

'Currere' to the rescue? Teachers as 'amateur intellectuals' in a knowledge society

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Introduction

Teaching today is increasingly complex work where teachers find themselves caught in a triangle of interests and imperatives. This triangle requires teachers to be: (a) catalysts of the promises of opportunity and prosperity of the knowledge society; (b) counterpoints to the threats posed by the knowledge society to community, security, and the public good; and (c) casualties of the standardization imposed by the imperatives of the knowledge society (Hargreaves, 2003). How must teachers proceed with their work as educators within the professional paradox and conditions of fragmentation created by the knowledge society? We argue in this paper that functioning in less fragmentary ways within this paradox would require teachers to transform themselves into what Edward Said (1996) calls 'amateur intellectuals' who are skeptical of mainstream political and social trends and who raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professional activity. We posit Pinar's (1974, 1976) autobiographical method of *currere* as a beginning point for the transformation of teachers

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into amateur intellectuals.

The paradox of teaching in a knowledge society

“We are living in a defining moment of educational history when the world in which teachers do their work is changing profoundly....” So writes Andy Hargreaves (2003) in *Teaching in a knowledge society*, his most cogent critique, to date, of the current wave of over-regulation and standardization in education, which neoliberal discourses defend as increasing equity and fairness while holding all students to the same high standards. As Hargreaves notes, we (post-industrial societies in the West) are living in knowledge economies that are driven by ingenuity, creativity, inventiveness, and the capacity to cope with rapid change. Schools in knowledge societies have to cultivate these qualities in young people for their nations to survive and stay competitive. But Hargreaves also observes that while knowledge economies stimulate growth and prosperity they primarily serve the private good, and, in their relentless competitiveness and pursuit of profit and self-interest, they fragment the social order and widen the wealth gap. Particularly disconcerting for public education, knowledge economies impose “soul-less standardization” that leaves some students behind by eroding curricula and pedagogies that build on the experience, language and cultural identity of these students, decreasing teachers’ autonomy of judgment, undermining moral vision and social commitment in schools, and derailing the very creativity, ingenuity, and flexibility that schools are supposed to cultivate. The paradox of teaching in a knowledge society is that while schools and teachers are expected to create the human skills and capacities that enable knowledge economies to survive and succeed, they are also expected to teach the compassion, sense of community, and emotional sympathy that mitigate and counteract the immense problems that knowledge economies create (Hargreaves, 2003). The predominantly market-oriented forms of life and practice at the heart of knowledge economies have, therefore, fragmented the work of teachers as never before.

How must teachers proceed with their responsibility as educators within this professional paradox and conditions of fragmentation? In this paper, we argue that functioning in less fragmentary ways within this paradox would require teachers to become what Edward Said (1996),

in *Representations of the intellectual*, calls "amateur" intellectuals. By this Said means intellectuals who remain skeptical of mainstream political and social trends, who are critical of the institutions which employ them, and who cultivate a position of exile that maintains an intellectual skepticism towards their own work, especially their apparent successes. Said (1996) writes:

The intellectual today ought to be an amateur who considers that to be a thinking and concerned member of society one is entitled to raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professional activity...The intellectual's spirit as an amateur can enter and transform the merely professional routine most of us go through into something more lively and radical; instead of doing what one is supposed to do, one can ask why one does it, who benefits from it, and how can it reconnect with a personal project and original thought (pp. 82-83).

Said's representation of the intellectual as "amateur" suggests that teachers, as private and public intellectuals in a complex and fast-changing knowledge society, must learn to teach in ways they were not taught, commit to continuous learning and reflection, and work and learn both alone and in professional teams where they can raise moral questions about practice and access knowledge from the collective intelligence of the team. Teaching in the larger sense would have to be considered in terms of *phronesis* which Paul Ricoeur (1992), in reference to a vocation or profession, describes as living and acting ethically or, as Hans Smits (in Lund et al., 2006, p. 2) recently put it, "acting well in terms of some sense of overall good". Such an orientation to professional practice requires skepticism toward all of one's educational experience which, as Elliot Eisner (1995) reminds us, is a product of both the features of the world and the biography of the individual: "Our experience is influenced by our past as it interacts with our present" (p. 26). Slavoj Zizek (2005) has recently noted that, in the specific social conditions of commodity exchange and the global market economy, "the modern notion of the profession implies that I experience myself as an individual who is not directly 'born into' his social role. What I will

become depends on the interplay between contingent social circumstances and my free choice..." (pp. 129–130).

