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Chapter 1

# Situating This Study in Theory and Research on Teacher Development

*No person is more influential in the day-to-day life of students than the teacher in the classroom.*

—California Education Policy Seminar (1998)

Teacher quality and teacher qualifications are keys to improving student learning. Effective teacher preparation is a major component of teacher quality, along with ongoing opportunities for teacher development and effective induction and mentoring for new teachers (National Commission for Teaching & America's Future [NCTAF], 1996). Effective teachers know their content, understand how their students learn, are able to develop and teach curriculum, and also know how to determine and support their students' needs. Accordingly, effective teacher preparation includes:

- A coherent curriculum that tightly intertwines theory and practice;
- Fieldwork that is integrated with class work, coupled with support from carefully selected mentors;
- An extended clinical component, with a minimum of 30 weeks of student teaching;
- An emphasis on learning-theory and child development, with extensive training in the ability to address the diverse needs of students. (California Education Policy Seminar, 1998, p. 10)

These characteristics of effective teacher preparation describe the Developmental Teacher Education (DTE) program at the University of California at Berkeley, a postbaccalaureate master's degree program that began in the

early 1980s and continues today to prepare elementary school teachers. The four teachers who are the focus of this book are 1987 graduates of the DTE program. Three of them are still teaching today. Their stories are the heart of this longitudinal study, which chronicles the development of their pedagogical understanding across 15 years. In this book, I offer longitudinal case studies of their lives as teachers in the hope of providing insights about how teacher thinking develops over time and how it is influenced by personal and professional factors, including their preparation for teaching in the DTE program.

Although current standards for teacher preparation are offered by policymakers and other experts (California Education Policy Seminar, 1998; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2000; NCTAF, 1996), there is little longitudinal research into how effective teacher preparation plays out in the lives of teachers once they begin their careers in the classroom. For example, although teacher preparation standards call for a coherent curriculum that tightly couples theory and practice, the conventional wisdom is that theory taught in education schools is disconnected from the reality of the classroom. The prevailing belief is that when prospective teachers graduate and go off to their first jobs, the theory quickly washes out. This so-called *wash-out effect* is documented in the teacher research literature (Lortie, 1975; Veenman, 1984; Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981; Zeichner, Tabachnik, & Densmore, 1987). Yet is this necessarily the case? Is everything learned during a teacher preparation program lost or changed when a beginning teacher faces the reality of classroom life and becomes socialized into the profession and school culture? Does the pedagogical understanding of a teacher grow or change over time and how does that happen? What influences a teacher's thinking about pedagogy? What personal and professional factors in the lives of teachers impact their understanding of children's behavior and development and of teaching and learning throughout their careers? What do other theories of teacher development have to say about the lives of teachers? What lessons can be learned from longitudinal case studies of teachers' thinking about pedagogy? These questions form the core of this longitudinal study of the pedagogical understandings and professional lives of four educators highlighted in this book: Julie, Ralph, Rick, and Sandy.

## BACKGROUND FOR THIS STUDY

Since the beginning of my own teaching career, I have been interested in understanding what teacher thinking in the pedagogical domain looks like, whether it continues to develop, and how this happens. As an elementary school teacher for 17 years, and now as a university-based teacher educator

for 13 years, I have often thought about my own development as a teacher and particularly about my own understanding of pedagogy. The opportunity to observe and study the development of other teachers' thinking, especially their understanding of pedagogy, over 15 years also allowed me to see if the wash-out effect is true or if teachers can and do use what they learn in their teacher preparation program once they are established in the classroom. However, another question driving me throughout this longitudinal study was trying to understand how teachers' thinking about pedagogy develops over time.

As a doctoral student at UC–Berkeley between 1998 and 1993, I had the opportunity to supervise student teachers for the DTE program. As I attempted to support the development of many prospective teachers who spent 2 years in this postbaccalaureate elementary teacher education program, I wondered how what they learned about children's cognitive, social, and moral development would play out in their classrooms when they were on their own. As I observed the supervising teachers of DTE students during my 5 years as a graduate student instructor, I marveled at how well they translated and integrated their understanding of child development into their pedagogical practices. Many of these supervising teachers were DTE graduates, which is how I met Julie, Sandy, Ralph, and Rick. Although I never taught or supervised these four teachers while they were preservice teacher candidates in the DTE program, I got to know them as they mentored and supervised the preservice teacher candidates placed in their classrooms.

