1

Composing a Life as a Teacher Educator[1]

What is involved in trying to grasp the source of one's fundamental professional ideas? I need to probe the formative experiences of my career, ranging from my work as an intern social studies teacher in Wisconsin, to my staff development activities with teachers interested in the "new" social studies, to my role as a "line" administrator responsible for a department of education. Except for the administrative episode, these potent experiences came early in my career.

I have never tried to codify what I learned from my early career as a teacher educator, and I do not try to do so here. The major impact of my early career experiences seems to have been to incline me to question many of the standard practices in teacher preparation and envision alternative possibilities. On the other hand, when I examine my administrative work, I do attempt to suggest several specific "administrative perspectives" that grew out of this work. These partially codified perspectives have had substantial impact on how I understand and view design principles, change strategies, and barriers to change.

Becoming a Teacher Educator

My ideas about teacher education are deeply rooted in my life experience as a teacher educator. By this assertion I mean

Copyrighted Material

several things. Most obviously, I have developed notions about the possibilities of teacher preparation while attempting to reconceptualize and reorganize programs for teachers, in-service as well as preservice. At the same time, any attempt to change a social practice such as teacher preparation inevitably brings with that venture some degree of insight into the structures that underlie and support the existing forms of that practice (Sarason, 1982). In addition, many of my teacher education ideas are rooted in my own teacher preparation and initial professional socialization.

High School Teaching

The way I entered public school teaching inclines me to be open to alternative approaches to teacher preparation. For example, I am not the product of an undergraduate teacher preparation program, because I became a high school teacher only after deciding, during my master's study in history, not to pursue doctoral work in that field. Neither did I have a traditional student teaching placement at the University of Wisconsin. After a spring of post-baccalaureate study in education course work, I became a paid intern (four-fifths of a load) for the fall of 1962 at Washington High School in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. Serving as a substitute for student teaching, the paid internship model was tied to a large group-small group model of "team" teaching. An experienced teacher—Sid Sivertson, in my case—and an intern could combine their same-period classes several times each week for large group lectures, films, and other joint activities. On most days, however, I taught my world history classes alone, much as if I were a first-year teacher.

Interning was a powerful experience. I had broad autonomy in my teaching along with the opportunity to observe Sid teach and to talk with him about my teaching. With its blend of independence, responsibility, and dialogue, the intern structure strikes me as superior to student teaching. Student teaching does not entail real responsibility, places the novice in a subservient position to the cooperating teacher, and often fails to create the conditions for open dialogue. Moreover, my abrupt shouldering of teaching responsibility as an intern has made me suspicious of what I call the gradualist assumption in teacher preparation. According to this way of thinking, clinical experiences are to be made progressively more complex and sustained, as opposed to an approach that entails substantial teaching experience early in professional preparation.

Copyrighted Material

After teaching in suburban Chicago for a year and a half—the shortest time my future major professor thought feasible before resuming graduate study—I returned to the University of Wisconsin-Madison to obtain a doctorate in curriculum and instruction. I have sometimes wondered the extent to which my short stint at high school teaching impeded my being socialized into believing that the primary task of teacher education was to prepare novices for schools as they currently are structured and operated. Or, perhaps, I did not teach very long precisely because I was restive with the high schools of the early 1960s. I do remember thinking that there was much to change about schooling, particularly the predominant textbook-based curriculum, and that becoming a professor of education was the route to bring about reform.

University Teaching

In 1966, I began a professorial appointment in education at a private university, Washington University in St. Louis. The interdisciplinary department in which I worked was part of the faculty of arts and sciences. Ten years earlier, in an attempt to bring increased academic rigor to the study of education, the central administration at Washington University had recast the old-line Department of Education into a supradepartment and renamed this entity the Graduate Institute of Education (known by faculty and graduate students as the G.I.E.).[2] Having the education faculty assume a more scholarly stance, in its undergraduate and graduate teaching as well as in its writing, was consistent with Washington University's move in the postwar period toward becoming a major research university. Moreover, the *Institute* term in the name G.I.E. indicated that the education faculty was to be part of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, not a separate professional school. At the same time, the G.I.E. faculty would continue to make teacher certification available to undergraduates taking degrees in the College of Liberal Arts.

What kind of teachers ought to be prepared by the G.I.E.? The precise implications for teacher preparation deriving from the spirit of the G.I.E. were never thoroughly formulated. The first director of the G.I.E., Robert Schaefer, attempted to do so when he sharply criticized Conant's (1963) teacher education proposals for being excessively vocational and overly dependent on an apprenticeship system. In contrast, Schaefer (1967) advocated the metaphor of the "scholar-teacher" (p. 25) and urged that "initial training must emphasize ways of knowing" so that there "must be less concern for job information

Copyrighted Material

already discovered and far more interest in the strategies for acquiring new knowledge" (pp. 69–70). Whenever teacher preparation was discussed by the faculty members hired by Schaefer, the concept of inquiry was sure to be central (e.g., Wirth, n.d.).