Thus teachers have the free choice to begin the analysis and the reflection required to reverse the neoliberal imperatives at the heart of knowledge economies and transform themselves into amateur intellectuals capable of developing conceptions of education that run counter to the emphasis on utilitarian aims which would have us evaluate schools and nations in terms of the quality of the nation's future workforce (McDonough & Feinberg, 2003).

We posit William Pinar's (1974, 1976) autobiographical/biographical method of *currere* as a beginning point for the transformation of teachers into amateur intellectuals. The method of *currere* foregrounds the relationship between narrative (life history) and practice and provides opportunities to theorize particular moments in one's educational history, to dialogue with these moments, and examine possibilities for change.

The method of *currere*

"Currere is a reflexive cycle in which thought bends back upon itself and thus recovers its volition".

(Madeleine R.
Grumet, 1976b, pp.130-131)

"Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards".

(Soren Kierkegaard, cited in
Habermas, 2003, p. 4)

Formulated in the 1970s by William Pinar and other curriculum scholars as the Latin infinitive of "curriculum"—meaning 'to run the course'—the concept of *currere* refers to an existential experience of institutional structures (Pinar, 1974b). The method of *currere* is devised to disclose and examine such experience "so that we may see more of it and see more clearly. With such seeing can come deepened understanding of the running and with this can come deepened agency" (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. vii). Pinar describes the method of *currere* as

autobiographical/biographical, consisting of four steps or moments depicting both temporal and reflective movements in the study of educational experience: the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetical (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 520).

In the regressive moment one's lived experience becomes the data source. To generate data, one utilizes the psychoanalytic technique of free-association "to recall the past, and enlarge, and thereby transform one's memory". Regression requires one to return to the past, "to recapture it as it was and as it hovers over the present" (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 520). In the progressive moment one looks toward what is not yet present, what is not yet the case, and imagines possible futures. The analytical moment involves a kind of phenomenological bracketing where one distances oneself from the past and asks: "How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both?" (p. 520). The synthetical moment brings it all together as one re-enters the lived present and interrogates its meaning.

Grumet (1981) describes *currere* as an attempt "to reveal the ways that histories (both collective and individual) and hope suffuse our moments, and to study them through telling our stories of educational experience" (p. 118). *Currere* returns educational experience to the person who lived it, so that the experience can be examined for latent and manifest meaning and the political implications of such reflection and interpretation. "In doing so, *currere* discloses new structures in the process of naming old ones" (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 521).

As this paper will show, narrative (Bruner, 1992; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), voice (Miller, 1990a; Britzman, 1986), collaborative dialogue (Gitlin, 1990; Belenky et al., 1986), connectivity of public and private (Grumet, 1988b), collaborative autobiography (Butt, 1990), and personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1987a) have all emerged as important concepts in the effort to understand *currere* as autobiographical and biographical text. This groundbreaking work allows educators and students of curriculum "to sketch the relations among school knowledge, life-history, and intellectual development in ways that might function self-transformatively" (Pinar et al., 1995, 515). Understanding and acting upon the past to influence the future affords growth and transformation for the intellectual.