Of course, my biases are obvious. I believe that the DTE program was and still is an exemplary teacher education program (California Education Policy Seminar, 1998; Snyder, 2000). Furthermore, I have been fortunate to maintain regular contact with these four educators over the years due to our mutual connection to the DTE program and our shared interest in helping people learn to teach. In 1989, when I first decided to follow these four educators by conducting regular, periodic observations and interviews, they were all eager to be my subjects of study, and I was interested in learning to do qualitative case study research to understand more about how teachers' thinking develops. At that time, all DTE students participated in entry and exit interviews, which were used for research purposes and to continually develop the DTE program. I had access to these tapes and the transcripts of these interviews, and all of them used the same clinical interview protocol. Such a rich source of data was a boon to me as a novice researcher, and I could not pass it up. That was the beginning of this longitudinal research study.

As I maintained contact with Julie, Ralph, Rick, and Sandy over the years, even after leaving California in 1993 for a career as a professor and teacher educator in North Carolina, they graciously agreed to continue being inter-

viewed and observed whenever I asked. Because my parents still lived in California, I was able to get back to see them every few years. Our relationship over the years developed into one of mutual respect as we looked forward to our conversations about their most recent thinking about behavior, development, learning, and teaching. Even the length of the clinical interviews (often over 2 hours) was no deterrent because they willingly gave me many hours of their time. I believe they answered all my probing questions openly and honestly, thus providing me with a window into their thinking about pedagogy at the time of each interview. In fact, at the end of each interview and after day-long observations, they all expressed how thought-provoking it was to talk about their current thinking and recent practices, and about how our conversations probably impacted their development by stimulating their thinking about pedagogical issues and about their classroom practice. Finally, after 15 years, six sets of clinical interviews conducted every 2 to 3 years, and extensive classroom observations, this book was born. It was time to stop collecting data and time to share their voices, perspectives, and stories as developing teachers.

As I chronicle the development of the pedagogical thoughts and actions of these four educators, I do so by taking periodic snapshots of the development of their pedagogical understandings based on a series of interviews and observations conducted over 15 years. I use their own words to create a montage to represent their professional lives as teachers. Because true development takes a long time, this research needed to span a number of years. In fact, if I had interviewed and observed these educators in a tighter time sequence, I would not have had the opportunity to capture many of the personal and professional factors that influenced the development of their lives as teachers.

In three of the case studies (Julie, Ralph, and Sandy), I start at the beginning—when they entered the DTE program in 1985. I then work forward chronologically to the present to discuss how each person's thoughts and actions, their understanding of teaching and learning, and their thinking about behavior and development developed over time. In Rick's case study, I provide a synthesis of more recent changes in his thinking and his personal and professional life because I have written about his earlier development in other places (Levin & Ammon, 1992, 1996). Readers may note in these case studies that each person's relative ability to articulate his or her thinking early on makes these case studies more clinical sounding and less rich with lengthy quotes than in the later years. As they developed their thinking, as they became comfortable with talking to me, and as I became more adept at probing and asking them open-ended questions, in addition to using just the clinical interview protocol, their stories became richer and their voices shone through. I also include personal and professional influ-

ences on their thinking as they shared them with me and conclude each case with their own reflective writing.

I offer these case studies as symbols of the lives of many teachers. Although each story is unique, perhaps you can recognize elements of your own story in the lives of these four educators or perhaps the stories of teachers you have known. Fortunately, such a chronicle of the lives of these teachers from the beginning to the midpoint of their careers makes it possible to highlight some important lessons about teacher education and teacher development, which I do in the chapter that follows the case studies. I also offer a detailed description of the methodology used during this study in a chapter preceding the case studies.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL TEACHER EDUCATION**

It is rare in teacher education for a research project to have the continuity and longevity of this study. Most longitudinal studies follow a single teacher or a few teachers during their student teaching experiences or into their first 1 or 2 years in the classroom (e.g., Ayers, 1993; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Bullough, 1989; Bullough & Knowles, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Hollingsworth, 1994; Kane, 1991; Knowles, 1992; Powell, 1996, 1997; Ryan, 1992; Sears, Marshall, & Otis-Wilborn, 1994; Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). With a few notable exceptions (Bullough & Baughman, 1997; Huberman, 1989; Nias, 1989a), other biographical and autobiographical works about teachers' lives usually chronicle only a year or two of their classroom experiences (e.g., Codell, 1999; Freedman, 1990; Johnson, 1992, 1995; Kidder, 1989).

