Time to Teach

Peter Smagorinsky

In a recent conversation I had with a student teacher, she noted that several teachers in her school were planning to retire. She spoke hopefully of filling one of those positions the following year and even more excitedly about the possibility that she and another student teacher from her university program would establish careers in the same department. That way, she said, it might be possible for the school to experience a dramatic change in its approach to teaching because of the new ideas they would bring to the faculty. She then spoke of a time when the whole teaching profession would be transformed by the infusion of fresh and innovative ideas brought in by a new generation of teachers. I briefly shared her enthusiasm. Then, after a moment of thought, I said, "Of course, that's what I thought when I started teaching in 1976, and schools don't look much different now than they did then."

Well, so much for my ability to inspire and motivate. But the inability of teacher education programs to have a profound impact on the practices of schools has been a nagging frustration since long before I entered the profession. As Lortie (1975) pointed out when teaching was just a gleam in my eye, schools are places where the hiring and retention practices are more likely to conserve the governing values of the institution than to change them. Many people who aspire to teach are attracted to the profession because they had succeeded as students in schools emphasizing content mastery and authoritarian teaching approaches, and seek such environments for their own careers. Instead of seeing themselves as the change agents that schools of education hope to cultivate, they resist preservice programs' efforts to teach progressive or critical pedagogies (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). A smaller number of teachers enter the profession as what Lortie calls "nonidentifiers"; that is, those who disliked their educations and see themselves as reformers. Such teachers might

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embrace the process-oriented, student-centered teaching approaches stressed in university methods classes (see Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995) yet find that schools promote an ethic more geared toward authority and control, making their progressive, constructivist alternatives difficult to put into practice (Borko & Eisenhardt, 1988; Ritchie & Wilson, 1993). Because schools are largely staffed and run by people who value authoritative approaches to schooling, the relatively small group of nonidentifiers and reformers often finds that schools are remarkably durable in perpetuating their ways and resistant to efforts to change them.

In this article my goal is relatively modest: to focus on one elementary school teacher, Penny, during the Language Arts lessons of her student teaching and to focus on a single (though significant) conflict she had with the values of the school. Because of what she described as a culturally-grounded view of time, Penny was an easy convert to the process-oriented, student-centered, constructivist pedagogy emphasized in her preservice teaching program. As luck would have it, however, her student teaching assignment placed her in a school that had a reputation throughout the district as being, in the words of several local educators, "traditional." Among these traditional features was a highly structured school day, including lessons that were expected to stay strictly on schedule. Penny's conflict with the school's emphasis on effective time management will lead me to reflections on the challenges that face teacher educators who advocate process-oriented instruction when schools are driven by coverage demands that discourage the exploration of ideas in depth.

My acquaintance with Penny began when she volunteered to participate in a study I was doing of the transition teachers make when moving from preservice programs to the workforce (see *http://cela.albany.edu/strand4.html* for a description of the whole project). Just prior to her semester of student teaching, I interviewed Penny at length about her experiences as a student, her beliefs about teaching, her course work at the university, and her experiences in the field. She also participated in a group concept map activity with other teachers who had volunteered for the study. Then, during her student teaching I made nine visits to her first-grade class. As part of these observations, I conducted a series of interviews with her, her cooperating teacher, and her university supervisor about her student teaching experience. In addition, I observed and interviewed another teacher in her school as well as that teacher's cooperating teacher and university supervisor, giving me frequent opportunities to get to know the school and how it worked. Because the other student teacher's cooperating teacher was also the school's head teacher (that is, the *de facto* assistant principal), I was able to learn of the school's administrative values through both observations and interviews. I also

learned about her preservice program from documents provided by the program faculty and personal conversations with them about their teaching.

To account for Penny's experiences in this school, I will first describe the two key settings that provided her with formal and practical knowledge about teaching: the university's teacher education program and her student teaching site, Warren G. Harding Elementary School. I will also describe the mentoring she received from Rona, her cooperating teacher. I then profile Penny, emphasizing what I understood to be her primary conflict during student teaching, that being her different conception about how to regard and use time. Finally, I illustrate this conflict with some vignettes from her teaching supplemented by excerpts from interviews with both Penny and Rona. These observations lead me to reflect on how this conflict represents a problem faced by any English educator whose emphasis on process-oriented pedagogy is at odds with the school settings that provide the formative settings for teachers' early-career development.

Key Settings for Beginning Teachers

Teacher Education Program

Penny was enrolled in a teacher education program at a comprehensive research university located in a college town. The elementary education program was offered within the university's 5-year teaching program that encompassed the junior and senior years of undergraduate course work and one year at the graduate level. After taking a preparatory education curriculum with majors in other certification programs that included 60-70 hours of field experiences, the elementary preservice teachers took specialized courses characterized by the following features:

1. The program had a conceptual perspective that was agreed upon among the tenured faculty, adjunct faculty, and teaching assistants, and streamed throughout all elementary education courses taught within the curriculum and instruction department. The program perspective featured *constructivism* (outlined later) and *multiculturalism*. Each of these themes was deliberately streamed through departmental courses, discussed among faculty, emphasized during field experiences, and featured in course assessments.

2. Students went through their sequence of classes as a cohort. They entered the program with the same group of students and, to the greatest extent possible, were scheduled into the same classes in the same sequence at the same time. This cohort approach enabled them

to have continuity with the students with whom they experienced the program and also allowed for the development of a consistently reinforced set of understandings about teaching and learning.