The transformative potential of autobiography/biography

In writing on the meaning of meaning, Jerome Bruner (1992) makes a distinction between two ways of knowing: narrative knowing and paradigmatic knowing. Narrative knowing occurs through reflection on personal experience through story-telling while paradigmatic knowledge is created through scientific inquiry. Narratives (e.g., life-histories) have become important sources teachers might use to improve their own teaching (Eisner, 1995). The freedom from traditional scientific methods and the return to narrative knowing allows an examination of the past but also the opportunity to influence the future. Jean-Paul Sartre (1963) comments, "the most rudimentary behavior must be determined both in relation to the real and present factors which condition it and in relation to a certain object, still to come" (p. 91). This examination of events in self-causes is what Alfred Schultz (1967), in his writings on social theory, has described as strangeness and familiarity. Schulz expands further and writes, "Strangeness and familiarity are not limited to the social field but are general categories of our interpretation of the world". (p.) Once we encounter something in experience that we did not know before, we begin a process of inquiry. Trying to integrate our inquiry with the meanings we have created over time, we transform our experience into an additional element of what we know. Doing so, "we have enlarged and adjusted our stock of experience" (Schultz, 1967, p.105).

Some theorists have suggested that individuals do not have the capacity to understand their life experiences critically. Mills (1981) disagrees and argues that the individual has the capacity to understand critically his/her life experiences and present dilemmas by situating herself/himself within history. By creating these dilemmas the individual is able to create situations in the past and in the future. These situations can then be contemplated with a critical understanding. Following Mills' thoughts, Deborah Britzman (1986) contends that individuals do have the capacity to participate in shaping and responding to the social forces that have directly influenced and continue to influence their lives. By uncovering biographies there can be an empowerment and a movement away from cultural authority and cultural reproduction. However, just uncovering biographies and examining them with critical understanding is not enough unless they prove to be unsatisfactory. The only way to

prove the beliefs inherent in biographies to be unsatisfactory is if "they are challenged and one is unable to assimilate them into existing conceptions" (Bullough, 1997, p.78; see also Pajares, 1992). This challenging of beliefs is what John Dewey (1938) discussed in *Education and Experience*. In that work, Dewey wrote about experience and its relationship to learning and teaching: "Every experience affects for better or worse the attitudes which help decide the quality of further experiences" (p. 38). Dewey believed that teachers must be aware of the "possibilities inherent in ordinary experience" (p. 89), that the "business of the educator is to see in what direction an experience is heading" (p. 38). It is impossible to see the direction of experience without reflecting on what the teacher brings to the experience from their past. To be able to see the direction an experience is heading the educator must understand his/her own history.

To understand the past is only one part. What the challenging of the past can also create is what Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) have called a transformative intellectual who envisions what is possible rather than merely accepting what is probable. When teachers examine their own histories and those "connections to the past which in part define who they are and how they mediate and function in the world" (p.160) they can unravel existing arrangements in public education and reconceptualize public education as more than the soul-less standardization that has alienated students, killed creativity and inspiration, and provoked tidal waves of resignation and early retirement among educators. But the examination of one's history can become an exercise in what many have called self-psychoanalysis where transformation of self and world does not take place. Educators, therefore, need to do more than just examine their own pasts. Reminiscent of Said (1996), they need to cultivate a position of exile from those pasts and the practices they have engendered and imagine a possible and different future. In this sense, Kierkegaard's statement (cited in Habermas, 2003) that individuals need to "detach from environment, become aware of individuality, become aware of actions and become responsible for them, then enter into a commitment with others" (p. 6) warrants thought. This detachment from environment is only possible if one understands the environment one is in. Much like a

fish only comprehends water when they are removed from it, a person can only understand their environment when they are detached as well. However, unlike the fish which is physically removed from their environment by another species, a human being is unlikely to be removed from their environment unless they choose to be removed. Furthermore, in the knowledge society in which educators function today, there are elements that are attempting to keep consciousness closed for economic gain. Capitalist imperatives suggest that the knowledge society depends on requiring individuals not to think about consequences, alternative futures or the public good.

When an individual goes through the process of detachment, a realization occurs of the impact of one's actions on others' lives. This realization has the effect of awaking one from a dream/nightmare where one gains insight into the harm caused to others, self, the immediate environment, and the world. This awaking allows possible growth to occur, but it is costly to the individual. Kegan writes that growth "involves the leaving behind of an old way of being in the world. Often it involves, at least for a time, leaving behind others who have been identified with that being" (cited in Bullough, 1997, p. 75) and, often, a misunderstanding by those others of why the individual is detaching. This growth often brings forward what Kegan describes as "disequilibrium" which challenges the self and forces the individual to regain equilibrium by reconciling the part of the self that has been made exposed. Kegan contends that not growing is costlier still, as a temporary balance may become a permanent one as current institutions sustain and support a comfortable historical relationship. This leaves talent undeveloped, as it is too simplistic to challenge abilities.