To staff the G.I.E., a faculty holding joint appointments between various social scientific/humanistic disciplines was to join an already established core of traditional teacher educators. By the time I arrived in 1966, several joint appointments had been made, and teacher educators similar to me were once again being added to the G.I.E. faculty. This staffing pattern created an exciting place to work, because graduate study was both interdisciplinary and bridged scholarly and practical concerns. Formally a "track" was set up for each of several specialized areas of doctoral study, but the faculty was so small (never more than 20 positions) that students had to study with faculty from varied disciplinary and curricular backgrounds. Moreover, qualitative studies were acceptable from the origin of the G.I.E. due to the presence of two historians, Raymond Callahan and Arthur Wirth, and the successful push by Louis Smith in the late 1960s and early 1970s to gain acceptance for dissertations grounded in ethnographic methods (Cohn, 1993). Both qualitative inquiry and interdisciplinary study seemed reasonable to me in light of my own background in history and overall interest in the humanities.

In 1963, Judson T. Shaplin replaced Robert Schaefer and became the second director of the G.I.E. An activist, Shaplin had spearheaded several approaches to university-school collaboration while at Harvard University (Keppel, Shaplin, & Robinson, 1960; Shaplin, 1956), and upon arriving in St. Louis, he initiated several projects in social studies, the reason for me being hired. To Jud Shaplin I owe my belief that changing schools entails collaborative effort.

Shaplin brought the idea of the Harvard-Newton Summer Program[3] to Washington University. Soon students in the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) program were starting their graduate studies with an experience in summer school teaching. Designed to prepare paid interns for their academic-year internship, the Washington University-University City Summer Program deeply affected my thinking on teacher preparation. I saw how the Summer Program's combination of teaching practice, structured classroom observation, and intensive analysis of teaching could have made my Wisconsin internship experience even more productive than it had been. After observing the Summer Program during 1967 and 1968, my belief in the value of beginning teacher preparation with teaching

Copyrighted Material

experience was further strengthened when I served as a social studies "master teacher" in the 1969 Summer Program.

Inspired by my work in a master teacher-intern team, I resolved to rethink the way we sequence theory and practice in teacher preparation programming. I subsequently recommended that an intense and realistic teaching experience be placed at the very beginning of teacher education (Tom, 1976). I reasoned that such an experience could help the novice fathom the teacher role, assist the beginner in deciding whether teaching is an appropriate career, and accelerate the development of teacher concerns beyond those focused on survival. One of my structural principles advocates the sequencing of teaching practice concurrent with, or even prior to, theoretical study.

Social Studies Project

Although I enjoyed taking part in initial teacher preparation at Washington University, I had moved there to work in a curriculum "implementation" effort, the St. Louis Social Studies Project. In this project, social studies faculty members from Washington University were to work with St. Louis area teachers interested in experimenting with curriculum materials embodying the "new" social studies.

Social studies curriculum reform in the 1960s was part of a broader movement for having school children study each school subject as if they were aspiring scholars, an orientation articulated by Jerome Bruner in *The Process of Education*. Bruner provided a powerful rationale for making the fundamental ideas of a discipline—its "structure," in the terms of that day—central to curriculum planning. He also advanced the influential hypothesis that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development" (Bruner, 1960, p. 33).

The concept of "structure of the disciplines" justified intimate involvement by distinguished scholars in the blossoming curriculum projects of the 1950s and 1960s. No project "was worth its salt unless it could sport a Nobel laureate or two on its letterhead!" (Bruner, 1971, p. 18). These scholars were inclined to develop materials within disciplinary boundaries and saw teachers as consumers of this improved content.[4] Although the "structure of the disciplines" approach originated in mathematics and science, the field of social studies quickly joined the bandwagon. By the mid-1960s, about 20 national projects were designing social studies materials for elementary and secondary teaching.

Copyrighted Material

The popularity of the "structure of the disciplines" approach meant that most national project materials reviewed by our St. Louis area social studies teachers were rooted in a single discipline, such as geography, history, sociology, or political science. But interdisciplinary curricula did exist, most notably the public issues materials created by Donald Oliver and his colleagues at the Harvard Social Studies Project. The Harvard materials also gave prominent attention to values and made extensive use of case studies to foster student discussion and analysis of public controversy (Newmann, 1965; Newmann & Oliver, 1967; Oliver & Shaver, 1966). Almost all of the new social studies materials—interdisciplinary as well as disciplinary—emphasized the "discovery" teaching strategies characteristic of the time.

