while teaching the subject of English language arts. In my interview with Daniel I asked about this.

> Heidi: When I read your journal entries, I sensed that you try to vary your curriculum. Sometimes you used song lyrics with the students but other times you draw on lessons based on historical facts and information. Is this a purposeful choice?
>
> Daniel: Yes, I think so. I am not as much into letting students totally do their own thing in English class. I think they need to know some about history—like who an author is, what a classic novel means. They have to understand that stuff because they will be expected to know it.

> Heidi: When they are in college?
>
> Daniel: Yes, in college. But, also more generally. I mean, you have to have some kind of knowledge that's like what others have in order to get along in the world. (Interview, 1/2009)

In the above examples, Daniel interprets the "tension between traditions" (Bickmore et al., 2005) as a rather productive concept, urging his students to simultaneously negotiate their own meanings through the curriculum while drawing on a common background to make sense of curriculum. In his journals, Daniel never expressed a disjointedness between disparate curricular models guiding the teaching of English-language arts; rather, he viewed these differences as potentially productive. Further, he later told me that it was his use of VRPs that assisted him in noticing that different models of curriculum can work alongside each other in the classroom:

> Daniel: My videos showed me that I didn't have to only have students do one thing in class. They wanted to do some factual stuff, some exploratory stuff, some small group work, some large group work. They worked better when I tried different types of things. I know that sometimes traditional English curriculum gets a bad name but my students appeared to learn when we discussed the history of the 1920's and The Great Gatsby. They were totally into that. (Interview, 1/2009)

Daniel's continual assertion about the fluidity between curricular models perhaps points to a need for English-language arts educators to rethink the "tension between traditions." Though Daniel recognizes that students are doing different types of work with working within these differing paradigms, he nonetheless confirms this work as productive in nature.

Discussion and Implications

Through the presentation of three cases of preservice English teachers' use of VRPs as a method to understand curriculum in English language arts, this article emphasizes that video records of practice are not neutral documentations of one's

teaching but rather sites for investigating nuanced matters of curriculum within disciplinary fields. Implications for future teaching and research include the ongoing analysis of VRPs with preservice teacher candidates and continued discussions with preservice teachers about how models of curriculum shape their respective fields of study.

In addition to featuring the themes within each of the three cases presented, sub-findings of the study provided useful considerations for teacher educators and beginning teachers. First, the study illustrated that instead of discrete boundaries between curricular models, preservice English-language arts teachers witnessed how curricular models interacted in the classroom. Daniel Martin was quick to reflect on the idea that it is a rare occurrence when a teacher of English-language arts only draws on one curricular model in his/ her teaching. Instead, because each curricular model is steeped in history, it is common for disparate models to work alongside of each other in the classroom.

Second, preservice English-language arts teachers witnessed how their use of video records of practice assisted in disrupting their sense of how the teaching of English "ought to be." One of the unique capabilities of video records of practice is their ability to provide continuous feedback to beginning teachers. No other technology offers an ability for teachers to "re-see" their teaching, thus considering new possibilities for how they interpret the events that occur within their classroom. This "re-seeing" can be a powerful tool in urging preservice teachers to find value in the act of teacher reflection.

Third, in this study, preservice English-language arts teachers often initially characterized difficult issues they faced in their teaching as classroom management issues. Upon reflection, these issues were recast as issues related to curricular choices. Houa's case provides a prime example of this idea, for it was not until she was urged to review the students' small group work occurring in her classroom on video that she could consider the time the students spent in these groups as productive and meaningful. Before preservice English-language arts teachers discussed their use of VRPs in small group interviews, many students had a tendency to conflate issues of curriculum, management, and student learning in their written reflections. For example, in Houa's journal entry (p. 15), Houa states that she needs to change her lessons in order to have more "structure" to her classroom. She then claims that this change will lead to better management. After this

initial claim, though, Houa was able to re-think her initial characterization of what was occurring in her video records of practice. With one of her peer's input, Houa was able to demonstrate an ability to move toward a more articulate vision of what was occurring in her classroom. These findings resonate with Ball and Cohen's (1999) claim that using records of practice in teacher education program affords preservice teachers the development of pedagogical approaches.

The interruption of these conflations also came in the form of discussions about VRPs. Though the participants' journal entries grappled with characterizing curriculum in English language arts, it was through sharing perceptions of VRPs with fellow preservice teachers that beginning English teachers were able to interrogate their initial views of the lessons. For example, with peers' input, preservice English teacher Carmen Kelly more clearly defined what role VRPs took in her thoughts about the Read 180 curriculum. In using VRPs to examine curricular models in teaching, I would add that, in addition to VRPs allowing for a fine-grained analysis of teaching, VRPs also offered beginning teachers the opportunity to continuously re-frame their assumptions about their own practice.

Limitations

One important point to note concerning this study of preservice teachers' use of VRPs is that very few teachers elected to digitally record their videos of teaching. Though digital technology is certainly the "newest" and most malleable form of video technology, circumstances surrounding teachers' use of video technology influenced their decision to primarily rely on older forms of technology as methods by which to record their VRPs (primarily use of VHS and DVD technology). In Carmen's case, for example, Parker Middle School did not own digital video cameras and only had VHS recorders available for check out in the school library. To complete the assignment of producing VRPs during her student teaching experiences, Carmen borrowed her parents' video recorder and turned in her VRPs in DVD form. Only two of the seventeen participants involved in the larger study attained access to a digital video recorder through their school sites and stored their VRPs on programs such as iMovie (see http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/). The small percentage of beginning teachers in this particular cohort, then, who both attained access to the newest form of video technology

at their field sites and were able to store their VRPs on computer programs (such as iMovie or MovieMaker http://download.live.com/moviemaker) alerts us to the fact that access to technology remains an issue in teacher education today.