A possible method to bring about and resolve the disequilibrium that Kierkegaard and Kegan discuss is collaborative dialogue. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Traule (1986) link the notions of experience, collaborative dialogue, and reflection:

In order for reflection to occur, the oral and written forms of language must pass back and forth between persons who both speak and listen or read and write—sharing, expanding, and reflecting on each other's experiences. Such interchanges lead to ways of knowing that enable individuals to enter into the social and intellectual life of

their community. Without them, individuals remain isolated from others; and without the tools for representing their experiences, people also remain isolated from self (Belenky et al., p. 26).

In essence, one cannot remain detached from the environment in which one examines oneself without entering into collaborative dialogue with others. This collaborative dialogue is predicated on what Noddings (1991) has described as 'stories'. Her statement that "Stories have the power to direct and change our lives"(p. 157) becomes powerful once one comes to an understanding that our stories need to be understood. The way that our stories begin to be understood is through conversation with others. In reality then, one must enter in and out of one's environment, gathering data and reflecting. As educators we need to understand that stories (narratives) are in essence what our art is about.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argue that, from the perspective of schooling, a teaching act is a "narrative in action", that is, an "expression of biography and history...in a particular situation" (p.184). In actuality our knowledge as educators comes from the reality in which we exist, sharing our narratives with students and receiving theirs back. Educators must have the ability to enter into narratives and reflection to transform the future. However, this collaborative dialogue, to be effective, must be equal between the individuals entering it and must be seen as relevant. Gitlin (1990) argues that a precondition for dialogue is that "all participants see the discourse as important and have a say in determining its course" (p. 447). Gitlin (1990) maintains that dialogue should "make prejudgments apparent" so that their critical testing can empower the participants to "challenge taken-for-granted notions that influence the way they see the world and judge their practice" (p. 448).

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that becoming a transformative, amateur intellectual is not an easy task to understand much less implement. One must be able to move out of oneself, become conscious of reality and a possible future, move back into reality and share narrative, and move back out once more to examine and reflect on self and narrative. As Kegan (cited in Bullough, 1997) noted, this is extremely costly to the self, to the point where one begins to question if one has the ability or desire to understand, much less take on this task of

becoming an amateur, transformative intellectual. However, as educators we have a responsibility to take on this challenge in order to be able to embrace and practice teaching as *phronesis* within the professional paradox that knowledge economies have created for us. In the next part of this paper we examine more specifically the role of *currere* in the transformation of teachers into amateur intellectuals.

On becoming amateur transformative intellectuals: *Curere* to the rescue?

Maxine Greene (2001) argues that when teachers are given the opportunity to articulate, or to give some “kind of shape to their lived experience, all kinds of questions may arise. Gaps appear in the narrative; awarenesses of lacks and deficiencies become visible; bright moments and epiphanies highlight the dark times, the fears, the felt failures” (p. 83). The key phrase in the above statement is ‘given the opportunity’. Opportunity in this context is not just provided to educators. Educators need to seek out those opportunities to expand their narrative, to seek those epiphanies, and to ultimately transform themselves into phronetic professionals serving the interest of the public good. At core, teachers need to become learners of themselves and start to ask questions of themselves—“questions that demand answers if restlessness or hunger or unhappiness is to be allayed” (Greene, 2001, p. 83). This seeking out of questions only will occur when teachers move out of the conception of teaching only as rules, processes, and procedures to be employed toward the achievement of utilitarian goals. Important as these might be, such an instrumental and technical conception of teaching fragments the unity of practice as an overarching orientation to *phronesis*. Many teachers, as casualties of the knowledge society, have come to see teaching as a sink-or-swim world where only the immediate moments are of concern. Reaction, not pro-action, has become the norm and the accepted way of doing things in the school. Teachers scramble to acquire standardized “scientifically proven” instructional strategies that can be applied to classroom situations that have already been preordained by others, without contemplating the effects upon the students as distinctive cultural and emotional beings. The “ignoring of the reasons for and consequences of what appears to work” (Britzman, 1986, p. 225) leads to a closing of the dialogue of the