Because the new social studies materials differed not only from one another but also from the syntheses of scholarly findings in standard textbooks, the teachers faced significant curriculum choices as they tried to select one set of these new materials for piloting. Bob deJong and I served as the curriculum specialists (or coordinators) for the 12 high school teachers who were in our first "field station." Bob and I accepted the project tenet that selecting among these social studies curricula ought not be done by relying exclusively on such traditional text-selection criteria as appropriate reading level, appeal of illustrations, an engaging style of writing, and accuracy of factual content. These traditional criteria, we believed, were not sophisticated enough to sort through project materials that often reflected differing epistemological assumptions, contrasting views on the role of values in social studies, or varying conceptions of discovery learning.

In an attempt to develop suitable criteria for choosing among these social studies curricula (a process we called *curriculum analysis*), Bob and I trotted the field station teachers through readings designed to help the group formulate a rationale for social studies instruction. These readings focused on such issues as alternative goals for social studies instruction, socio-political assumptions underlying particular curricula, the place of normative judgments in the social studies (Shaver & Berlak, 1968; Tom, 1969, 1970a). We assumed that the 12 teachers could discuss and come to a consensus on key issues undergirding curriculum decision making; our primary focus was on "whether the intents of a curriculum are worthwhile" (Tom, 1970a, p. 104). The teachers' shared beliefs about curricular purpose would be cast into a written rationale, and this rationale could be the basis for selecting among the available materials (Lasher & Solomon, 1971).

Copyrighted Material

Despite stimulating discussions during our 18 two-day sessions over the 1966–67 school year, philosophic differences surfaced within the group, and consensus on a rationale for social studies instruction proved to be an elusive goal. One teacher disliked the drift of the group away from a traditional conception of fact-oriented history and dropped out during the fall of 1966. Some teachers liked "guided" discovery whereas others advocated "openended" inquiry, and proponents of topical instruction were challenged by those who wanted a problems-based curriculum. At a spring retreat in the Ozarks, where we were to decide which materials to pilot in ninth grade, we mostly drank beer, shot pool, and fished instead of confronting the philosophic differences that splintered the group. Our group's inability to reach consensus on the purposes of social studies is a microexample of our society's difficulty in obtaining agreement on the central aims of public schooling.

The retreat over and into May, we still had not decided which materials to try in the three pilot classes at Lindbergh High School (trial of the ninth grade civics materials was to be one year later at the other five schools). By a split vote of 6 to 5, the 11 remaining teachers selected Don Oliver's Harvard materials over Ted Fenton's Carnegie Institute of Technology materials. Moreover, this decision had little to do with issues of curriculum goals, or the place of values in social studies instruction, or our shared rationale (not yet developed and written, in any case). In the end, the teachers essentially ignored the substantive differences between the Fenton and Oliver materials: the disciplinary orientation and guided inquiry built into the Fenton materials in comparison to the interdisciplinary content and open-ended inquiry characteristic of the Oliver materials. The final choice between Fenton and Oliver was grounded in two practical considerations: "the reading level of the Carnegie materials was judged to be too difficult, and the Harvard materials were viewed as being more interesting to the typical ninth grade student" (Tom, 1973a, pp. 87–88).

At the time I was very disappointed in the practical basis for teacher decision making, concluding that our systematic model of curriculum implementation (Berlak & Tom, 1967) did not work. In fact, over my three years with the St. Louis Social Studies Project, a persistent undercurrent in the discussions among the curriculum specialists (who worked with the teachers in the four field stations) was whether our model of curriculum analysis was feasible.

As with selecting Oliver over Fenton, pragmatic criteria continued to be the basis for most curriculum decisions in my group of 11

Copyrighted Material

teachers. At decision-making points the teachers usually asked, "How will the kids react?" Another curriculum specialist had similar experiences with his teachers: "Rather than whether the stuff is consistent with what you did yesterday and what you're going to do the rest of the week, it's 'will the kids like it?'" (Tom, 1973a, p. 88). Not one of the four groups of teachers made substantial use of the analytical perspectives we four curriculum specialists had worked so hard to foster.

Despite seeing the teachers as inattentive to key conceptual distinctions, I must also note—with amusement—that I brought my own conceptual blinders to the making of curriculum decisions. Along with the other curriculum specialists, I (Tom, 1970a, 1973b) was strongly committed to an abstract form of curriculum analysis. This conceptual-analytic approach was built into the design of the St. Louis Social Studies Project (Berlak & Tomlinson, 1967). On the other hand, the teachers typically reasoned about curricula in concrete ways rooted in their lives in classrooms and schools, a situation that has frustrated many would-be reformers (Kliebard, 1988). For this reason, the Project evaluator concluded that selecting curricula without trying these materials with students was a major mistake: "Regardless of what was done in the analysis and development phases, teachers were not willing to really accept a new curriculum until it had been tried out and until the children's responses were known" (Colton, 1970, p. 129).

