Chapter 18

THE CENTRALITY OF A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LEARNING TO TEACH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to present an argument for the centrality of a theoretical perspective as a guide for facilitating the process of learning to teach and the design of preservice teacher preparation programs. A sociocultural perspective combined with a socialization process model grounded in a social justice ideology is presented as a way to make sense of learning to teach and for facilitating the process. A three-course sequence in a teacher preparation program is used to illustrate the application of theory to practice in facilitating the process of learning to teach.

Key Words: Teacher education, teacher socialization, sociocultural perspective, theory, guided participation, diversity, urban schools

THE CENTRALITY OF A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LEARNING TO TEACH

Classroom teachers participate in developing the academic and intellectual resources for the nation. The extent to which teachers are successful influences the quality of benefits and services available in the society. Presently, in the United States there are shortages in particular professions such as health care, engineering, science, and mathematics. The quality of education provided to students in public school classrooms has a very real influence on this shortage. Demographic shifts in the nation’s population increasing the percentage of traditionally underserved students in public schools suggests that unless classroom practices...
change and learning outcomes are improved, shortages in critical professional areas are likely to continue to increase. Learning outcomes are significantly influenced by teacher quality.

Reform in teacher preparation aimed at improving teacher quality by raising standards for certification and licensure, and for the accreditation of teacher preparation programs have improved practices in teacher education, but have not resulted in the desired impact on the public education system in the United States (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). In many instances new standards have been incorporated into preservice teacher preparation programs with few changes in course content and practices in field experiences. These new standards and the mandated conceptual framework for program design have not resulted in coherence, consistency, and continuity in program content and practices across courses and field experiences. Further, the tenets of the reform movement have not provided direction for making sense of the process of learning to teach that would enable teacher educators to design programs that consistently accomplish the desired outcomes (Zeichner & Liston, 1990). These reform efforts have rarely addressed the need for a theoretical perspective on learning to teach, although program accreditation processes usually call for a conceptual framework (Cooney, 1994). Typically, the conceptual framework is linked to the mission statement for the teacher preparation program, identifies themes that cut across courses and field experiences, and describes special attributes of candidates who complete the particular teacher preparation program. The purpose of this chapter is to present an argument for the centrality of a theoretical perspective in the design of teacher preparation programs.

The evidence from even a cursory examination of research on teacher education reveals the centrality of a theoretical perspective in the design of research studies, and in many cases in the design of the intervention in courses and field experiences. The theoretical perspective in these studies provides teacher educators and researchers with a tool for making sense of a phenomenon in a course or field experience; understanding relationships among different aspects of the phenomenon—and the actions, reactions, and outcomes for participants; and for documenting the phenomenon, and designing approaches and interventions that increase the likelihood for getting the desired outcomes. Additionally, the theoretical perspective brings coherence, consistency, and continuity to the course design that supports a process of learning to teach that is developmental and cumulative (Cooney, 1994).

The centrality of a theoretical perspective is made explicit in the research on single courses and field experiences; however, this is not the case for studies on teacher preparation programs. There are very few studies on teacher preparation programs and the studies on single courses and field experiences do not usually provide indepth descriptions of the teacher preparation programs in which they are located, and when descriptions of programs are provided they tend to be limited and superficial in depth and scope. The purpose of this discussion is to present an argument for the centrality of crafting a theoretical perspective on learning to teach to inform the design and investigation of preservice teacher preparation programs. This argument is based on the premise that (a) coherence, consistency, and continuity across a teacher preparation program are necessary for supporting a process of learning to teach that is developmental and cumulative; and (b) a theoretical perspective on learning to teach is an essential tool for designing approaches and interventions in a program that supports a process that is developmental and cumulative.

Coherence, continuity, and consistency across a teacher preparation program are interrelated. Coherence refers to the interrelatedness of content and experiences across the program; continuity indicates that the relationship among content and experiences is
continuous and uninterrupted; consistency means presenting the content and experiences in alignment and without contradictions. A theoretical perspective on learning to teach provides purpose and direction for designing a teacher preparation program and forms the basis for interconnectedness of different aspects of the program, continuous and uninterrupted content and experiences, and internal alignment without contradictions.

A SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO MAKING SENSE OF LEARNING TO TEACH

Making sense of teacher learning is at the heart of the argument for crafting a theoretical perspective. How we make sense of teacher learning depends on the perspective employed. For example, Johnson & Golombek (2003) argued that “teacher learning is understood as socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, students, subject matter, curricula, and setting… Moreover, it emerges from a process of reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods or materials on teachers…” (p. 730). Understanding and facilitating this complex and multidimensional process of teacher learning requires the use of a construct or tool for organizing and interpreting observations, designing actions and interventions, and explaining and predicting reactions and outcomes. Johnson & Golombek (2003) identify internalization and transformation, the zone of proximal development, and meditational means as elements that will “enable researchers to trace the internal cognitive process of teacher learning” (p. 730). However, this understanding of cognitive processes in learning to teach can be used to guide the designing of teacher preparation programs and for facilitating the process of learning to teach.