3. Prior to the methods classes, students were not required to take courses in content areas. Rather, they took a number of courses in the curriculum and instruction department, many from the tenure-track faculty who designed the program. The emphasis in the elementary program was thus on pedagogy rather than disciplinary knowledge, and the teaching models provided through these courses came from teachers of pedagogy rather than teachers who were subject-area specialists. The program themes of constructivism and multiculturalism were therefore consistently reinforced in their course work and, for the most part, modeled by their teachers. Exceptions occurred when some faculty would give multiple choice exams on constructivism. According to students interviewed for the study, students were aware of these discrepancies and critiqued them skillfully.

4. The semester prior to student teaching, the students took what was called the *elementary block* consisting of five methods classes in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Reading, and Science. For each class they spent at least 30 hours in field experiences, totaling a minimum of 150 hours of field experiences in the semester prior to student teaching. The methods classes made explicit connections between the program themes and instructional planning, and each of the five field experience placements required each student to design and teach lessons that illustrated the constructivist principles stressed in the university course work.

5. The program included a mentoring dimension that was taught by a tenure-track faculty member and built into the professor's course load. In mentoring classes students were introduced to experienced teachers, taught how to negotiate the program, exposed to broader professional issues, and in general provided guidance in how to conduct oneself as a teacher.

6. At the conclusion of their program, each student submitted a portfolio designed to synthesize knowledge gained through course work, mentoring, field experiences, and student teaching. Students were required to reflect on their experiences, reconstruct the program as they understood it, and present their understanding through a collection that represented the way in which they made sense of their preservice experiences. The portfolio, therefore, was designed to provide the students with a constructivist experience.

Interviews with the 5 volunteer students from the cohort revealed remarkable consistency in their ability to articulate a constructivist approach to teaching, which they typically contrasted with what they termed

a "traditional" approach (Smagorinsky, O'Donnell-Allen, Fry, & Konopak, 1998). They consistently characterized a traditional approach as consisting of the idea that teachers and texts are authoritative, that knowledge is fixed and transmitted, and that teaching should rely on textbooks (primarily basals and worksheets) for its curriculum. They described constructivist teaching as instruction that emphasizes learning and learners (and thus is concerned with issues of diversity), stresses students' activity, views knowledge as connected, and relies on literature and writing (rather than basals and worksheets) as vehicles through which students construct knowledge.

In addition to individual interviews, the group was brought together on a separate occasion to draw a concept map of their understanding of teaching and learning. During this meeting they identified constructivism as the umbrella concept to guide all teaching decisions. As one teacher, Shelley, put it, constructivism is "your theory of teaching. I mean, that is like if you agree that kids have hands-on experience as opposed to you filling a cup. Everything you do [as a teacher] is going to have that here." She went on to say that

> I believe constructivism is just allowing children to develop their own knowledge with your guidance. I mean, you're helping them kind of do some boundaries and kind of helping lead them to discover things for themselves, and in their own way, but also making sure they don't discover something in the wrong way, where they think they can tie their shoes by rolling them up or something. You kind of help them along but you let them discover for themselves instead of spoon-feeding them or just pouring knowledge into them.

The rest of the group agreed with this definition, with only Penny's addition that "we forget to feed ourselves in the learning process. I have constructive knowledge myself, so I see teachers as being learners too." Penny, in deciding where to put the term *constructivism* on the map, said it should go "at the top with 'teacher' and then the arrow pointing down." Main subcategories they identified included learning styles, stages of development (primarily Piagetian stages, as stressed in the program, though some expressed a preference for Vygotsky), and multiculturalism. These categories then included a host of pedagogical tools such as developing lesson plans, making poetry wheels, using developmental approaches to teaching spelling, using readers' theater, and other particular applications, all of which involved guiding students through a process of constructing knowledge for themselves. This constructivist process necessitated providing students with time for exploration of their ideas and the construction of a meaningful product. The student teachers frequently contrasted this approach with fact-driven traditional instruction in which teachers transmitted information more quickly to students.

The preservice program structure, then, was designed to provide a thorough grounding in constructivist approaches to teaching. The ability of this set of volunteer participants from one year's cohort to articulate a constructivist pedagogy suggests that, for those students with a disposition to adopt such practices, the program was effective in teaching it.

The School Site

The college town's school district included a number of elementary schools that ultimately fed into the school's single 2-year senior high school. The district was committed to site-based management, allowing each school to develop its own approaches to instruction. Warren G. Harding Elementary School was often described as being among the district's most traditional schools, and that reputation was substantiated by my own observations. The curriculum was guided by basal readers and teachers tended to follow them faithfully. In the fourth-grade class I observed, students would complete their worksheets without having to do any of the generative problems (e.g., writing their own sentences using the week's vocabulary words); the emphasis instead was on answering questions based on the basal reading. For the most part, teachers and texts held authority and the job of a good student was to absorb what they offered. Students were remarkably compliant in both behavior and in school work, a point I noted several times in my observational commentary.

Carolyn, the school's head teacher and teacher of this fourth-grade class, outlined her views about teaching and learning during my formal interview with her and also during our many informal chats before and after my visits. A 17-year veteran at the school, she served as principal whenever the principal left the building and was highly influential in determining instruction throughout the school. Indeed, while a number of principals had passed through the school over the years (including a new one during the year of Penny's student teaching), Carolyn had been a stable presence.

I talked to Carolyn about what she looked for in an early-career teacher, particularly in the teaching of Language Arts. Our conversation went as follows:

> *Carolyn:* Good language arts teaching includes so many strands that I would place most of my emphasis on I would say structure. Because structure is going to cover any kind of expository writing, where you have, if the child can write a good sentence, then they've got some of the basic skills of capitalization and punctuation, complete thought, and I feel like by the time they leave third grade a good language arts

basis for a child would be to be able to write that solid paragraph, and that's going to include spelling. Because in our expository writing lessons, incorrect spelling cannot be read.