After selecting the Harvard materials for our civics pilot, we started in the summer of 1967 to prepare ourselves for teaching these case-based materials the following fall at Lindbergh High School. Because I saw teachers as active curriculum adapters rather than as passive adopters, I planned a summer workshop at which we could alter and augment the Oliver materials before using them with three classes of ninth graders. During this six-week summer workshop, we read the cases carefully, created lesson plans to accompany teaching ideas outlined in the Harvard booklets, and prepared supplemental materials for teachers as well as for students. A highlight of the summer was a two-day visit by Fred Newmann, who had helped develop the Harvard materials. He recommended that we spend less time planning for next year and more time becoming familiar with the public issues materials by discussing the cases among ourselves.

As we moved into the pilot phase in 1967–68, the wisdom of Fred's advice became clear. We found that our detailed teaching plans for directing case discussions were nearly useless. These plans failed primarily because the teachers could not accurately predict the

Copyrighted Material

twists and turns of classroom dialogue. For this reason, we often had plans for classroom contingencies that never materialized, while concurrently being unprepared for circumstances that did unfold during the give and take of case discussions. Only after teachers had taught a Harvard booklet several times did they start to understand which aspects of a case needed alternative teaching strategies or a few extra analogies (a key teaching strategy for sharpening class discussion of public issues).

My failures were not limited to curriculum analysis or materials adaptation but also extended to my presumption that teachers had substantial decision-making authority and that the decision-making process was predominantly deliberative. Although our project occurred before statewide testing limited the curricular latitude of local districts, classroom teachers in the late 1960s had limited involvement in the selection of curriculum materials. For example, a typical teacher comment was this: "In my district the teachers do not make the decision—the curriculum is bought at General Headquarters" (Tom, 1973a, pp. 89–90). Project teachers also demonstrated an awareness of the politics of curriculum decisions when they said such things as "I have 'sold my school' on the Harvard Project" or "my department chair asked me to eat lunch with the new social studies teachers" (pp. 89–90).

From the St. Louis Social Studies Project, I learned about the centralization and political realities of curriculum decisions and had to modify my view of the teacher as an autonomous intellectual making rational and systematic curriculum decisions. Although I have gradually grown more "realistic" in my view of how educational institutions work, especially after seven years of academic administration, my continuing desire to reform teacher education probably reflects my rejection of the organizational realities (and their detrimental effects) that I first observed in an intimate way while working in the St. Louis Social Studies Project.

Even before the Project was over, I had decided that teachers' pragmatic reasoning and their careful attention to student response were two important factors to consider when organizing and structuring future activities. In particular, we needed a concrete and effective way for approaching social studies teachers not yet involved with the Project but working in districts where pilot teaching was occurring. Several graduate students and I developed a summer workshop model; teachers would learn about new social studies materials by concurrently teaching them to high school students and studying the rationales and underlying assumptions for these materials.

Copyrighted Material

The "teaching workshop" (Tom & Applegate, 1969) was a six-week summer program. Each day started with two hours of teaching by several of the four to eight teachers on a workshop team. Over the six-week period, materials from several of the national social studies projects might be used with the high schoolers. One of the Project pilot teachers acted as the lead teacher for the workshop, but the daily teaching (8:00–10:00 A.M.) was also routinely done by the teachers who had come to the workshop to learn about the Oliver, the Fenton, or other national project materials. At 10:00 A.M. the entire workshop team analyzed that morning's teaching, both in terms of classroom skill and in relation to the characteristic teaching requirements of the various sets of national project materials.

After lunch, plans were made for the next day's instruction, drawing on ideas generated from that morning's analysis of teaching. During the two-hour afternoon session, workshop participants also frequently studied a set of national project materials, partly by examining the rationale that undergirded the development of the project materials and partly by searching for the epistemological, learning, and socio-cultural assumptions that might be implicit in the materials. These abstract inquiries, similar to the ones Bob deJong and I had conducted during the 18 two-day sessions, often were better received by the summer workshop participants than had been true for the Project teachers in 1966–67. Teachers responded well to our ability to relate assumptions underlying materials to the classroom teaching of those materials. However, not every workshop leader included the "examination of rationales and assumptions" component; some of them questioned its applicability to the teaching process. In addition, some workshop leaders were more committed to disseminating particular sets of materials than to what I have characterized as the process of curriculum analysis.

Overall, however, the "teaching workshop" idea seemed to be a powerful model of staff development, with positive teacher evaluations far outweighing negative ones for the summers of 1968 and 1969. Teachers tended to be most enthusiastic about the parts of the workshop format most directly linked to working with youngsters; that is, teaching, analysis of teaching, and planning for subsequent teaching. Some typical teacher comments on the end-of-workshop evaluations were "Being with other teachers gives you the opportunity to discuss common problems and also reappraise yourself as a teacher" and "I think it was highly successful in giving me the practical background to walk into a classroom in September and feel comfortable with the Oliver materials" (Tom & Applegate, 1969,

Copyrighted Material

pp. 18–19). Most negative reactions clustered around the emphasis on assumptions and rationales; this component was consistently viewed as the least valuable part of the summer workshop. Some workshop participants did not feel it was necessary to understand the assumptions behind curriculum materials to be able to teach them well, and others thought that the examination of assumptions was poorly conducted or in need of more time to be fruitful (Tom & Applegate, 1969).