mind for the self, and a closing of dialogue with and about others. Eisner argues that even more is lost through this lack of questioning. He writes, "getting in touch is itself an act of discrimination, a finely-grained, sensitively nuanced selective process in which the mind is fully engaged" (cited in Cole and Knowles, 2000, p. 28). By not fully engaging the mind and seeking out the questions that need to be answered we fail to understand who we are as individuals and as teachers; we fail to understand what is controlling what we do and to what effect; we remain fragmented, shadows of what we could be.

Given the hope of a new existence, a chance to be whole once again, how do educators begin the transformation into amateur intellectuals? As explicated above, educators need to be willing to begin self-examination through the process of "telling and living, re-telling and reliving the meanings and significances of our lives to begin to help us understand ourselves, how we came to be who we are, and where we are going" (Clandinin & Connelly, cited in Cole & Knowles, p. 28). Educators need to attend to more than the immediate present, but must engage in what Britzman (1986) calls the "hidden work" of negotiating the past and future demands (p. 221). Such negotiation will lead to disequilibrium which will cause discomfort but "disequilibrium is a necessary condition for transformation" (p. 230). The opening up of ourselves and our professional practice to examination will proverbially shine light into many of the spaces that perhaps educators are uncomfortable to acknowledge need inspection. But this process need not be threatening, as has been culturally generated through our pasts. This fear must be examined for what it is—a method to stop transformation from occurring. Instead of being trapped by the old metaphors that generate fear and solitude there is the possibility that we can envision new metaphors that allow us to "think of old situations in new ways" (McWilliams, 1995, p. 40). The results may be new lines of action and new teaching behaviors coming from new ways of thinking about problems. This can become a liberation that can bring about solidarity and transformation instead of solitude and rut.

When teachers are willing to begin the process of transformation that *currere* allows, many positives can occur. First the method of *currere* allows educators to develop a collaborative autobiography. Richard Butt,

in his research, strives to understand biography and autobiography as “educational praxis” (cited in Pinar et al., 1995, p. 556). Educational praxis ties into the idea of a transformative intellectual in that there is a movement towards not only writing autobiographical, reflexive narratives but also sharing such narratives with others. The idea is to create narratives from which one can learn about teaching but not in the sense of definitive lessons. As Stenberg (2005) writes, reflexive narratives are not intended to offer final or complete renderings of the self as a subject. Instead, “they provide opportunities to theorize a particular moment, dialogue with it, and examine possibilities for change” (p. 76). Collaborative autobiography allows teachers to understand their lives via a community that values self-understanding, but acts towards a future that is collective. Butt’s notion of praxis fulfills Pinar’s idea of ‘the regressive’ (data collected about the past through reflection and free association) and ‘the progressive’ (looking forward to what may be a possible future). With collective autobiography, however, it must be understood that the individual involved in the collective must be able to step away and examine the situation and its meaning (Pinar’s ‘analytical’ and ‘synthetical’ moments). This is also in fulfillment of the ideas put forward by Kierkegaard and Kegan that educators need to detach to be able to examine, but must then enter into the collective to begin the process of acting on their environment with an idea of a possible future. Some theorists have criticized the idea of collective biography as entailing the possibility for risk to the individuals involved in the process (for example, the risk of self exposure). However, as educators we need to remember Kegan’s warning that not growing is costlier still.