Q: Anything else that goes into good teaching of the language arts?

Carolyn: Well, reading, that's one thing, being able to read. And unfortunately, children can read what they write whether it's good paragraph formation or not. They don't have to have a vowel in it to be able to read their story. But to be able to have it correct, we've got to have all those other things in place. Spelling, and I also place a great emphasis on grammar, correct verb agreement, because each morning they'll come in to two incorrect sentences that they have to correct. And that also carries over into their writing.

Q: What would you say that the major purposes of teaching language arts are? Why do we teach language arts in the schools?

Carolyn: You have to have language arts to be able to be (inaudible) or a person in the work force. You cannot complete an application without language arts. Improper grammar, that's going to turn me off in a minute with a teacher. I'll X her out or him out immediately for poor grammar. It may be right or wrong, but I feel like whatever they're modeling those children are going to model, after all, they got it from their parents. So I would say in order to be a productive citizen you're going to have to have language arts skills.

Q: What would you say someone needs to know in order to be a good teacher of language arts at the elementary level?

Carolyn: Have you ever diagrammed sentences?

Q: Mmm-hmm.

Carolyn: I feel that the old-fashioned diagramming of sentences would sure help most of our language arts, you know the university would very much help because often they do not know basic language arts, basic grammar skills, basic punctuation, they haven't had it for years. So how can they teach it if they don't understand it? It's not just something that is written in the third grade basal. It's something that's come from way back. I would say, again, you have to develop the basic skills into finer skills.

Q: What you have described so far has referred mainly to language use, a grammatical foundation. How about in order to teach writing and reading.

Carolyn: You still have to have that basic, you still have to have that grammar. I don't care if it's reading or writing because all of your workbooks that go with your basals in reading, those aren't just comprehension skills, those are language skills. They still have to know those. They have to know a synonym from an antonym to teach it.

As Carolyn's remarks suggest, the school's Language Arts curriculum featured knowledge of correct form, with basal readers the primary vehicle for instruction. As the interview with Rona will suggest, Carolyn's beliefs represented the teaching practices of most of the faculty. If we agree that practices of this sort represent traditional teaching, and if a traditional environment discourages time-consuming attention to learning processes, then Harding Elementary was a difficult place for a constructivist preservice teacher to practice with comfort and confidence.

Rona was, in many (but not all) ways, a good fit with this school. During one interview with her, I mentioned that I had noticed the efficient quality of her teaching during lessons I had observed. I asked her to talk about it:

Q: One thing I've noticed in the times when I've seen you teach is that you are very aware of your schedule and the time. You know, the lessons are very, I would say, crisp. You know, your management of the time. Could you talk a little bit about why that's a priority for you? Is that something within you or is that something—

Rona: I think so. I'm always—I'm punctual. I mean, even outside of the school, I'm at places I need to be on time. And I guess that is— I've never really thought about it before, but that's something that must be important to me. And so I know that I need to end math by two o'clock so that we'll have five minutes to get ready to go to the library or to go to P.E. or to go to reading buddies. So, yeah. I am pretty crisp, probably.

Q: Is that—and I've noticed Penny is less crisp, and is that something that you've talked to her about or does it matter?

Rona: Yeah, because like when we do go to 4th grade reading buddies, they are sitting there waiting for us at 1:50. But I think the more you teach, you get into that groove more because this is still all so new to a student teacher and you've probably never had to check. And I remember running over and being late when you first start teaching. That takes some time to get into the—you know, I've been here seven years, so I know the routine. And she hasn't. She's only been here a couple of months.

> *Q:* Let me ask this: I got a sense from what you said a moment ago, you kind of felt a sense of responsibility to other people in the building to be where you are expected so that they are not—their time isn't wasted. Is that something you would do—how can I ask this? Is that kind of the type of obligation you get when you have to work with people and see them the next day and the next year? Do you know what I mean?
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> *Rona:* Probably. Yeah. Probably. And I told the students, you know, sometimes in school we have to stop. We may not be finished. That's okay. We can finish up tomorrow. I mean I always let them know there will be a time that we can finish if it's something that we haven't finished like a writing lesson or math lesson or social studies picture. Sometimes in school we have to stop because we have to go to 4th grade. They are waiting for us. And I think if you are up front with them and tell them—now that I think about it, that let's them know that time is—that's something I value. And I hadn't really thought about that before.

Even with this good fit, Rona was somewhat of a maverick within her school. She was working on a master's degree at the same university where Penny was working on her preservice certification, and for her thesis was developing a literature-based reading program, a project for which she had received a district grant to purchase children's literature for use in her class. While pleased with this innovation in her school, she experienced conflicts about the way in which her colleagues at Harding would perceive her departure from the basal-driven curriculum:

> *Q:* You've mentioned some of these larger structures that you've worked within. You've talked about what the school wants and what the district wants. Could you talk about what those things are and how you fit in them? I noticed when you explained about not teaching basals, you kind of lowered your voice so that—
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> *Rona:* This is a very traditional school—So the district, the [state-mandated learning outcomes], and then the school, I know what's expected here. And I know—
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> *Q:* When you say, "what's expected," who expects that? Does it come from the principal's office or is that something your colleagues decide, a faculty decision?
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> *Rona:* I think it's principal and colleagues.
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> *Q:* What is it that they agree on that you all need to be doing?
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> *Rona:* I knew when I walked in here and started teaching that there were very high expectations here, as far as achievement tests.