Although agreeing that the teachers were not willing or able to select curricula based on "abstract and deductive analysis," David Colton (1970, p. 59), the Project evaluator, also suggested another flaw in the way the analysis phase was designed. Project personnel, Colton argued, presumed that "the analysis phase can be so free of the biases of . . . coordinators that . . . teachers themselves will be unconstrained in their choice of curricula" (p. 58). Colton noted that each of the four groups of teachers eventually developed a rationale that emphasized the "public issues" approach to social studies instruction. This result might have occurred because systematic curriculum analysis leads to the conclusion that public issues is the best approach, but Colton concluded that Washington University's social studies faculty, whose members stressed a public issues approach, strongly influenced the direction of the Project teachers' thinking. Even though the Project coordinators (all of whom had close ties to Washington University) usually did try "to avoid imposing their views on teachers," such imposition, he concluded, probably was unavoidable: "The analysis process is so alien to the habits of most teachers that it seems inevitable that whoever leads a group through the analysis process is likely to infuse his own views—however well disguised—into those people who are working with him" (Colton, 1970, p. 59).

Colton probably was correct in his estimate that the other coordinators and I embedded our own substantive preferences in the process of curriculum analysis. Moreover, I was much more interested in the issue of rationale building than many of the teachers with whom I worked from 1966 to 1969. For example, at the end of the second year, I wrote in my annual report that only a few of the teachers were interested in developing a social studies rationale for selecting curriculum materials and knowing what supplemental materials might be needed. As noted earlier, most of the teachers focused on whether the kids liked the national project materials under review. In my annual report, I concluded by noting that my group of teachers "as a whole seems to have little interest in the

Copyrighted Material

rationale; I have written all drafts of it and have found the teachers not to be very interested in discussing the rationale."

Reflections on the Social Studies Project

My pessimism of several decades ago suggests that I view the St. Louis Social Studies Project as a failed effort. I vividly recall one day in 1969 when our group was reminiscing about our work in the Project. "Ladies and gentlemen," intoned Weldon Cox, one of the Lindbergh teachers, "we failed." Weldon then proceeded to enumerate all the difficulties that we had had, especially how few social studies teachers in Project districts were attracted to the curriculum materials our group had selected. Several others agreed. But some teachers disagreed and talked about the impact of the Project on their school districts and on themselves. Teachers in several districts now played a larger role in curriculum decision making, and teachers felt much better informed about issues in social studies instruction. Several said they now felt confident enough to challenge directives emanating from central administration.

To some extent, these conflicting evaluations reflected a contradiction lodged in the design of the St. Louis Social Studies Project. On the one hand, teachers were given a larger role than normal in curriculum decision making, an aspect of the Project that I have emphasized. Moreover, these teachers' skills were enhanced by learning a process of curriculum analysis. At the same time, the term *field station* gives a flavor of the agricultural thinking that permeated the original plan (Berlak & Tomlinson, 1967). From this perspective, the Social Studies Project was a dissemination effort in which Bob deJong and I became field agents charged with bringing the newest social studies curricula to Project teachers. These teachers in turn were mini-agents who were to "sell" their peers on whatever materials we had selected and adapted. In this instance, success was measured by the extent of materials adoption; from the other viewpoint, success entailed a more skillful teaching force that had increasing authority to make curriculum decisions.

While the project conceptualization developed by Harold Berlak and Tim Tomlinson was quite clever, I learned that planning for complex educational reforms is often best approached in a staged way, as events unfold. Beyond the inconsistencies sometimes embedded in a "grand" plan, unforeseen events can easily disrupt a predetermined plan, such as our difficulty selecting materials for ninth grade in a timely manner. Such unanticipated events can be

Copyrighted Material

better accommodated within the context of an unfolding plan, a plan that does not extend too far beyond the horizon. Step-by-step planning of reform is an approach that deserves more emphasis than it usually receives.

But I learned much more than that grand plans can have internal inconsistencies or that staged planning can be a useful approach for complex educational projects. Working closely for three years with social studies teachers was the most potent episode of my professional life. On the one hand, I was intellectually challenged to figure out what curriculum analysis ought to be. Although the general nature of this process had been foreshadowed by the planning grant for the project (Berlak & Tomlinson, 1967) and by additional essays (e.g., Shaver & Berlak, 1968), as well as by the ideas of others (e.g., Morrissett & Stevens, 1967; Newmann, 1965), I was able to use the practical experience of analyzing curricula to stimulate my thinking about this process and to write a monograph on curriculum analysis. Unfortunately, my handbook on curriculum analysis, titled *An Approach to Selecting Among Social Studies Curricula* and prepared in two versions (Tom, 1969, 1970a), was not completed until the analysis phase of our work was over, yet another unforeseen event that disrupted our grand plan for curriculum reform.