Second, beyond the collective, *currere* provides teachers with the capacity to gain voice, as individuals, within or even against the system. Voice, according to Britzman, “is meaning that resides within the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community....The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all a part of this process” (cited in Connelly and Cladinin, 1990, p. 4). By examining why/how they are not individuals in the system, but are assumed to be broad categories of technicians meant to implement others’ prescribed changes, teachers can find their voice. This voice can then be used to implement transformative

change in response to individual student needs. When educators understand their own voice, they can help students find their voice. It cannot be assumed that teachers will be just granted voice. The process of self-examination that generates voice is a time consuming task that may not be easily supported or facilitated by the current system of bureaucratization and standardization. Often educators, in moving to gain voice, will encounter others who may attempt to limit their voice. This act of limiting voice may not even be done consciously by those who are conducting the action. They may only be involved in replicating, subconsciously, the system of which they have been a part. However, an educator who has been awakened through an examination of their own narrative has a profound opportunity to make a difference. Even if they are the one lone voice crying out in the wilderness, they are still a voice.

Third, *currere* has the potential to bring educators to the understanding that they possess personal practical knowledge which guides their everyday work as educators. This personal practical knowledge is conceived of as "that combination of theoretical and practical knowledge born of lived experience" (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 557). Through critical examination and understanding of that knowledge, which has guiding power in teachers' lives and work, teachers can feel empowered to make transformative change. In a knowledge society, teachers' experiential knowledge, along with research evidence that informs practice, can contribute significantly to improve schools. No longer will teachers be at the bottom of the education hierarchy with university researchers, government departments of curriculum writers, and social and economic trend-setters all sending down edicts to be digested and implemented by teachers. Teachers become more than the tools of others, and now are able to understand the effect of their actions in relation to the world around them. They begin to understand that they have power within the system to transform rather than simply adjusting. To gain this power, however, there needs to be an awareness of how the system has shaped their lives and their consciousness. The only way to gain this understanding is through an examination of the narratives that are influencing their actions consciously and subconsciously.

Lastly, *currere* provides a connection of the public and private spaces of teachers that Madeleine Grumet (1988b) discusses in her highly

regarded book, *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching*. According to Grumet, educators experience a separation between their public spaces and private spaces through the current educative models that create a dichotomy in their consciousness. In the *currere*/autobiographical method, public and private, institution and individual, abstract and concrete are all interconnected. The examination of personal narrative creates a connection between private and public that is missing within the current fragmented education system. The rejoining of the two-selves within a model of autobiography leads to a deeper sense of understanding through connectivity. Understanding of an educator's holistic identity allows for the possibility that movement can occur towards the fuller examination of self.

The transformative possibilities of *currere* are substantial once teachers accept that teaching in a knowledge society means profound changes to how they see and do their work as educators. This acceptance, however, is based upon a desire for change. For instance, there is the difficulty that even when educators are presented with the opportunity for transformation that *curere* offers, many may not accept such opportunity because to accept would mean disequilibrium which they may wish to avoid. Hence achieving real change where amateur and transformative intellectuals become the norm requires a type of revolution that is difficult to bring about within the teaching profession. Hope, however, resides in pre-service teacher education where prospective teachers can be exposed to the transformative potential of *currere* before they reach the schools and become part of the system. We project this hope with the full realization that prospective teachers are not *tabular rasa* but rather have already been part of the system through their own education. However, the chance to enter into self-discovery through *currere* may be greater in pre-service teacher education before prospective teachers enter the profession. In the next section, therefore, we explore the potential of *currere* for pre-service teacher preparation.

Currere for preservice teacher education

It is a well-known truism that prospective teachers enter teacher education programs with the taken-for-granted notion that they know what a teacher is and does. They have been part of the school system for well over a decade and have a conception in their mind of what a teacher

is. As Britzman (1986) writes, prospective teachers “bring their implicit institutional biographies - the cumulative experience of their school lives - which in turn, inform their knowledge of the student’s world, of school structure, and of curriculum” (p. 221). As the prospective teacher brings this knowledge into the institution, the teacher education program often brings forward ideas that then are filtered through the lenses that the prospective teacher has gained from their past. The lessons of experience that prospective teachers learn through the education faculty and later their practicum will be “strongly influenced by the assumptions, conceptions, beliefs, dispositions, and capabilities they bring to the program” (Zeichner, 1996, p. 216). To facilitate their development into amateur transformative intellectuals, prospective teachers need to be given the opportunity to examine these experiences for those lenses that they are wearing.