What was particularly striking about this excerpt from our interview was the way Rona dropped her voice dramatically when talking about the school's emphasis on basal readers and then again when she said, "This is a very traditional school." At the time of the interview, we were sitting in the corner of the school's cavernous cafeteria; the only other person in the room was a cafeteria worker at the opposite end of the room, well out of earshot. Yet, presumably because Rona did not want to be overheard talking about the school's traditional orientation and its curricular vehicles for achieving its goals, she spoke in hushed tones even under relatively secure conditions. I was strongly impressed by the ways in which the school provided pressures to teach, and think, in traditional ways.

I should state that Rona was an excellent teacher and exemplary mentor teacher. When asked why she supervised student teachers, her remarks focused on the learning potential it afforded her because presumably the student teachers would bring new ideas into her classroom. Rona's decision to pursue a master's degree in curriculum and instruction was a rare choice in her school and district, where most teachers pursuing advanced degrees did so in administration. Her interest in developing a literature-based reading program at Harding Elementary was rather daring given the overwhelming pressures to achieve high test scores, even in her first-grade class. While fitting into the overall environment at Harding, she also engaged in her own quiet revolution. The mentoring relationship she provided for Penny was on the whole caring and supportive. Their generally congenial relationship makes their relatively few differences all the more striking.

Penny

Penny was a nontraditional student, being in her late thirties at the time of her student teaching and being a single mother of daughters aged twenty-three and eight. She was about 10 years older than Rona, somewhat altering the dynamics often found between cooperating teachers and student teachers. In most regards, Rona and Penny liked, admired, and spoke highly of one another. They departed in their beliefs about how to spend time. Penny, as noted in the interview with Rona, was not so crisp in her time management. As I will illustrate later, her lessons tended to overrun the time parameters set up on Rona's planning book. Penny attributed these differences to two factors. One was her compatibility with the constructivist principles of her university program:

Q: Can you identify the influences on your decisions about how to teach that way? Can you trace them to anything in particular?

Penny: Well, I guess 'cause I see this as being real constructivist in nature because the kids are all doing it, you know, they're not just copying something, they're not just memorizing something, they're creating it on their own, and I guess it's those kind of things that are my kind of philosophy, that if they construct it, they'll more likely remember it or use it or those kind of things.

Q: Do you see a constructivist influence on the other language arts instruction you'll be doing over the next week?

Penny: I hope so. I try to put it in wherever I can, I mean, I guess that's why I'm having such a hard time with the penmanship thing and the U paper [a lesson emphasizing the letter U], because I don't see it, I just see it as being traditional and not—I guess everything has its value, but for me I just feel uncomfortable with it. I'm not a traditional teacher.

Q: Are there any other things that you can think of that might have influenced your planning for the teaching you'll do next week?

Penny: Well, I think, you know, just about everything I learned at the university has led up to this, of the constructivist theory, I mean, I feel comfortable with that, I think the research supports how children learn, understanding the learning styles of the children. . . . I think that all of that goes into what I feel comfortable with and what I don't feel comfortable with. So I think it has been an influence on who I am as a teacher.

Penny's constructivist orientation came from the *conceptual home base* she located in her university's preservice program; that is, the community through which she referenced and evaluated approaches to teaching (Smagorinsky, O'Donnell-Allen, Fry, & Konopak, 1998). Through the theoretical lens afforded by constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, she felt uncomfortable with much about the structure of Harding, feeling that it provided little opportunity for students to construct knowledge. Her views about conforming to rules directly contradict Carolyn's value on the primacy of correctness in speech and writing; her constructivist approach encouraged more creative uses of language. Even working with perhaps the most constructivist teacher in the school in Rona, Penny revealed that she felt handcuffed when given the opportunity to teach.

Toward the end of her semester of student teaching, she provided a second, more culturally-grounded reason for her difficulty in adhering to Harding's highly structured environment. During a visit I made early in November, Penny asked me if I had any suggestions for how to decorate her room for the fall season. I barely hesitated in recommending what seemed normal to me for that time of year, a Thanksgiving theme. "No,"

she said. "I don't do Thanksgiving." In response to my puzzled look, she clarified: "I'm an Indian."

Penny's cultural identification with her Native American heritage lent itself well to the university program's constructivist ideology and, in her view, made Harding a difficult place for her to teach. During the interview that followed her revelation of her Native American heritage, she talked about how constrained she felt by the school's ways and means, particularly in the manner that the school structure discouraged teaching that allowed for students to learn at a comfortable pace:

Penny: The only thing that I don't like generally across the board, about how the lessons go or don't go, is I feel this really big time crunch thing coming around, I mean, it's like, "okay, you've got 20 minutes to do this lesson," and I know it should take an hour or an hour and a half, so I don't know how to get all that worked in. Because my teaching style definitely doesn't fit that school which is very structured and traditional, and I'm not. So it's like kind of I'm trying to work in a little bit of who I am—the structure so that I don't totally mess the class up, because I don't think it would be fair for me to go in and do completely what I think, because—

Q: What do you think the source of that time conflict is, is that a personal thing, or is there something else?