At the same time as I was being intellectually stimulated, I was also pressed on a daily basis to deal with how classroom teachers view curriculum and instruction issues, and I had to operate on their turf rather than in the university classroom. The 18 seminars held during the first year of the Project were conducted in the central office of one of the participating school districts, and most subsequent meetings were held in schools, including the classrooms of Social Studies Project teachers. Even more important, I was not evaluating or grading the teachers, nor did I have any control over their careers. They were selected to participate by their schools, typically by a principal, and their actions were constrained less by me than by their work settings. In addition, I had to deal with the politics of six different school districts, a challenge to anyone, let alone a novice professor of education.

Probably the most salient aspect of the St. Louis Social Studies Project experience for me as a beginning professor was that I spent my formative years as an "academic" working in the schools rather than at the university. Precisely when the typical professor of education is being socialized into conducting on-campus classes, identifying and initiating a line of inquiry, serving on committees, and related activities, I was spending most of my time off campus, working daily

Copyrighted Material

with teachers. This sustained clinical activity was to cause a career crisis several years later when the faculty in the Graduate Institute of Education did not even want to consider my tenure case due to minimal scholarship. My publications amounted to a couple of articles and a monograph on curriculum analysis issued by a regional laboratory rather than by a more conventional publisher.

In the spring of 1972, I searched unsuccessfully for a position at another institution. Ironically, suspicion was expressed by faculty members at one prestigious liberal arts college because I came from a research university. At that same time, the G.I.E. faculty was restructuring teacher education, and I was asked to remain as the coordinator of clinical training. In this new position, I was to have substantial administrative responsibilities, a teaching load of one course per semester, and although "writing will be encouraged . . . the normal criterion will be modified in view of the clinical and administrative aspects of your position" (letter of appointment, May 10, 1972).

What ought a faculty member committed to clinical work in teacher education do when confronted by the tenure criteria of a research-intensive university? My own way of coping with the extraordinary amount of time needed to do good scholarship, as well as first-rate clinical work, is to inquire into my clinical work, particularly the curricular, administrative, and policy issues embedded in that work. I made this decision in order to survive professionally. If I did not combine scholarship and clinical work, one or the other had to be shortchanged.

For me the decision to merge the two was made consciously. After receiving tenure in the summer of 1973, I started a pattern of writing about my practical work, something I had begun several years earlier in the curriculum analysis handbook. Among such efforts in the 1970s were the description of a supervisory approach growing out of my work with student teachers (Tom, 1972), two analyses of my experiences in the St. Louis Social Studies Project (Tom, 1973a, 1973b), a discussion of the tensions I had observed while engaging in several school-university ventures (Tom, 1973c), an analysis of the clinical professor role after I had occupied such a position in 1969-70 (Tom, 1974a), an examination of pass/fail grading for student teaching after engaging in debates on that policy (Tom, 1974b), and a rationale, which drew on my experience in the Washington University-University City Summer Program, for starting a preservice program with teaching experience (Tom, 1976).

Even some of my more conceptual efforts such as *Teaching as a Moral Craft* drew heavily, though indirectly, on my work as a staff

Copyrighted Material

developer and preservice teacher educator. All of my writing on the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (Tom, 1980a, 1980b, 1981, 1983, 1996a) evolved as a by-product of preparing the Washington University NCATE report in 1979 and of being on Board of Examiner visiting teams for the past 10 years. Similarly, the impetus for my writing about teacher education reform (Tom, 1986a, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c, 1991a, 1995) was grounded in my becoming a line administrator and taking part in the deliberations leading to the Holmes Group. Last, the motivation for writing this book, as well as many of the ideas in it, arose from my 30 years as a teacher educator.

Linking my writing to my clinical work does not mean that I see writing as nothing more than the codification of my experience as a teacher educator. To approach "writing off experience" in that way would be to risk committing the naturalistic fallacy; that is, presuming that what we find in practice should be accepted and promoted. On the contrary, I have always seen my writing off experience to be informed by fundamental educational and democratic values, as well as by a commitment to collaborating with others who often work from values differing from my own.

Although my intensive clinical work almost ended my career, this experience has enriched my perspective on teacher education. To the work with Project teachers, I trace my desire when introducing conceptual content not to repeat my error of imposing my abstract approach to curriculum analysis on teachers. Whether working with veteran teachers or novices, I now believe we teacher educators are more likely to engage these professionals if we embed our conceptual ideas within the realm of their teaching practice (Zeichner, 1995). To separate the conceptual from the practical literally assures that the conceptual will be acquiesced in by teachers but not integrated into their thinking and actions, much as I ended up drafting the rationale for the Project teachers, who had little interest in discussing this statement or its significance for selecting curriculum materials. Only when we linked teaching and curriculum analysis through the "teaching workshop" did we experience some success. Even then, many workshop teachers saw curriculum analysis as a much less valuable way of learning about new social studies curricula than teaching with these curricula.