Because the common thread for all of the people engaged in this longitudinal study is our connection to the DTE program at UC–Berkeley, it is important to provide some background about the program. Although more extensive descriptions of the DTE program are available elsewhere (Black & Ammon, 1992; Snyder, 2000), I briefly explain the structure and goals of the DTE program and then describe the theoretical perspective that underlies the entire program.

The DTE program is a 2-year, postbaccalaureate teacher education program that leads to an elementary-grades teaching credential (formerly called a *multiple subjects credential*, but now a Cultural, Language, and Academic Development [CLAD] credential in California) and a master of arts degree in education. Students in the DTE program are expected to develop a deep understanding of how children develop, focusing on the perspective of Piaget and other constructivist theorists (Ammon, 1984; Ammon & Levin, 1993; Black, 1989; Black & Ammon, 1990; Snyder, 2000). Students

are also taught the importance of understanding the reality of teaching and learning in our diverse society, including the economic, language, ethnic, and racial diversity of children in schools today.

At a time when most teacher education programs in California were 1-year postbaccalaureate programs, the DTE program proposed that a second *year* of study combining a master's degree with a credential would allow for more in-depth study of children's development and teaching methods, along with extensive field experiences undertaken concurrently with university coursework (Black & Ammon, 1992). In other words, what the DTE program has been doing since the early 1980s is now considered best practice for teacher preparation programs: a coherent curriculum that intertwines theory and practice; extended fieldwork integrated with class work, coupled with support from carefully selected mentors; a minimum of 30 weeks of internship or student teaching experiences; and an emphasis on learning theory and child development, with extensive training in the ability to address students' diverse needs (California Education Policy Seminar, 1998; NCTAF, 1996).

The DTE program emphasizes coordinating an understanding of children's cognitive, social, and moral development with in-depth knowledge of content and content pedagogy. With this background in understanding children, curriculum, and instruction, the DTE program founders hypothesized that teachers would continue to develop their thinking in each of these areas (behavior, development, learning, and teaching) as they continued to teach and reflect on their teaching experiences. A primary goal of the DTE program is to provide a strong foundation on which teachers can develop their pedagogical beliefs through experience and by reflecting on their experiences (Levin & Ammon, 1992).

The DTE founders also believed it was important to develop a model that could be used to understand the development of teachers' thinking in the pedagogical domain. This model would help teacher educators understand how people learn to teach, and it could be used to scaffold the progress of DTE students as they became skilled in a developmental-constructivist process of teaching (Black & Ammon, 1992). Beginning in the early 1980s, DTE researchers proposed such a model based on data from journals and interviews of preservice and inservice teachers associated with the DTE program (Ammon & Hutcheson, 1989; Ammon, Hutcheson, & Black, 1985; Ammon & Levin, 1993; Black & Ammon, 1992; Hutcheson & Ammon, 1986, 1987). The Ammon and Hutcheson Model of Pedagogical Thinking is a cognitive-developmental structural model; it suggests that sophisticated, multidimensional thinking about pedagogy evolves from simple, one-dimensional thinking in an invariant sequence. Appendix A provides a version of this model that describes goals for instruction, the role of

students, and the role of teachers at various stages in the development of teachers' thinking about pedagogy.