Penny: Well, yeah, because of who I am, I think well—I don't know if it's, I can't tell you the source, but I can tell you that I don't necessarily function like everyone else does, at 8:00 you do this at 10:00 you do this, at 9:00 you do this. Time is more of a—it's not, time is not just determined by what a clock says it is. I can look at my house and know that because every clock has a different time. I mean, because if it's close it's great, you know, it's not one of those things I worry so much about—the process of going through this time span is a lot more important than thinking, "I've got to get finished, I've got to start here and finish here and my product has to be done at 2:15 in the morning." That's not who I am. I know that culturally maybe there is something to be said to how I respond to time or how I rate time or those kind of things, which I think might be good in my class because I'm not so quick to get answers from the kids, that it's like I understand that you need to think about it. I know a lot of my professors want answers, instantaneously, now! With me it's like, no, I can't tell you now, let me think about it, process it, work with it that way. Time—there's like two different time spheres, I've got my time and then there's this, well, what my brother calls

it is "the white man's time." So it's like, I don't know if you want to record this or not, but, okay, you can wipe it out. He's like, "Okay, you're coming over 7:00 white man's time or at 7:00 your time?" I was like "Well, it's Saturday, it may be 7:00 my time." So I mean, I don't, I, I think that's the best I could explain it. I mean if you have a question I maybe could think about it and let you know what—

Q: Well, I think it's um, it's um—

Penny: Well, just, the time thing is that, you know, because the school is real structured and they have all these requirements for grades, I would have to fit in to what they're doing, you have to have two grades here, two grades here, two grades here, two grades here, two grades here, two grades here, so I'm looking at eleven grades. Well, if I taught the way I wanted to teach, I couldn't get the grades they expect to get. Okay, my grades would come from— well, assessment is a whole other ballgame, that goes against most what everybody else thinks too, so, I think I'm gonna get me a kitchen timer, I'm gonna time it, okay we've got ten minutes to do math, okay, we've got 15 minutes to write. Because I feel stressed and pressured to produce grades, which in the first grade, I mean, you know, all these kids are going to have wonderful grades for the next two weeks because, hey, I saw improvement, I mean, smiley face, that works, that's 100 in my book, so that's been something I had to think about.

In many ways Penny's remarks sound like those of many student teachers, particularly those coming from programs emphasizing process-oriented teaching and learning, trying to adjust to the strictures of schools. Yet her difficulties are compounded by a more fundamental difference in how to view time. Krueger (1989) discusses how Native American notions of time do not fit easily with Western scheduling. Krueger's focus is on Native American healers and their tendency to take however much time is required in order to earn a patient's trust and reduce fear. Yet her remarks are also relevant in thinking about teachers who "believe teaching begins instead with the establishment of relationships between themselves and their students" (Delpit, 1995, p. 139):

In the relief and pleasure of really being taken seriously as a human being, it is also easy to forget that at the very moment one is being helped to feel at ease, the healer may simultaneously be putting off someone else for whom she will then be "late." That kind of time consciousness includes time to be compassionate and human. Taking time and tuning in. . . .

> There are benefits to the highly structured time frame: predictability (which makes people feel safe, too); an order and harmony of its own; it can fit and function well in an eight-to-five world. But it does not create "knowing" and comfort. The more fluid time consciousness has its own benefits: making real human contact, creating ease, creating comfort through knowing an "other," and faith. This kind of time does not fit as readily into an eight-to-five structured world. (Krueger, 1989, pp. 227-8)

Krueger's comments are remarkably applicable to the conceptions of time that I observed in the classroom of Rona and Penny. Rona was clearly an excellent teacher, and among her strengths was the sense of order and harmony that her efficiency brought to her teaching. Her lessons moved along briskly with little wasted time. Her classroom was set up so that there were clear traffic lanes that allowed students to move from activity to activity easily and with little difficulty. She would undoubtedly score at the top of any measurement of instruction that valued cost-effective teaching (e.g., Brophy & Alleman, 1991). And her students appeared to have great respect and admiration for her as a teacher and a person.

Penny was also well-liked by the students. Her approach, however, appeared to be based on a "fluid time consciousness" that provided opportunities for extended human contact and created an environment of comfort and ease. Lessons stretched out beyond their scheduled bounds and at times occupied the time allotted for another subject area; librarians were occasionally kept waiting while Penny stretched a lesson so that students could complete it. Her approach was hardly unique to Native Americans; teachers who embrace process-oriented approaches to teaching and learning are likely to hold a fluid time consciousness, regardless of race or cultural background. Many of the best-known proponents of teaching approaches that are not beholden to the clock (e.g., Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984) are middle-class whites. And, as Belgarde (1992) has shown, Native American identity exists along a continuum from efforts to fully assimilate with middle class culture to efforts to maintain a strong cultural and tribal identity. My reference to Krueger's account of time should not suggest stereotypical attitudes about Native American approaches to time, but should rather help explain Penny's own cultural account of her difficulties with Harding's structure. I next illustrate those difficulties with vignettes from her teaching.

Illustrations of Conflict in Practice

The first example comes from early in the semester when both Rona and Penny were sharing the teaching responsibilities; as the semester

wore on, Penny increasingly taught the class. The example occurred during a regular activity in Rona's class, the reading of a children's literature book to the class. The general procedure was for the teacher to gather the students before her on the floor at the front of the room and read to them a book from Rona's children's literature collection. This activity required one of the most remarkable physical feats of teaching first grade: The teacher had to be able to simultaneously sit facing the students and maintain eye contact with them, hold the book open to the students so that they could see the pictures and text, smile constantly, read the story (which not only faced away from the teacher but was off to her side, requiring her to read the text by peering at it from the side and over the top), and conduct a discussion of the characters and their actions. Rona was a marvel in her ability to manage these seemingly impossible logistics effortlessly and all at once.