Zeichner writes that we need to follow Shulman’s thinking concerning transformation of one’s own personal knowledge so that sense can be made. Transformation of knowledge through an examination of the prospective teachers’ past allows for a critical consciousness to be developed early in the process—a consciousness that allows one to interrogate what one does, who benefits from it, and how it can be reconnected to a personal project through agentive action. Most if not all teacher education programs acknowledge that the past has a strong influence on how prospective teachers see their roles as future teachers. Sue Johnston (1993), however, observes that “there have been few suggestions about what can be done about these past experiences within teacher education programs” (p.79). She contends that the influence of past experience is ignored,

in the hope that new learning will replace them - that is, a process of unconscious displacement is envisaged. At other times, conscious efforts are made to change these views of teaching which arise from the teacher’s own experiences as a student. Rarely are they fully acknowledged and efforts made to help student teachers understand the influence of their thinking and negotiate new ways of thinking about teaching as a result of this understanding (p.79).

A system, therefore, needs to be developed where prospective teachers have an opportunity to disengage from their environment and search out those experiences in their consciousness and sub-consciousness in order for the amateur transformative intellectual to develop. Often, even where knowledge accumulated from past experiences is examined, it is done so as a potential resource. This knowledge is portrayed as an asset, but rarely is it acknowledged as a liability for those beginning teachers who have not sufficiently examined their own school experiences in light of current theory, social and economic trends, and alternative futures. Thus autobiography is left as an examination of the past but with little acknowledgement of its role in the future. *Currere*, as autobiographical inquiry, engages prospective teachers with their past and present environments and a look towards the future. It does so by inviting them to reflect on three basic questions that are intended to help them challenge deeply entrenched conceptions of teaching: What do I understand teaching to be? How, through my experience and personal history, did I come to understand teaching this way? How do I wish to become in my professional future? Autobiographical inquiry conveys how teachers' knowledge is formed, held, and how it can be studied and understood transformatively.

In transforming teachers' knowledge, *currere* offers more than what has worked in other institutions or what has been successful and celebrated in the literature. As Zeichner (1996) warns, "the answer to problems of the practicum is not to be found in merely having student teachers write journals, construct cases, tell teaching stories, or conduct action research" (p. 224). All of these are good practices, but they can easily become unstudied tools utilized by prospective teachers without an understanding of why they are being implemented. Without linkage with critical understandings of personal stories, these methods become little more than techniques to be implemented because they are mandated to occur. As a side note, Zeichner's (1996) warning must also extend to administrators who try to implement such practices in their schools. While educators should be encouraged to seek out their narratives, bringing in 'systems' where teachers are mandated to conduct journal writing, tell stories, or conduct action research will not create amateur transformative intellectuals. That process needs to occur

through a seeking of the self because one wants to seek out the self.

Transformation may also occur during pre-service teacher education through the very nature of *currere*, that is, the educational experience or curriculum provided to those who will become teachers. As Pinar writes, citing Grumet,

[I]t is the curriculum which provides new experience for the student, which stands out against the ground of ordinary experience, both revealing and transforming it...The curriculum becomes, in this scheme, the middle passage, that passage in which movement is possible from the familiar to the unfamiliar, to estrangement, then to a transformed situation" (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 548).

At the heart of many current teacher education programs, however, is an apprenticeship type model that immerses prospective teachers into a submissive role, and cloaks and sustains the very structures that prevent them from becoming more than what others prescribe. In such programs prospective teachers are faced with the knowledge that they have to be able to survive the situation in which they are placed. They are in a subservient role under the supervising teachers with whom they are placed and the faculty advisors who hold the power of pass/fail over them. What tends to be implied during the practicum is an orderly existence that continues what the supervising teacher has started in their classroom. What needs to be understood, however, is that professional teaching knowledge is constructed and deconstructed through observant, reflective, decision-making teachers in response to unpredictable and rapidly changing circumstances. Prospective teachers need the opportunity to examine what it means to be a teacher in contexts of constant change and unpredictability. They need to be helped to develop capacities for taking risks and undertaking inquiries when confronted by new demands. More importantly, they need the opportunity to enter into dialogue about such risks and inquiries with a teacher supervisor/faculty advisor who is willing to abandon the 'power over' approach in favour of 'power with' student teachers.