The Ammon and Hutcheson model, as originally proposed, suggested five qualitatively different ways to think about pedagogy in four areas: behavior, development, learning, and teaching. This model describes the quality of teachers' thinking about pedagogy as it develops over time and with experience and reasoning about one's praxis. As with other developmental stage models (Turiel & Davidson, 1986), progress in the four strands that make up the pedagogical domain may be inconsistent, asynchronous, or uneven, although there should be no real regressions. The essential qualities of pedagogical understanding that teachers go through as their understanding of learning and teaching develops from the perspective of Ammon and Hutcheson's model are described in Appendix A. According to this model, teachers' thinking about pedagogy begins with associationist and behaviorist conceptions (Levels 1 and 2) and develops toward constructivist conceptions that are initially quite global (Level 3), but that eventually become more differentiated (Level 4) and finally more integrated (Level 5). Black and Ammon (1992) described the teachers' role in the learning process in this way:

With regard to the central role of how teachers bring about learning, for example, the expectation at level 1 is that children will learn if teachers simply show or tell them what they need to know. At level 2, the teacher attempts to remedy the shortcomings of reliance on showing and telling by involving students in the practice of what is to be learned and by providing corrective feedback and reinforcement.

At level 3, the teacher is concerned that a level 2 approach, with its emphasis on closely monitored learning of specific skills, does not necessarily lead to understanding and may even impede it. Thus it becomes the teacher's role to permit the learner to engage in self-directed discovery through interaction with concrete materials that the learner is developmentally ready to understand, that is, to understand "correctly." Developmental readiness is understood only in relatively global terms—for example, in terms of Piaget's general stages.

In contrast, level 4 thinking differentiates between the various domains of knowledge, in which development may occur at somewhat different rates [physical, cognitive, social, moral], and it attends to the key conceptual advances that must occur within each domain. The teacher may once again assume a more directive role, except that the teacher now follows the learner's lead and attempts to provoke progressive thinking on the learner's part.

The differentiations achieved at level 4 provide the foundation for a final, more integrated level of constructivist pedagogical thinking at level 5. Now the teacher appreciates both those aspects of development that are unique to each domain and those that cut across domains, such as logical operations,

that have a potentially wide range of applications. From this perspective, the idea of integrated curriculum becomes a functional concept, as an approach to instruction with mutual support for the development of understandings in different domains and as a way of assessing the learner's capabilities across domains. (pp. 331–332)

The upper levels of the original model developed by Ammon and Hutcheson in the 1980s were somewhat hypothetical early on because data were available mainly from less experienced teachers, and there were few experienced program graduates to interview and observe. Since that time, the model has been evaluated empirically in several studies and with more experienced teachers (Ammon et al., 1985; Hutcheson & Ammon, 1986; Levin & Ammon, 1992, 1996). These studies found evidence to support the description of the developmental trajectory of teachers' thinking about teaching and learning, behavior, and development offered in Ammon and Hutcheson's original model. The longitudinal case studies presented in this book also support this model, although the intent of this book is not to validate this model, but to describe personal and professional factors that influence the lives of the teachers featured in the case studies.

The Ammon and Hutcheson Model of Pedagogical Thinking provides the theoretical framework for this longitudinal research and offers a way to compare the pedagogical development of the four educators in this study with each other and across time. Much of the data collected for this study are based on the same set of clinical interview questions on which the model was originally developed and tested (Ammon et al., 1985; Hutcheson & Ammon, 1986; Levin & Ammon, 1992, 1996). In other words, the Ammon and Hutcheson Model of Pedagogical Thinking provides an *etic*, or outside, perspective on the longitudinal data collected in this study.

However, due to the changing nature of qualitative research over the past two decades and increasing recognition of the importance of context and life history in understanding the development of teachers' thinking, the original clinical interview protocol was modified slightly in 1997. This was done to gain an *emic*, or inside, perspective from the participants. At the start of the interviews conducted in 1997 and 1999, each educator was asked, "Tell me what has been going on with you since we last talked," before responding to any of the clinical interview questions. Combined with classroom observations that began in 1989, the two kinds of interviews (open ended and structured) used in this study form the basis for in-depth analysis of the development of teachers' thinking about pedagogy over time. I describe and discuss the methodology used in this study in more detail and chronicle both my own development as a researcher and changes in the field of qualitative research during the 15-year time period of this study in chapter 2.

RELATED RESEARCH ON TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

In Dan Lortie's seminal study published in 1975, lives of schoolteachers were described based on extensive interviews, observations, and surveys. Lortie examined how teachers were recruited, socialized, and rewarded. He concluded that their work led them to feel isolated in their classrooms, forced to rely on their apprenticeship of observation for understanding how teachers teach, with weak support during the induction period and a strong emphasis on learning by doing. Although these findings were representative of the state of teacher education, teacher induction, and of many teachers' lives and careers in 1975, teaching and teacher education has changed in the past 25 years, and Lortie's findings have never been updated. Nevertheless, Lortie's research continues to be cited extensively and has become part of the vernacular about the state of the teaching profession.