On the day I observed Rona reading, the story was a book in the series about Arthur the aardvark, a nebbish of a young fellow who gets into all manner of dilemmas that he and his friends must resolve: housebreaking a new dog, putting on a school play, and so on. Rona's approach was to read a page or so of the story and then ask a set of questions: How does Arthur feel? What does "triple" mean? If you've read a lot of other Arthur books, how would you describe Arthur's sister D.W.? What I immediately noticed about Rona's approach was that after an answer or two to a question, she would move along and read the next page, even if several children were still waving their hands to be called on. Furthermore, the lesson ended at precisely the moment it was scheduled to end. I was observing the class from her desk where her planning book indicated the time parameters of the lesson; as the second hand of the classroom clock swept toward the twelve, she ended the reading and moved the students to the next lesson seamlessly. The pace for reading and discussing the story were thus determined by the schedule, and the lesson fit neatly within the demands of offering the whole of the first grade curriculum.

Penny's reading went to a different beat. She lacked Rona's experience at simultaneously reading a book sideways and looking ahead at children, and so the reading itself lacked Rona's polish, as would be expected of a novice. The book Penny read was about Johnny Appleseed and his travails as a pioneer (a topic that might have rankled Penny given her views on Thanksgiving, though I did not think to ask her about it later). My observational notes of the story time reading include the following:

> Penny stops, asks why a character wanted to have a tree-chopping contest. Lots of hands up, lots of answers. After hearing each answer she says, Those are all good ideas, let's read ahead and find out. Occasional questions from Penny—So what did he do? So why would the pioneers want to buy the trees? So they'll have shade, to have trees to pick apples,

say the kids. What do you think they mean when they say they "exagger-
ate" a little bit? Penny tried to get them to see the traits of a tall tale: What
do you think Johnny's doing here (showing picture)? Do you think that
really happened? Meanwhile, eye on the clock, Rona got up at 1:12 and
began preparing for the next lesson scheduled for 1:15, putting a paper
cup at each student's desk. Penny continued with the reading and
questioning. Story finished. Question: So thinking back on the story, what
were some of the changes Johnnie and his family went through? His mom
got divorced, said one girl. No, not quite. His father died, said another. He
almost got bitten by a tiger, said another. Do you think that was real?
asked Penny. No, said kids. He planted apple trees.

Two traits distinguished Penny's reading and Rona's, aside from
Rona's more refined logistical skill. One was that, no matter how many
children raised their hands in response to a question, Penny would call on
every one, at times as many as ten of the eighteen students for a single
question, no matter what the responses. In contrast, Rona would move
along with the reading after getting an answer or two. The second
distinguishing trait was that, at a time when the reading was scheduled to
end, Penny opened up a new line of questioning designed to get students
to think about the story as a whole, again entertaining every student
whose hand was raised. The lesson ran over the scheduled time, even with
Rona observing the class and helping to set up the next scheduled lesson
as time expired. Penny's next lesson had to be truncated because she had
allowed the reading to exceed its allotted time.

Later, when asked how she thought the lesson had gone, Penny said
that in spite of the fact that the lesson had run over, "It was too rushed.
There wasn't enough time and continuity from one aspect of the lesson to
another aspect. I don't think you can just do something like tall tales at 15
minutes here and 15 minutes there over a week at a time and come out
with a true understanding or grasp of what the concept was. . . . It is just
real hard for me to kind of whip through these topics." This theme recurred
in our discussions: that the brisk pacing resulted in lessons that lacked
continuity, a problem that Penny was able to critique through the technical
language afforded by her constructivist training. In Penny's view the
highly structured curriculum at Harding discouraged both time for explo-
ration and opportunities for seizing teachable moments. In discussing the
way in which spelling lessons were prescribed by a central curriculum, she
said, "Yeah, this is what I've been finding out, that the spelling words are
pre-ordained by the high priestess of spelling. So I mean, there's like, I just
learned about the spelling words, it doesn't matter if it's related to
anything you're doing, it's just planned out. A lot of things are just planned
out, like you do short O's this week, that's what you do." She preferred
instead to teach more opportunistically and spontaneously in response to
needs and interests that came up through more extended lessons.

A further consequence of the emphasis on cost-effectiveness was the way the curriculum required assessment of each piece of student work. This emphasis precluded the possibility that some learning activities might have the potential for promoting intrinsic rewards in school work. Following my observation of a lesson in which students wrote story books about pumpkins they had drawn, I asked what the students had learned about writing through the assignment. Penny replied,

> Um—Well I don't know if—I think the whole point of that was just to have fun and that writing can be fun and it can be fun to share what you artistically made with the pumpkin, and share the story that you wrote. I mean that everything has to be for an exact purpose that can be assessed as for okay, they learned about consonant blends during this writing thing. I mean, if all writers wrote to produce something you know, for an editor, would Steinbeck have been published? I don't think so. You can't always look at everything as having to have an exact outcome. My soapbox for today.

She felt that the curriculum in general mitigated against students' realization that literacy activities can be fulfilling. In a later interview she spoke of how the state-mandated learning outcomes provided a super-structure congenial to Harding's emphasis on covering a set of skills according to an established schedule: "Yeah, but most of the time you don't see *have students enjoying what they're doing* as an objective. I don't think it's one of the [state-mandated] skills. Yeah, *students will enjoy . . .*" Penny consistently expressed a concern that the tight scheduling worked against her efforts to work in what she felt were productive ways with her students.

A final example of how their different conceptions of time affected their views of teaching comes from Penny's remarks following her efforts to have students elaborate on a worksheet assignment where they were required to make distinctions between two objects within the same class (e.g., big and small balls), a task that could be accomplished fairly quickly. Penny tried to get the students to discuss what was different about the objects so that the worksheet could serve as the basis for a discussion about the concepts behind the worksheet questions; Rona felt instead that doing the worksheet was sufficient because there were other things to cover that day. Following the activity, I asked Penny how the lesson had gone:

Q: Were those lessons that your cooperating teacher designed herself or did you have any role in it?