Wertsch, Del Rio, & Alvarez (1995) pointed out that “the goal of a sociocultural approach is to explicate the relationships between human mental functioning, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this functioning occurs, on the other hand” (p. 3). This is particularly relevant given that learning to teach is a process embedded in the cultural, social, and cognitive histories of the candidates and the learners they will teach, and is situated in the cultural and social history of school practices located in particular communities. The challenge for teacher educators is to design mediated action and tools that will result in “reshaping existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods or materials on teachers…” (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 730). The meditational action and tools need to focus dialogue, experiences, and thinking among candidates in ways that transform existing knowledge related to teaching and learning, and enable application of new understandings.

Rogoff (1995) emphasized the interrelatedness of individual development, social interaction, and cultural activity. She pointed out that “…it is incomplete to focus only on the relationship of individual development and social interaction without concern for the cultural activity in which personal and interpersonal actions take place” (p. 141). Rogoff described a sociocultural approach to the observation of human behavior and learning that involved three mutually constituting planes that correspond to personal, interpersonal, and community. These planes were referred to as apprenticeship, guided participation, and participatory
appropriation. In this conceptualization, apprenticeship refers to the process through which “newcomers to a community of practice advance their skill and understanding through participation with others in culturally organized activities” (p. 143). The use of the term apprenticeship is broader than the traditional notion of expert-novice dyads. In this instance, it refers to the activities aimed at accomplishing specific goals within a group comprised of members who share an occupation or social function. The roles within the group are fluid and flexible in ways that take advantage of the expertise distributed among group members. Guided participation (the interpersonal process) refers to “the process and systems of involvement between people as they communicate and coordinate efforts while participating in culturally valued activity” (p. 142). Here, guidance “involves the direction offered by cultural and social values, as well as social partners; the ‘participation’ in guided participation refers to observation, as well as hands-on involvement in social activity (p. 142). Participatory appropriation (personal) refers to “how individuals change through their involvement in one or another activity, in the process becoming prepared for subsequent involvement in related activities” (p. 142).

Rogoff’s approach to observing human behavior and learning on three planes can be applied to the process of learning to teach. Learning to teach in a preservice program can be viewed as an apprenticeship where candidates participate in organized and professionally valued activities in a community of practice consisting of peers, teacher educators, and teacher practitioners for the purpose of developing skill and understanding for teaching. In this process, the roles of members of the community of practice may change and shift in planned and natural ways in order to support the process of learning to teach and improving teaching practices. Candidates are engaged in guided participation which is a well coordinated approach with interrelated and sequenced social activities (observation and hands-on) that support a mutually constitutive process of transformation and growth among members of the community of practice. Guided participation is the constitutive process for participatory appropriation—the transformation and growth in skills and understanding individuals experience as a result of guided participation where previous activities enable more sophisticated application in subsequent activities. The social activities in the guided participation are based on what candidates know and what they need to experience to develop new skills and understandings related to teaching and learning. The experiences incorporated into the social activities situated in authentic social and cultural context enable participatory appropriation—the transformations in what the candidates know and believe. This is at the core of the process of learning to teach urban and underserved students.

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND SOCIALIZATION ON LEARNING TO TEACH

Learning to teach is a complex process of transforming existing knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about learning, learners, and subject matter to enable the adaptability, flexibility, insights, and understandings that support facilitating the growth and development of students from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds in different contexts and under a variety of conditions. This process of transformation requires carefully guided and active participation in interrelated experiences and observations in authentic cultural and social
contexts with others in a community of practice. The discourse in the community of practice is focused on the process of learning to teach, is theoretically grounded in a particular perspective on the learning process, and takes into consideration the background experiences and needs of the particular group of candidates.

The majority of those in the teaching profession and those entering are white, female, from the middle class, grew up in the suburbs or a small town, and has had very little experience with individuals from cultures different from their own (Hollins & Torres Guzman, 2005). Many teachers and teacher candidates attended schools that reinforced their identity as members of a privileged class. Hollins (in press 2011), in a review of the literature on identity and socialization in school, found that (a) socialization into the ideology of power and privilege is ubiquitous in the educational process in the United States from kindergarten through graduate school, (b) many university faculty in different disciplines, including teacher education, have been socialized into the ideology of power and privilege and may have difficulty engaging in practices that challenge this ideology, (c) there are identifiable interpersonal and intrapersonal practices that maintain the ideology of power and privilege, including the world as an extension of self and knowledge as neutral, (d) where candidates are organized in cohorts in their teacher preparation programs there is the risk of reinforcing and legitimizing prior knowledge and experiences framed by the ideology of power and privilege. Many preservice teachers from this background have indicated a preference for teaching students like themselves and often hold negative views of students different from themselves, but expressed a willingness to teach urban and underserved students if other employment is not available (Hollins & Torres Guzman, 2005).