Preservice Teacher Education

After I became the coordinator of clinical training in 1972, my professional life became more like that of a typical campus-based

Copyrighted Material

teacher educator. I taught courses and spent a lot of time on the administrative aspects of arranging, monitoring, and troubleshooting field work placements. Initially, there was some administrative support for this labor-intensive work, but during the 1970s that support dwindled even more rapidly than did the enrollments. Frequently, I did administrative work in the evenings. In the summer I administered a student teaching program for post-baccalaureate students, and then used part of my August "vacation" to try to prepare a manuscript for publication. This part of my career is not a phase I would like to relive.

I gradually accommodated to surviving personally and maintaining the G.I.E.'s teacher education programs, even though one of my assigned duties was to foster improvement of elementary and secondary programs. I worked substantially harder on program maintenance and my teaching than did most colleagues in the G.I.E., yet was slowly wearing down and being absorbed by the morass of problems endemic to understaffed teacher education programs. The overall lack of interest in teacher education by my G.I.E. colleagues is typical of the ethos within departments and schools of education in research-oriented institutions (see, e.g., Goodlad, 1990a, pp. 74–79).

However, extensive programmatic reforms eventually were introduced, first in elementary (Cohn, 1980) and later in secondary (Cohn, Gellman, & Tom, 1987; Tom, 1984) education. Many of these changes were initiated by several creative colleagues who worked in an experimental elementary program during the early 1970s (Tom, 1988). Yet, I suspect that the critical factor in institutionalizing these trial reforms was that, in the late 1970s, the G.I.E.'s enrollments continued to decline while our faculty resources for teacher education temporarily stabilized. In other words, we were lucky.

Universities rarely are willing to invest the resources needed to run first-rate, clinically oriented teacher education programs, whether they be research-oriented institutions, regional public institutions, or liberal arts colleges (Goodlad, 1990a, pp. 70–85; Sykes, 1983; Tyson, 1995). All three types of institutions typically use teacher education to attract and recruit students and to generate income, which is often devoted to other missions of the institution. This institutional bias reflects the low status of teachers, as well as teacher educators.

In the same way that the position of teacher education tends to be similar across differing types of institutions, I suspect that teacher educators in most institutions will see similarities between my life as a preservice teacher educator and their own. My clinical work was of minimal interest to my non-teacher educator colleagues at Washing-

Copyrighted Material

ton University, even faculty within the Graduate Institute of Education. Few tenured faculty members in the G.I.E. wanted to supervise student teachers, and they avoided that responsibility. Tangible rewards for this work were minimal, either at the time of merit review or for promotion (I was not promoted to professor until after *Teaching as a Moral Craft* was published in the mid-1980s). Ducharme's (1993) basically optimistic view of the professional lives and careers of teacher educators is certainly at variance with my own mid-career experience, as well as with many other teacher educators I know from a wide variety of institutions.

Not too long ago, many teaching-oriented institutions could claim that significant rewards did exist for clinical work in teacher education, but institutional mimicking has led a number of these institutions to aspire to be more like research-oriented ones (Goodlad, 1990a, pp. 85–93; Woodring, 1987). In the context of such aspirations, Soder (1990, p. 709) wryly notes that the winner for the open deanship in education can well be the candidate who promises to make "Plainview State another Stanford." Faculty members with less grandiose goals may well sit on their hands waiting for the impatient dean to decide that it is time to leave and "to turn another normal school into a world-class research institution." Status envy affects research-oriented institutions as well; lower-status research institutions always are on the lookout to climb several rungs. Witness the playful T-shirt message: "Washington University—the Harvard of the Midwest."

Vividly illustrating how the reputation game is dominated by scholarly criteria is a recent survey of productivity and prestige among schools of education. When the University of Wisconsin-Madison was named number 1, the results of the survey were published in the next Wisconsin *School of Education News* with the headline: "National Study Ranks School of Education #1 (Again)." The accompanying story notes that various indicators were used to operationalize "academic productivity," and closes with a quote from the dean of education: "Our faculty . . . work extremely hard. . . . This study recognizes the many contributions they have made." Not noted are those faculty members who also work hard but make contributions to teacher education and other areas not addressed by the survey's restrictive view of what constitutes academic excellence.

Across differing types of institutions, the environmental conditions for teacher education seem to be becoming increasingly alike. Moreover, the status of teacher education tends to be low in all types of institutions (Soder, 1989). No doubt the association of teacher

Copyrighted Material

education with undergraduate education affects its status, but the dilemma is deeper than the degree level at which teacher preparation is offered.

Professors of education are themselves ambivalent about teacher education. From their origins, educationists attempted to distance themselves from the female and lower-class world of the public schools, initially being more interested in administrator preparation and later in secondary teacher education, both of which were male-dominated domains (Ginsburg, 1987). In Chapter 7, I return to the status of teacher educators; our lowly position plagues every attempt to improve the quality of teacher education.