As mentioned previously, dialogue needs to be a place where both sides feel respected, equal, and empowered. However, the

apprenticeship nature of many teacher preparation programs stymies equality and empowerment due to “assumptions about the benefits of... granting authority to the perceptions of the supervisor over the experiences of the student teacher/learner” (Paris and Gespass, 2001, p. 398). The argument can be made that true equality between student teachers and their supervisors can never be attained due to the inherently unequal nature of the relationship. Steps, however, can be taken to change the system into one where the prospective teacher can feel empowered to raise technical and moral questions pertaining to practice, and take risks to introduce change. Others before us have suggested that empowerment would entail such steps as moving toward a mentorship model where student teachers are renamed as ‘teacher candidates’, sending out letters that welcome prospective teachers to their school placements, or providing them a space at the school that they can call their own. We, however, propose much larger steps, such as creating spaces within teacher education for student teachers to examine their own educational experiences, how these experiences shape their conceptions and practices of teaching, and how they can be transformed so that, as teachers, they can act well in terms of some sense of an overall good for all students. Such spaces must be created both in the university courses and in the practicum because paying lip-service to the process at the university without a strategy for implementation in the practicum will lead to prospective teachers becoming actors that play a role in one part of their program but not in the other. They will self-examine because they are told to do so at the university but then they will move to the schools where they are told that “this is the real world now, where real work is done”. When the survival mode begins to take hold in the schools, self-analysis, growth, and the potential for transformation cease.

Conclusion

Teaching today is increasing complex work where teachers find themselves caught in what Hargreaves (2003) calls “a triangle of interests and imperatives”. This triangle requires teachers to be (a) catalysts of the knowledge society and all its promises of opportunity and prosperity; (b) counterpoints to the threats posed by the knowledge society to community, security, and the public good; and (c) casualties of the standardization imposed by the imperatives of the knowledge society (p.

10). The effects of these three interacting forces are shaping the nature of teaching and what it means to be a teacher in a knowledge society. We have argued in this paper that functioning holistically and meaningfully within these forces would require teachers to transform themselves into 'amateur intellectuals' who raise ethical/moral issues at the heart of even the most standardized, technical professional activity. Believing that a teacher is an individual who is 'not born directly into his or her social role' but is rather a product of the features of the world and his or her biography, we have posited and explored the potential that the autobiographical method of *currere* offers for the transformation of teachers into amateur intellectuals.

Through *currere*, the chains can be examined and a weak spot can be found to break the constraints on the engagement of teaching as *phronesis* in a knowledge society. Some say that any act of remembering is a fictional re-creation. Grumet, for example, asserts that text revealed through the autobiographical method never completely coincides with the experience it signifies. Interpretation is a "revelatory enterprise...Imitations, half-truths, contradictions, and distractions hover around every tale we tell" (Grumet, cited in Cole and Knowles, 2000 p. 44). In light of this assertion, we posit that one should not be concerned about remembering correctly, or having more questions than answers. The key is the path or journey one takes and what is discovered. To look at the world and marvel at one's place in it, we must be encouraged to use our imaginations, but not only so that our imaginations of the future seek to find some sort of satisfaction for ourselves. According to Maxime Greene (2001), "What we need to be warned against is the use of imagination as a means of withdrawal from uncongenial surroundings instead of as a means of stimulating transformative thinking"(p. 86). There is hope in transformative thinking. We have the opportunity to learn from our past experiences that have shaped our utilitarian understandings of curriculum and pedagogy and to take on what Hannah Arendt has called "an enlarged way of thinking" (cited in Greene, 2001, p. 85). Our identities can be more than just what others have given to us to make sense of their realities. We (the authors) are both history teachers but we can become more than history teachers. Through *currere*, the possibility exists for us to become amateur

transformative history makers, as it does for all educators.

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