In a review of the literature on the preparation of teachers for diverse students, Hollins & Torres Guzman (2005) found that an analysis of studies on practices for changing candidates’ attitudes and beliefs about underserved students and for implementing equity pedagogy to be inconclusive because of methodological concerns, including the fact that there were very few longitudinal studies and that most studies were of single courses and field experiences with inadequate descriptions of the teacher preparation programs in which they were located. However, these studies reveal three important tendencies among teacher candidates: (a) a view of the world as an extension of self, (b) a view of knowledge as neutral, and (c) a social discourse among candidates that supports and reinforces personal experiences and perceptions. These perceptions of self, the world, knowledge and the social discourse are well embedded in the formal educational process from preschool through graduate school (Hollins, 2011 in press). In the curriculum across grade levels and in university courses in United States history and literature, the emphasis on White accomplishments and contributions and the omission of work by people of color reinforces a status of superiority—power and privilege. There is evidence that the discourse in classrooms among students and between students and teachers supports the power and privilege ideology and the subordination of “others” (Hollins, 2011 in press).

Research on the socialization of the majority of those entering teacher preparation programs and the mixed results from research on strategies presently used to change attitudes and beliefs about under-served students suggest the need for the systematic incorporation of a theoretical perspective on learning to teach that will guide approaches for changing views of the self and the world, views of knowledge, and that will disrupt or replace the discourse of power and privilege. When incorporated across a program, rather than situated in one or two courses, a theoretical perspective on learning to teach has the potential for serving as a basis
for program coherence, continuity, and consistency. This type of theoretical grounding in a
teacher preparation program supports learning to teach as a cumulative and developmental
process. Additionally, it enables teacher educators to more carefully mediate and monitor the
process for learning to teach. This requires a theoretical perspective that can be employed as
a tool to guide the design of a teacher preparation program, that can be incorporated across
the program as a tool for mediating and monitoring the process of learning to teach, and that
addresses the social aspects of teaching and learning to teach.

Hollins’ (2011 in press) socialization process model can be further deconstructed and a
deeper meaning revealed through the application of Rogoff’s sociocultural approach to
observing human development on three planes—personal, interpersonal, and community.
Rogoff refers to these three planes as apprenticeship—the community, guided participation—
interpersonal, and participatory appropriation—personal. For example, school can be
understood as a community of practice that provides an apprenticeship for developing social
identity and for socializing students into particular positions in the society. The school
community is governed by cultural values and practices including culturally valued social
discourse, activities, and norms. School personnel serve as community elders who provide
direction for the guided participation that is the heart of the socialization process.

Guided participation is framed by the ideology of power and privilege and employs
cultural tools and artifacts to develop specific attitudes, behaviors, and habits of mind that
maintain and reinforce the ideology of the community. An example of the way cultural
artifacts are embedded in the curriculum to reinforce the ideology of power and privilege is
that until recently, many American literature courses in high schools and colleges omitted the
works by authors of color which served to reinforce the myth of the superiority of white male
authors over authors of color (Fishkin, 1995). The impact of participatory appropriation, the
way individuals come to understand the world, is evident in that the majority of participants
come to view the world as an extension of self and knowledge as neutral and universal
(Southerland & Gess-Newsome, 1998; Rodriguez, 1999). That is, their own culture and way
of existing in the world becomes the norm by which they judge the appropriateness and
worthiness of others (Mueller & O’connor, 2007). The knowledge legitimizied through their
personal socialization process is viewed as neutral and universal. Given the background
experiences of the majority of candidates entering teacher preparation programs in the United
States, the challenge for teacher educators is that of developing a process for learning to teach
that is powerful enough to transform attitudes and beliefs that have resulted from many years
of socialization into a position of power and privilege, and that is maintained and reinforced
through social discourse and social participation.

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR FACILITATING
THE PROCESS OF LEARNING TO TEACH

When Hollins’ socialization process model is combined with Rogoff’s sociocultural
approach to understanding human behavior (apprenticeship, guided participation, and
participatory appropriation) it provides a theoretical framework that can be used for
facilitating and interpreting the process of learning to teach. The basic tenets of Hollins’
(2011 in press) socialization process model include: (a) a powerful ideological perspective that
frames social discourse within the community that explains social and political relationships and positions self within the community and in relationship to outsiders; (b) carefully constructed social networks among community members that acquire the language, behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes that are based on the ideological perspective; and (c) a perspective on knowledge, knowledge construction, and the value of knowledge that maintains and reinforces the ideological perspective. The practices that characterized the socialization process include (a) the purposeful and strategic use of cultural tools and artifacts and (b) the use of intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviors and practices that support the ideological perspective. This description of the tenets of the socialization process and the characteristic practices for an ideological perspective can be used to guide the implementation of a sociocultural theoretical perspective on learning to teach.