Conclusion

Through the presentation of three cases of preservice teachers' use of VRPs as a method for understanding curriculum and curricular models in the field of English language arts, teacher educators may become more aware of the potential benefits of including video records of practice in preservice teacher education, specifically as a way to aid beginning teachers in understanding matters of curriculum "in action" in classrooms. As new technologies continue to shape teacher education in "new times," it is equally important that teacher educators respond to how curriculum and curricular models are characterized within their respective disciplinary fields. New technologies can be used as the tools through which to investigate such matters.

Though beginning teachers likely draw on distinct models of curriculum when teaching in their own classrooms, the meta-awareness of curricular models that they gain through the process of viewing VRPs is pivotal in their career as teachers. Explaining, rationalizing, and problematizing the curricular choices they make as beginning teachers within their own classrooms becomes highly visible with the use of video records of practice. This article reiterates that the choices that teacher educators make with regard to their methods classes and field experiences have a great impact on the training of beginning teachers.

Viewing the benefits that technology offers to beginning teachers beyond technology's mere connection to being "new" can assist teacher educators in advocating for thoughtful integration of technology into teacher education programs. Viewing the potential benefits of including video records of practice in preservice teacher education, specifically as a way to assist beginning teachers in understanding matters of curriculum "in action" in classrooms, resonates with the continued desire that teachers and teacher educators have to continually examine one's teaching practice. As new technologies continue to re-shape teacher education in "new times," it is imperative that teacher educators respond to how preservice teachers characterize curriculum in their respective

disciplinary fields, and how the use of video records of practice can be one fruitful method for prompting beginning teachers to investigate curriculum in sophisticated ways.

References

Applebee, A.N. (1996). *Curriculum as conversation.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Ball, D.L. & Cohen, D. (1999). Developing practice, developing practitioners: Toward a practice based theory of professional education. In L. Darling-Hammond & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching in the Learning Profession: Handbook of policy and practice* (pp. 3-32). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Bickmore, S., Smagorinsky, P., & O'Donnell-Allen, C. (2005). Tensions between traditions: The role of contexts in learning to teach. *English Education 38*(1), 23-52.

Black, S. (2001). Thinking about teaching: How teachers can put reflection at the heart of their teaching. *The American School Board Journal, 188*(11), 42-44.

Brophy, J. (Ed.) (2004). *Using video in teacher education (Advances in Research in Teaching, Volume 10).* Oxford: Elsevier.

Eisner, E. (1982). *Cognition and Curriculum: A basis for deciding what to teach.* New York: Longman.

Ellen, R.F. (1984). *Ethnographic research: A guide to general conduct.* London: Academic.

Feiman-Nemser,S. (1990). Teacher preparation: Structural and conceptual alternatives. In W.R. Houston (Ed.), M. Haberman & J. Sikula (Assoc. Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 212-233). New York: Macmillan.

Fendler, L. (2003). Teacher reflection in a Hall of Mirrors: Historical influences and political reverberations. *Educational Researcher 32*(3), 16-25.

Gee, J.P. (2000). The New Literacy Studies: from 'socially situated' to the work of the social. In Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanic, R. (Eds.), *Situated Literacies: Reading and writing in context.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In C. Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays* (pp. 3-32). New York: Basic Books.

Kinsella, E. (2007). Embodied Reflection and the Epistemology of Reflective Practice. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 41*(3), 395-409.

Lampert, M. & Ball, D. (1998). *Mathematics, Teaching and Multimedia: Investigations of real practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Lankshear, C. & Knobel, M. (2003). *New Literacies: Changing knowledge and classroom learning.* Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Luke, A. & Elkins, J. (1998). Reinventing literacy in "New Times." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 42,* pp. 4-7.

Marshall, J. D. (1993). Toward a theory of practice: Readers, texts, and the teaching of literature. In G.E. Newell & R.K. Durst (Eds.), *Exploring texts: The role of discussion andwriting in the teaching and learning of literature* (pp. 307-323). Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Publishers.

Merriam, S.B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, S. (2007). English teacher learning for New Times: Digital video composing as multimodal literacy practice. *English Education, 40*(1), 61-83.

Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner.* New York: Basic Books.

Schön, D. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sherin, M. (2004). New perspectives on the role of video in teacher education. In J. Brophy (Ed.), *Using Video in Teacher Education (Advances in Research on Teaching, Volume 10)* (pp. 1-27). Oxford: Elsevier.

Smagorinsky, P. (2008). *Teaching English by Design: How to create and carry out instructional units.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Squire, J. R. (2003). "The history of the profession." In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. R. Squire, & J. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on the teaching the English Language Arts* (pp. 3-17). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research; Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zeichner, K.M. & Liston, D. (1990). Traditions of reform in U.S. teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(2), 3-20.

Zeichner, K.M. & Tabachnick, B. R. (1991). Reflections on reflective teaching. In B.R. Tabachnick & K.M. Zeichner (Eds.), *Issues and practices in inquiry-oriented teacher education* (pp. 1-21). New York: Falmer.

Note: [1] This research study was supported through the New Faculty General Research Fund Program (NFGRF) at the University of Kansas.