Penny: Some I do, but that's been kind of nipped in the bud because I get kind of carried away with doing things and I think it makes her feel uncomfortable. Because I would do like the

Q: workbook and it was comparisons and I started bringing kids up: "Okay, let's make comparisons this way." And then she came up and said, "No, you are supposed to draw the lines big or red." And—it just kills me. So I think it's just all—

Q: What was the difference between what you wanted to do and what you were advised to do?

Penny: What I wanted to do was make it real to the students so that they can go: "Okay. Yea, I can see the difference here" or "I can see."

Q: Could you give me an example of the difference between what and what? What was the content of these?

Penny: The worksheet was "big" and "not big," "red" and "not red" and it had a big red ball and a small red ball, a red dog and a not red dog, a black and white dog. And they were just supposed to take the word and make a line through the word red and to the balls.

Q: Okay. And the teacher just wanted them to do that and move on?

Penny: Right.

Q: And what were you trying to do?

Penny: Bring up kids, pairs of kids, and they would guess—well, they would say, "What do you see that's the same?" And they would say, "Oh, they are both wearing shorts, or that they are wearing tennis shoes." Or what's different? Well, one has blonde hair, one has brown hair; one's wearing shorts, one's wearing a dress.

Q: And they would do that in front of the class?

Penny: Um huh. Yeah. We did it for a little bit but then [Rona] came up and said, "No. Wrap it up."

My intention here is not to glorify Penny's approach at the expense of Rona's. Rona had a much broader perspective on teaching in general and saw each lesson not only in relation to others she needed to cover but also in terms of the role of her class in relation to the rest of Harding Elementary. Penny's interests were more local, as would be expected of a student teacher. I should also note that my attention in this study was on Penny rather than Rona, and so her perspective predominates in the transcripts. My intention is simply to point out that the two viewed the purpose of the lessons in dramatically different ways, and that these different purposes were shaped by different conceptions of time, which in turn reflected different world views.

I have tried to tie these different world views to their respective cultures. Assuming that culture is a function of engaging in social pract-

ices through the use of tools (Cole, 1996), we see here an illustration of how the culture of Harding Elementary relied on particular social practices, promoted by the use of a variety of tools. Penny offered the insight that the students, even in first grade, had been conditioned to regard school as a place where their thinking and learning processes were of secondary importance to the efficient functioning of the school system:

> *Q:* From what you just told me, what's difficult for the children is not what's cognitively challenging in the material or the assignments, but almost a social fit with the pacing or—
>
> *Penny:* No, no, see, they're really good at that. It's unpacing them and unstructuring them is what's hard.
>
> *Q:* Because of the structure that Rona has established earlier in the year?
>
> *Penny:* Because this is first grade, they haven't been socialized. Most of them have been to kindergarten, transition at Harding, so this is in actuality, for students this is their third year there, so I mean, you've got all this structure going on for three years, which is, gee, half their lives, so to then say what's unstructured, they're kinda like "what?"

Penny's reference to "transition" was to the school district's policy of allowing students to delay entry into first grade by attending a year of school between kindergarten and first grade. The fact that many students had already been socialized for half of their lives into the traditional structure of Harding Elementary made it difficult for her to operate with a different pace, one that was less cost-effective but allowed for more exploration of ideas and personal construction of knowledge. Based on my observations of the fourth-grade class in the same school, I would say that the subordination of learning processes to lesson scheduling was well-established in students' enculturation to school, thus making it increasingly difficult for a teacher like Penny to integrate curriculum and emphasize the process of learning. Penny provides a good illustration of how a teacher might resist institutional values and eschew the tools designed to shape development (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). I next consider the consequences for English educators of the kinds of conflict I have described.

How Can Teacher Education Have an Impact?

I do not intend for this contrast to be taken as a criticism of Rona or those like her whose teaching rates high on cost-effective measures, for I admire her personally and as a teacher; I would like for her to teach my

own children. Rather, I see her as illustrating good cost-effective teaching, particularly when viewed in relation to the more fluid time consciousness practiced by Penny.

Although I have focused on elementary school teachers in this paper, the misalignment I witnessed is typical of a particular tension I have seen recurrently during my 23 years of experience teaching in three public high schools and three preservice English education programs (including the one I attended as a student and ultimately supervised student teachers in). The same story gets played out anew each year; the anecdote with which I opened this paper is one I could tell every year. If my study of English education methods classes (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995) is at all accurate, the overwhelming majority of preservice English teachers in the United States learn teaching methods in their universities that are constructivist, student-centered, process-oriented, fluid-time, progressive, and therefore at odds with the highly predictable, structured, content-driven, form-oriented values that predominate in most schools (see, e.g., Sizer, 1984).

While this case study has identified and illustrated this conflict, it offers no simple solutions for what to do about it. I think that most people enter teacher education with the same idealism expressed by the student teacher with whom I opened this paper: Their goal is to participate in the transformation of schooling by training the next generation of teachers to think and teach so that students develop lifelong dispositions to lead happy, thoughtful, and productive lives, with a special affinity for the role of language, literature, and writing in leading a joyful life. I'm concerned that at the end of my career as a teacher educator, however, I'll see no more changes in schooling as a result of my work in universities than I was able to effect during my tenure in the classroom. What needs to happen in order for schools to view students and teachers as knowledge producers who need time to explore, discuss, draft, and revise their ideas as part of their process of learning?