THE APPRENTICESHIP

The first component in this framework is the apprenticeship—the community. In Rogoff’s characterization of the apprenticeship, participants engage in culturally valued activities, use cultural tools and artifacts, and attention is given to the cultural setting in which activities occur; however, the ideology that explains relationships among participants, and that frames attitudes and beliefs is not emphasized. In Hollins’ model, ideology is the essence and substance of meaning in the community. Ideology is the lens through which participants make sense of the internal and external worlds. In preservice teacher preparation, a theoretical perspective for facilitating learning to teach functions in much the same way as ideology in the socialization process in schools. The community of practice for preservice teachers has three parts—the university teacher preparation program that provides opportunities for guided
participation, participating schools that provide opportunities for candidates to engage in guided observation and practice, and in the local communities serving participating schools. The cultural tools and artifacts for teaching and learning to teach are located within the teacher preparation program, in participating schools and their local communities. The activity settings for learning to teach include the teacher preparation program, and participating schools and their local communities.

**GUIDED PARTICIPATION**

The second component in the framework for facilitating learning to teach is guided participation. Rogoff (1995) defines guided participation as “the processes and systems of involvement between people as they communicate and coordinate efforts while participating in culturally valued activity” (p. 142). This includes observation and hands-on involvement in an activity as well as the assignments and experiences included for courses in the teacher preparation program. In preservice teacher preparation, guided participation is an important part of the socialization into the professional community of practice. This is the point at which attitudes and beliefs are reinforced or transformed, and where candidates develop the skills and understanding necessary to teach urban and underserved students. Two aspects of the process warrant particular attention—the relationship among participants and the ways in which the knowledge and experiences participants bring to the program are transformed and extended. In the teacher preparation program that will be described later, candidates are organized into cohorts. The research on cohorts shows mixed results. The research shows that without carefully planned guidance, the relationship among participants in cohorts can range from providing more emotional than academic support to forming cliques and engaging in negative treatment of those considered outsiders (Radencich et al., 1998), and priority in values and authority given to the beliefs and experiences of peers (Ohana, 2004). The beliefs and experiences of many candidates have led to the perception of the world as an extension of self (Gomez, Black, & Allen, 2007; McIntyre, 1997; and Mueller & O’Connor, 2007) and the view that knowledge is neutral and universal (Ball & Ladner, 1997; Kang, 2008; Rodriguez, 1999; Southerland & Gess-Newman, 1998). The social discourse and experiences in preservice teacher preparation need to be designed to facilitate transforming such perceptions and views.

**PARTICIPATORY APPROPRIATION**

The third component of the framework for facilitating learning to teach is referred to as participatory appropriation. Rogoff defines participatory appropriation as “how individuals change through their involvement in one or another activity, in the process being prepared for subsequent involvement in related activities” (p. 142). This transformation in personal attitudes, beliefs, and understanding depends on the qualities and structure of guided participation during the process of learning to teach. For example, research indicates that the attitudes and beliefs many candidates hold on entering teacher preparation programs influence the appropriation of knowledge for practice even after taking pedagogy courses focused on
teaching diverse and underserved students (Kang, 2008; Southerland & Gess-Newsome, 1998). However, Rodriguez (1999) provided evidence that a well designed, well thought out, theoretically grounded approach to support candidates in constructing pedagogical content knowledge can provide powerful learning opportunities that can help transform attitudes, beliefs, and understanding.

The following discussion provides an example of the application of this sociocultural theoretical perspective based on Rogoff’s (1995) conceptualization of the sociocultural perspective as applied to the study of human behavior and Hollins’ socialization process model.

**AN EXAMPLE OF THEORY IN PRACTICE IN FACILITATING LEARNING TO TEACH**

This analysis of a teacher preparation program using Rogoff’s presentation of the sociocultural perspective and Hollins’ socialization process model is an example of the application of the socialization process and the characteristic practices through which the majority of the candidates in preservice teacher preparation have been socialized, but with a drastically different ideological perspective. The processes and practices employed in this example are based on the premise that learning to teach is a sociocultural process that is developmental and cumulative— Further, teaching is a social and cultural construct grounded in a historical process based on shared and negotiated meanings that are constructed and reconstructed daily in classrooms as a result of joint productive activity shared among teachers and students, mediated by cultural artifacts and tools, and shaped by the cultural and historical experiences of the participants. Learning to teach is a process of peripheral participation in a community of practice where newcomers engage in culturally valued and culturally mediated activities as they develop the understanding and skill of the profession. This is a developmental process in that the understandings and beliefs candidates bring to the process are transformed through guided participation in a community of practice. This transformation of understanding occurs over time and is cumulative wherein each activity and experience builds upon the previous.

This approach to facilitating teacher learning is grounded in Rogoff’s (1995) conceptualization of a sociocultural approach and operates as a community of practice where participants have particular roles and engage in joint productive activity aimed at learning to teach and improving teaching practices. The teacher educators and classroom teachers who facilitate the process of learning to teach have shared values and a shared understanding of how the process should work when consistent with the sociocultural approach. The concepts of cultural models and cultural settings introduced by Gallimore & Goldenberg (2001) can be used as a format in explaining the program structure and processes used to accomplish program goals. According to these authors “Cultural models encode shared environmental and event interpretations, what is valued and ideal, what settings should be enacted and avoided, who should participate, the rules of interaction, and the purpose of the interaction…” (p. 47). These elements of the program are described in the different components of the sociocultural approach that frames the program, especially the apprenticeship and guided participation. Gallimore & Goldenberg described cultural settings as “those occasions where
people come together to carry out joint activity that accomplishes something they value” (p. 48). In this program, cultural settings are those occasions where participants come together in courses, seminars, field experiences, online discussions, and informal discussions for the purpose of better understanding the teaching and learning process.