Becoming an Administrator

Not until I became a department head in 1983, almost twenty years after I started my professorial career, did I hold an administrative position with "line" responsibility. In reality I had been doing administrative work since 1966 as part of the Social Studies Project. In those years, I intervened with principals when teachers had project-related problems, wrote memos to frame issues for discussion by Project teachers, and prepared budgets periodically, as well as engaging in a variety of other organizing and structuring tasks.

Similarly, during the 1970s when I was coordinator of clinical training, I also performed a variety of administrative duties, including all the tasks connected with field work as well as functions such as ensuring that undergraduates received proper course advising, hiring and evaluating student teacher supervisors, working with the director of the G.I.E. to staff methods courses, keeping abreast of the certification policies of the Missouri Department of Education, and so forth.

The Shock of Administration

These administrative functions and tasks, however, did not adequately prepare me for the department head role I held from 1983 to 1988. In part, the shock of being "in administration" occurred because I assumed a much wider range of responsibilities than I had ever had before. As department head, I did such varied activities as set faculty and staff salaries, schedule curricular offerings (undergraduate through doctorate), appoint departmental committees,

Copyrighted Material

identify external sources of funding, present the case for new/replacement "lines" to the dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, organize faculty searches, represent the Department of Education at a variety of public events, and organize state and national accreditation visits. These extensive personnel and budgetary responsibilities, rooted in the decentralized structure of Washington University, meant that I was essentially a mini-dean.

In addition to the breadth of my responsibility, simultaneously pulling me in multiple directions, I often lost control of my daily calendar, as unplanned events arose as a day unfolded. These events could range from a student with a complaint about the scheduled time of a class to a faculty member with a "short" question for me—better addressed today than later, after the minor concern had mushroomed into a major issue. Determining which unanticipated events require personal attention and which are essentially diversions is itself a key administrative task.

Administration of Teacher Education

The diversity of demands on me complicates any account of my administrative work. Constructing a narrative of my department chair experience is also difficult because such a story is hard to make meaningful without detailed attention to organizational context. In fact, the setting for my work may be of more significance than what actually happened while I was chair, since this institutional context highlights problems and dilemmas faced not only by me but also by many other teacher educators.

Central to this institutional context is a series of events that had occurred between 1981 and 1983. After the resignation in 1981 of a person who had been director of the Graduate Institute of Education for almost ten years, the dean of the faculty of arts and sciences appointed an English professor as temporary head of the G.I.E. and also appointed a review committee to consider the future mission of our unit. The review committee was headed by a political scientist with scholarly interests in education and had predominant membership from outside the G.I.E. The report of the review committee recommended top priority be given to developing a major and minor in educational studies (noncertificate programs), with the possibility of a small Ph.D. effort in educational studies.

The review committee also recommended that the university phase out teacher education, the one thing the central administration subsequently decided the G.I.E. faculty should be doing. The review

Copyrighted Material

committee's rationale for recommending the termination of teacher education was concise and pointed:

> There appear to be unavoidable structural difficulties in maintaining programs of teacher training, or indeed any program that is essentially professional in character, within an institutional setting devoted to liberal arts education. . . . The central problem is that faculty members primarily concerned with professional training often do not follow career paths that conform readily to the standards of evaluation utilized in awarding promotion and tenure. Such faculty members too frequently must suffer second-class citizenship at best, and there appears to be no readily acceptable method to resolve the problem without departing from University tenure procedures and standards. (committee report, unpublished)

What is propounded here, therefore, is a fairly typical argument about how teacher preparation (labeled *training*) is incompatible with an arts and sciences environment. This reasoning reveals the ambivalence with which teacher education is often viewed by liberal arts faculties in research-oriented universities, an ambivalence that in many ways still persists at Washington University (Cohn, 1993).

After receiving the report of the review committee, the dean of the arts and sciences faculty, in the spring of 1982, authorized a search for a new chair for the G.I.E., now renamed by the central administration as the *Department of Education*, apparently reflecting the increased emphasis to be given to undergraduate teacher preparation. The external search failed, and I ultimately was named as an "inside" chair. It was clear to me—indeed, to all of us—that our department was a very low priority to the university, even though the central administration had acted to preserve teacher education. Teacher education was kept to maintain a vocational outlet for some arts and sciences majors.

What we faced in 1983, which many faculties of education confront yet today, was a deep uncertainty about what role the Department of Education was to play at Washington University, particularly the importance of teacher education. In regional public universities and liberal arts colleges, there often is less ambivalence among the overall faculty about the importance of teacher education, but that usually does not translate into high prestige for teacher education faculty (Soder, 1989). As noted earlier, I return to these status considerations in Chapter 7. For now, I want to outline several perspectives that grew out of my administrative experience, considering more

Copyrighted Material