There are several well-known obstacles to developing such environments. One is the prevailing culture of schools that views knowledge as fixed rather than constructed and therefore structures the school day so that knowledge can be efficiently delivered rather than more thoughtfully and carefully constructed. Surrounding these schools are larger policy contexts that share the same assumptions, using standardized tests as measures of schools' quality. Even within the university, most fields emphasize the mastery of the content of a discipline rather than students' development of personal knowledge, as Marshall and Smith (1997) showed in their study of a college English department. On the whole, then, professional pedagogues, who are often dismissed as being among the least rigorous scholars in the academy (e.g., Kramer, 1991), are among

the few who view teaching and learning from a sociolinguistic perspective that eschews the transmission view of communication in favor of a constructivist approach (e.g., Hymes, 1974).

What, then, to do? English educators could simply continue training teachers in constructivist methods, with the hope that some percentage of preservice teachers will either be predisposed to embrace them, as Penny did, or experience conceptual change, as some students described by Agee (1998) did, during university course work. We can then further hope that these students will student teach and find jobs in schools that provide environments that support their approaches to teaching, as I was able to find in two of the high schools in which I taught. If observational studies of schools are on target, however, such environments are uncommon (Goodlad, 1984). Basing expectations for wholesale change on successful teaching in university programs, then, seems wishful at best.

A second approach would be to seek alignment between the values of the preservice program and the values of schools and teachers with whom student teachers are placed as a way to help teachers implement constructivist practices under knowledgeable and supportive guidance. My experiences in trying this over the last nine years, however, shows the effort to be erratic in its success due to the politics of placement. In order to gain access to some schools, we have needed to accept the cooperating teachers whom those schools provide for us. While some have been well-aligned with our view of teaching, others have not, with some actively undermining the students' confidence in the approaches we have advocated. Often university programs produce large numbers of student teachers each year and cannot return repeatedly to the same mentors year after year. Often universities are located in college towns where the choices for student teaching placements are not abundant. Seeking alignment, then, while good in theory, is often not available in practice and is thus an unreliable plan for transforming the profession.

The project of which this case study is a part focuses on the role of settings in the development of teachers' conceptions about teaching (Grossman et al., 1999). I have already described the ways in which most educational settings, including university content area courses and K-12 schools, encourage and support instruction that focuses on the subject rather than the learner, on form rather than process, on facts rather than inquiry. Conventional educational settings, then, appear to discourage rather than encourage the use of conceptual and pedagogical tools based on constructivist principles. One way to help sustain other approaches to teaching, then, would be to create alternative settings that support unconventional ways of teaching. National organizations such as NCTE and their state affiliates provide umbrella structures for teachers to sustain such practices, though typically provide only occasional meetings for

members to gather. I will next look at some more immediate and constant settings through which teachers could support one another's efforts to teach in ways commensurate with the architectural adage that less is more.

As part of their preservice education, students can join a local student affiliate of NCTE to help develop both a relationship with the national and state organizations and also provide them with experience in active leadership as teachers and decision-makers. Such settings are convenient and, while requiring time and attention, fit into the Council's pre-existing structure. As such, they do not require the reinventing of the wheel for university faculty.

A related pre-existing structure is a local site of the National Writing Project. The NWP is not always viable for early-career teachers, given the preference for summer institute enrollment to experienced teachers. Initiatives such as Project S.T.A.R.T. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), however, seek to link the Philadelphia Writing Project with local preservice programs that emphasize action research, thus establishing a relationship at the beginning of teachers' careers that they can maintain throughout their teaching. Action research collaboratives have been shown to have beneficial effects not only on what teachers learn about research but on their development of a sense of community as innovative teachers (O'Donnell-Allen, 1999). Links to a variety of such collaboratives are available at http://www.ncte.org/rte/links4.html.

Although it requires more effort, university faculty can develop independent inservice programs that cater more fittingly to local circumstances. Graham, Hudson-Ross, and McWhorter (1997) describe how a subset of faculty within a large university program set up a network of teachers from a variety of local schools. The network provides a forum for professional development for the teachers; enables the university faculty to stay closely in touch with their concerns, priorities, needs, and interests; gives the teachers a role in the development of the teacher education program; helps sustain mutually respectful and collegial relationships between schools and university; and, with the teachers serving as cooperating teachers for the program's preservice teachers, provides reasonably good alignment between campus and school for these faculty members' student teachers.

A different way to maintain steady contact with other teachers is through electronic discussions. Listserves are increasingly accessible to teachers and can serve either very general levels of discussion (e.g., NCTE-talk) or highly specialized discussions (e.g., the GLESOL-L network for gay, lesbian, bisexual teachers of speakers of other languages). While listserves can be onerous for teachers with high demands at work, they can also provide communities of practice when such support is not

available in their schools. For extensive listings of such networks, see http://www.ncte.org/rte/links5.html#E-mail Discussion Groups.

My purpose in suggesting these alternatives is to emphasize the importance of creating settings that support teachers who wish to teach in ways that their school structures discourage. Creating these settings seems particularly important given the ways in which larger policy settings are influencing instructional practice, such as California Bill 1086's mandating of particular approaches to teaching reading (http://165.74.253.12/webdev/index.html/htdocs/cilbranch/AB1086/criteria.html). My interviews and observations with Penny and the other students from her program illustrate how effectively the setting of the university program enabled them to articulate and put into practice constructivist principles. Other studies I have cited have shown how equally effective school settings can be at discouraging those practices over time as their careers progress. The encouragement and development of alternative settings for teachers beginning their careers, then, appears to be one action that university faculty can take to provide the kind of community and support that can help teachers sustain their beliefs in the face of resistance.

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