**APPRENTICESHIP IN AN AUTHENTIC CULTURAL SETTING**

An important aspect of learning to teach is the location of the process in an authentic cultural setting. The cultural setting in the design of this preservice teacher preparation program is comprised of the candidates, teacher education faculty, the school practitioners and their students, and the community in which the participating schools are located. The goals of the community of practice and the roles of the participants have been clearly delineated. Practitioners have agreed to participate in ongoing efforts to learn about and to improve teaching and learning for urban and underserved students, to actively support the process of learning to teach for candidates and colleagues, and to engage in the co-construction of knowledge about teaching and learning to teach in the community of practice. Classroom teachers, university faculty, and candidates attend a regularly scheduled seminar where they discuss their observations and understanding of the relationship among pedagogy, learner characteristics, and learning outcomes. University faculty actively participate in the dialogue and support the value and authority of theoretical perspectives on learning; research on teaching and learning for urban and underserved students; knowledge about urban communities and the social context in urban classrooms and schools; and knowledge about the influence of human difference on planning meaningful learning experiences. Candidates are actively engaged as newcomers to the community of practice whose participation is carefully planned and guided by university faculty and teacher practitioners.

**Guided Participation**

The interrelatedness of individual development, social interaction, and cultural activity that Rogoff (1995) emphasized has been incorporated into the design of the preservice teacher preparation program in this discussion, and is particularly evident in the process Rogoff refers to as guided participation. In this example, guided participation includes the social interaction and relationships among participants, the activities and assignments, and the theoretical perspective that frame the process of learning to teach.

Social relationships and interactions among participants are multidirectional within, among, and across groups; and among individuals. However, these relationships and interactions are focused on the process of learning to teach—understanding more deeply the meaning of a theoretical perspective on the learning process and coming to better understand the relationship among pedagogy, learner characteristics and experiences, and learning outcomes. The dialogue among participants in this process gives value and authority to observations in classrooms, research on teaching and learning, and theoretical perspectives on learning. The role of the elders (teacher educators and practitioners) is to maintain and reinforce the purpose of guided participation and the values that frame the dialogue as a part...
of the process for transforming attitudes, beliefs, and particular habits of mind. Candidates are active participants in dialogue and other activities and assignments where they interact with other community members. In this dialogue candidates share their observations and insights and receive reactions and feedback from peers and elders. This sharing among participants contributes to collective and individual transformation in thinking and habits of mind. When participation is guided in this way, candidates are not left to independently develop relationships that define some peers and faculty as insiders and others as outsiders (Radencich, et al. (1998); to give disproportionate value and authority to their personal beliefs and experiences (Ohana, 2004); or to provide more emotional support for peers than support for academic and professional growth (Bullough, Clark, Wentworth & Hansen, 2001).

Activities and assignments in the teacher preparation program are focused on five points of understanding: (a) understanding the learning process; (b) understanding students beyond the classroom—including the cultural settings where they are being socialized and in which they interact every day; (c) understanding the social context within and outside of school—and the teacher’s relationship with and responsibility to both; (d) understanding how to make curriculum content meaningful and accessible to students with different experiential backgrounds and learning propensities; and (e) understanding the meaning and use of pedagogical approaches that facilitate learning for particular students, learning specific subject matter and skills, under specific conditions. Constructing, co-constructing, reconstructing and transforming understanding in these areas is a continuous process that is a central part of every experience in the program with greater or lesser emphasis on one than another in a particular course, activity or context. The process of transforming understanding in these areas restructures dialogue among participants in the community of practice. It replaces dialogue that gives disproportionate value and authority to personal beliefs and experiences (Ohana, 2004) with that focused on the value and authority of observations in schools and classrooms, research on teaching and learning, and theoretical perspectives on the learning process.

The activities and assignments in the program are guided by particular pedagogical practices that include the use of authentic cultural settings and culturally valued activities; active participation in social discourse and meaningful experiences in a community of practice; and value and authority are given to observations in classrooms and schools, research on teaching and learning, and theoretical perspectives on the learning process. The use of authentic cultural settings includes making observations and interacting with individuals and groups in local communities and in schools and classrooms. These observations and interactions contribute to the process of constructing and transforming knowledge about students and their experiences. The observations and interactions in communities, schools, and classrooms are a significant part of the dialogue in the community of practice that contributes to constructing, co-constructing, reconstructing, and transforming understandings—enhanced through an examination of confirming and disconfirming evidence from research and the use of different theoretical perspectives for interpretation.