In the mid-1980s, Stephen Ball and Ivor Goodson edited a book called *Teachers' Lives and Careers*, which attempted to add flesh to the bare bones portrayals of teachers offered by earlier studies. Ball and Goodson (1985) sought to include personal and biographical data about teachers in their book. They hoped to better understand teaching by learning who teachers were. Their work helped us begin to see the complexity of teachers' lives and careers and offered more contextually sensitive portrayals of schoolteachers. No longer were studies of teachers' lives represented solely through surveys and statistics, and the importance of understanding the complex nature of teaching began to pervade the research literature in the 1980s and 1990s.

Ken Zeichner and his colleagues (Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981; Zeichner et al., 1987) also conducted studies of teachers that captured some of the complexity of their lives. They often used case studies to describe the development of teachers' reflective orientations toward the problems of teaching and schooling. Zeichner and his colleagues also studied the teacher education program at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, including its theoretical and practical contributions to the thinking of its graduates (e.g., Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1987; Zeichner et al., 1987). In their often-cited paper, Zeichner and Liston (1987) concurred with other researchers (Lortie, 1975) who found that preservice teacher education washes out during the induction years, and they suggested several factors that impede the development of reflective teaching. Among these other factors are reliance on apprenticeship models of teacher preparation and the ideological eclecticism and structural fragmentation found in many teacher education programs then and now.

Jennifer Nias' (1989a) 10-year follow-up study of 54 primary teachers in England and Wales, which was mainly based on individual, semistructured interviews, offers a longer term view of how teachers' conceptions of their work changes from the beginning of a career to its midpoint. The major

strength of Nias' longitudinal work is that it offers insight into how internal, personal factors and external forces impact teachers' lives. In particular, Nias' research provides information about how individual teachers in her study developed a sense of self as teachers, how they viewed the centrality of the tasks of teaching to their lives, and the importance of their schools and classes to their perceptions of themselves as teachers. In her work, Nias made extensive use of teachers' voices to provide us with a long-term view of how teachers change and develop over time.

Robert Bullough, Jr., published a case study of a first-year teacher named Kerrie in 1989 and a follow-up study, which he co-authored with Kerrie 8 years later (Bullough & Baughman, 1997). These book-length case studies offer us a detailed view of the life and career of one teacher based on ongoing, extensive, and intensive interviews, observations, and conversations from the beginning to the end of Kerrie's 8-year career as a teacher. This single case study provides insight into the ups and downs of Kerrie's development as a teacher, changes in her beliefs with increasing experience in the classroom, and the influence of her personal life on her professional one. Unlike the present study, Bullough's work with Kerrie was a true collaboration from the outset, including the codevelopment of both authors' interpretations of Kerrie's life as a teacher. Like this longitudinal study of four teachers, Bullough and Bauman's case study provides details about the context of Kerrie's life and experiences and is based on prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which helps support the credibility of a researcher's interpretations.

Findings from the first 6 years of the longitudinal research described in this book (Levin & Ammon, 1992, 1996), based on periodic clinical interviews and classroom observations, indicated that the development of the four teachers' thinking in the pedagogical domain was not smooth or linear. Furthermore, the wash-out effect suggested by earlier researchers (Lortie, 1975; Zeichner & Liston, 1987) was not evident in these earlier analyses (Levin & Ammon, 1992, 1996). In fact, Levin and Ammon's (1992, 1996) findings suggest that the teacher preparation experience of the four educators described in this book was a theoretically coherent program of study that later provided opportunities for graduates of the program to mentor student teachers and to teach and supervise student teachers for the program. These opportunities apparently encourage DTE program graduates, including the four people who are the focus of this longitudinal research, to think, rethink, and articulate reasons for how they teach as they do and for understanding why particular pedagogical practices are effective in helping children learn.

In the next chapter, I describe the research methods employed throughout this 15-year study, including my own role and my perceptions of how changes in qualitative research methods during this time impacted this study.