**Participatory Appropriation**

Participatory appropriation is the process of transforming attitudes, beliefs, and understanding as a result of guided participation. The particular experiences provided for
candidates, as well as those shared among other participants in the community of practice are intended to deepen understanding of teaching and learning. The dialogue among participants is carefully structured to create interplay between knowledge for practice and knowledge in practice that transforms how and what knowledge is appropriated. The five points of understanding incorporated into the activities and experiences in guided participation, combined with the particular pedagogical practices result in focused dialogue that supports the transformation of attitudes, beliefs, and understanding among participants.

The next part of this paper will use a three-course sequence in a teacher preparation to illustrate the application of Rogoff’s approach to sociocultural observations of human behavior and learning on three planes combined with Hollins socialization process model.

THE SUBSTANCE OF GUIDED PARTICIPATION IN AN AUTHENTIC CULTURAL SETTING

The substance of guided participation in an authentic cultural setting includes the content and focus of courses and field experiences. These courses and field experiences engage participants in joint productive activity aimed at mutually constructing knowledge for teaching and learning. The coherence, consistency, and continuity in the teacher preparation program that contribute to the transformation of attitudes, beliefs, and understanding among candidates are embedded in these experiences. A three-course sequence is used in the discussion that follows to illustrate this point. These courses are focused on supporting the candidates in understanding the urban community, the learning process for students, and how human differences influence students’ experiences and background knowledge for learning.

Understanding the Social Context of Urban Communities

The initial social activity in the program is referred to as the framing experience. The purpose of the framing experience is to begin the process of transforming candidates understanding of the social context in urban communities and in urban schools. The framing experience is a guided observation in three parts—the educational, historical, and recreational resources in urban communities; the social and political context in which schools are situated; and the social context within urban schools. Candidates need several tools for completing the framing experience including a package that provides information to guide the experience. This package includes the requirements for keeping a journal for documenting the experience, a list of the categories of places and organizations to visit, questions for interviews with individuals in specific roles, and instructions for writing a reflective essay for each part of the experience. This experience does not include assigned readings and has only one class meeting which is designed to provide an overview for the experience and to provide an opportunity for classmates to meet each other. Opportunities are provided for candidates to interact with each other through discussion boards, chat rooms, and bulletin boards, but this is not a requirement.

In the first part of the framing experience, candidates begin their journey beneath the surface in an urban community by exploring its resources. In this experience, candidates
examine educational resources such as colleges, universities, private schools, and libraries; museums and other repositories for historical documents and relics, as well as historical sites and markers in the community; and sources of employment, recreation, and shopping. This first experience introduces candidates to the culture of the local community through its museums, historical sites, libraries, private schools and institutions of higher education. This introductory knowledge of the history and culture of the people will be helpful in interpreting information from other sources in the community and later in thinking about and planning instruction for students who live in the community and attend local schools. In some instances, candidates will observe a discrepancy between the culture presented in the evidence they collected and the culture of the residents. This could represent a recent demographic shift in the population. This, too, will provide important information for making sense of the relationship among organizations and power relationships among different groups in the second and third parts of the framing experience. Upon completing the first part of the framing experience, candidates will write a reflective essay that: (a) identifies and describes the unique or special characteristics or emphases for the resources in the local community, (b) explains how the resources in the local community are similar to those in other communities, (c) explains how the resources benefit the community and the formal educational process, and (d) explains what was learned about the community through examining the resources.

In the second part of the framing experience, candidates seek to make sense of the social context within a community including the social and political organization and structure. In this part of the experience candidates examine the formal structures of mayor, city council, school board and other boards and agencies serving the community. In their examination of the political structure of the community, candidates note the role and function of the particular entity, initiatives underway, the agenda at particular meetings, the demographic composition in participation, and the decision making process and its impact on the community. They examine community based organizations such as churches, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDF). Candidates attend meetings and interview participants. Upon completing the second part of the framing experience, candidates carefully examine their field notes and write a reflective essay that explains the goals of the participants in these different agencies and organizations, their values, the general contribution to the quality of life in the community, and how the power relationships among different groups within the community combined with external forces influence the outcomes and the distribution of benefits.

In the third part of the framing experience, the goal is to make sense of the social context within schools, and the relationship of schools to the social context of the community in which they are situated. In this part of the experience each candidate examines a public school located in the same community where the first two parts of the process have been completed. The examination of a public school begins with an interview of the principal and other members of the leadership team. Candidates seek to understand the roles of members of the leadership team, how the school is organized and managed, and the vision the leadership team has for the school. Candidates give special attention to the relationship between the school and the community in terms of values and reciprocal participation. Candidates make observations about the characteristics of the school based on visual displays and the interactions and relationships among participants engaged in their daily routines (in classrooms, passing in the hallway, eating lunch in the cafeteria, interacting on the
playground, attending meetings, etc.). Upon completing the third part of the framing experience, candidates write a reflective essay describing the relationships among participants and stakeholders within schools and between schools and the communities in which they are situated.

Understanding the Social Context for Urban Schools

The second course in the sequence is titled *Understanding the Social Context for Urban Schools* and uses the framing experience and the reflective essays as part of the text for the course. The purpose of this course is to present research and theory that corresponds with the evidence candidates collected during the field experience as a way to support transforming thinking related to the social context in urban communities and in urban schools. In this course, candidates rethink and reinterpret the evidence collected during the framing experience based on the research and theory presented in the readings.

This course has regularly scheduled class meetings, assigned readings, multimedia presentations, required participation in an online discussion board, and opportunities for online chat rooms and bulletin boards. The course content is organized into five general topics—(a) ideology and social policies that influence practices in urban schools; (b) conditions in urban schools; (c) institutionalized racism; (d) urban communities; and (e) the social context of urban schools. The essays in the first two parts of the framing experience correspond with the topic on urban communities in this course. The essay on schools in the third part of the framing experience corresponds with the topic on the social context of urban schools in this course. After completing the appropriate assigned readings in this course, candidates write a commentary on the corresponding essay from the framing experience. In the commentary, data from the course readings are used as affirming or disconfirming evidence, or further explanations for observations in the field.

The multimedia part of the course consist of four locally developed video tape recordings: (a) The story of three low-income children who grew up to be state and national leaders—Former President Bill Clinton, Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Former Congressman and Mayor of San Francisco Willie Brown; (b) The contribution of community based organizations to equity and social justice; (c) The challenges facing urban parents who advocate for their children; and (d) Building relationships with gang affiliated youth. The primary goal of these multimedia presentations is to support candidates in transforming their understanding and attitudes towards urban and underserved students. These multimedia presentations provide counter evidence for deficit perspectives that blame urban students, their parents, and communities for the condition of urban schools. Additionally, candidates see examples of successful students who emerged from poor quality elementary and secondary schools, and individual school practitioners who are successful in their work with underserved students. These images are helpful in reframing the dialogue among candidates.

The dialogue on the electronic discussion board is focused on the five topics for the course. Each candidate is required to make one original commentary for each topic and to respond to two separate commentaries made by peers. Candidates are encouraged to discuss those aspects of the readings that affirm or contradict their experiences or observations in the field, that provide new insights, or that raise new issues or questions. During class meetings candidates engage in dialogue about the readings, the video tape recordings, and their
observations in the field. **Candidates** are concerned with identifying common themes and discrepancies, identifying gaps in their knowledge, and identifying unresolved issues and questions. Ultimately, candidates grapple with the meaning of their new understandings for facilitating learning for urban and underserved students.

**Understanding Learning for Urban and Underserved Learners**

In the previous experiences candidates explored beneath the surface in urban communities to reveal the social and political organizational structure, educational and recreational resources, historical and cultural artifacts, the goals of community based organizations, power relationships among various groups, and the impact of these groups and external forces on the residents of the community. The appropriation of these experiences and observations provide the background understanding of the cultural setting and cultural tools that are part of the learning process for students living in these urban communities. The readings and assignments for this course provide the first opportunity for many candidates to think deeply about the learning process.

In this third course in the teacher preparation program the focus is on how students learn. The purpose is to provide a sequence of readings and experiences that will enable consistent application of theories of learning in designing classroom learning experiences, developing a classroom learning community, and assessing progress towards the expected student learning outcomes. The overarching theme in this course is the confluence of culture, cognition, and mind. The particular theoretical perspectives presented are based on those endorsed by scholars and practitioners in the field through the professional associations identified with specific subject matter, and consequently, incorporated into the school curriculum, textbooks and other materials. These theoretical perspectives include, for example, constructivism in mathematics and science; sociocultural perspectives in literacy education and social studies; behaviorism in special education; and the primary theories from which variations have been derived.

The readings were selected based on their salience in developing a sequence within a topic or unit of study that: (a) presented a holistic view of the historical development, basic principles or tenets, and critique of a particular perspective on learning; (b) made explicit the connection between theory and practice; and (c) provided a detailed example of the application of the theory to practice with particular attention to issues of diversity and inclusion. The readings on behaviorism, constructivism, and sociocultural perspectives were supported with videotape recordings of the actual application in urban classrooms in high achieving schools.

The assignments and learning experiences for this course are intended to provide a developmental sequence grounded in a sociocultural pedagogy that will enable candidates to progress from academic knowledge of theoretical perspectives on learning, to recognition and application and, finally, to problem solving in the classroom. The assignments for the course provide opportunities for candidates to apply different theoretical perspectives on learning in analyzing segments of classroom practice and for solving problems in vignettes. These classroom segments and vignettes are located in classrooms with diverse and underserved students and in inclusion classrooms. Candidates are required to write a five page commentary on each of six analyses.
The dialogue on the electronic discussion board and during class meetings is similar to that in the previous course. Here, candidates are concerned with identifying the principles and tenets of particular theoretical perspectives, analyzing and interpreting instances of the application of one theoretical perspective as compared to another, understanding how a particular problem might be addressed using one theoretical perspective as compared to another, identifying gaps in their knowledge, and identifying unresolved issues and questions. The knowledge candidates have constructed so far forms the basis for thinking about the influence of human differences on background knowledge and approaches to learning.

**Understanding the Relationship between Human Diversity and Learning**

The observations and understandings candidates bring from previous experiences in this teacher preparation program related to the social context in urban communities and schools, and theoretical perspectives on learning are incorporated into discussions of human differences. The discussion of human differences is focused on those characteristics and conditions that distinguish one group or individual from others such as social or political status, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, or physical or intellectual ability or disability. The purpose of this course is to deepen candidates’ understanding of the meaning of social context and theoretical perspectives on learning when considering various aspects of human difference and the use of specific cultural tools and artifacts, including situations where students have special needs.

Initially, this course builds on the framing experience and the social context course in a discussion of the social ideology of power and privilege that influences relationships across race and social class, the distribution of social benefits, and the quality, content, and outcomes of schooling for different populations in the United States. Further, candidates extend their understanding of learners and learning through examining the relationship among cultural settings, the use of cultural tools and artifacts combined with the use of an appropriate theoretical perspective on learning. Finally, candidates explore the influence of social and cultural identity, gender, and intellectual ability/disability on the identification and selection of experiences that facilitate learning.

The readings for this course were selected on the basis of their value in presenting: (a) the social ideology that influences power relationships among different groups within the society and the distribution of social benefits; (b) detailed examples of learning experiences for urban and underserved students using culture specific tools and artifacts combined with an appropriate theoretical perspective on learning; and (c) examples of the influence of various aspects of human difference on the identification and selection of experiences for facilitating learning. Videotaped examples using culture specific tools and artifacts combined with an appropriate theoretical perspective and of inclusion classrooms are provided for examination by candidates.

The assignments and learning experiences for this course are intended to provide opportunities for candidates to engage a more focused examination of the influence of various aspects of human difference on teaching and learning. Candidates give particular attention to the process for the identification of gifted students from urban and underserved groups, as well as the placement of these students in various special education categories—especially, categories of learning disabled and emotionally disturbed. When possible, candidates are
encouraged to attend placement conferences and reviews. Candidates conduct observations in inclusion classrooms and in separate classrooms serving students with special needs. Candidates maintain detailed field notes on their observations and develop a reflective paper presenting the conclusions they have drawn about teaching and learning for students with special needs and the implications for general education teachers.

The dialogue on the electronic discussion board and during class meetings is similar to that in the previous courses. Here, candidates are concerned with expanding their understanding of social context and theoretical perspectives on learning when considering various aspects of human difference and the use of specific cultural tools and artifacts, including students with special needs.

**CONCLUSION**

The three-course sequence presented in this discussion provides an example of the substance of guided participation and the coherence, continuity, and consistency that contribute to transforming attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of teaching and learning for diverse and underserved students. The design of this three-course sequence builds on the Hollins’ (2011in press) conceptualization of the process and practices in the socialization into the ideology of power and privilege and Rogoff’s (1995) conceptualization of the sociocultural perspective for the observation of human behavior. Each of these perspectives takes advantage of a culturally based socialization process, uses cultural tools and artifacts, gives priority to particular ways of thinking and valuing knowledge, and clearly delineates intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviors and relationships. The centrality of the tenets of these perspectives in influencing the desired outcomes is made evident and provides support for the centrality of a theoretical perspective in facilitating learning to teach.

The centrality of crafting a theoretical perspective on learning to teach has been made explicit in the examples provided for designing a preservice teacher preparation program, and the interpretation of the points of understanding and particular pedagogical practices that are combined in meaningful activities in authentic contexts to transform participants’ attitudes, beliefs, and understanding. In this example, the sociocultural theoretical perspective enabled faculty and practitioners to work together with shared values and ideals; shared understanding of an approach to facilitating teacher learning; shared interpretation of joint productive activity and activity settings; agreement on who should participate in which activities, how, under what conditions, for what purpose and in which settings; and agreement on the nature and purpose of discourse and interaction.

Rethinking preservice teacher preparation programs requires examining the structure, approach, and theoretical base. Presently, most teacher preparation programs are organized into foundations and methods courses and field experiences. Typically, courses provide propositional knowledge and field experiences provide opportunities for observation and hands-on experiences with students and in classrooms. The interrelatedness among courses and field experiences varies across preservice teacher preparation programs. In some cases, methods courses are linked to a practicum, but not in all programs. In some cases, particular foundations courses are linked to community based field experiences. In some cases, aspects of syllabi for a particular course are stable across instructors, which contribute to consistency.
Courses and field experiences are usually designed to meet state or national standards that require a conceptual framework, but not necessarily a theoretical perspective on learning to teach. In many instances, the conceptual framework provides thematic coherence, but may not support the interrelatedness of experiences across courses and field experiences. The theoretical perspective presented in this discussion provides a powerful basis for understanding and facilitating learning to teach and for designing teacher preparation programs that hold promise for having the desired impact on public education.

REFERENCES


