

## Book Review

*Preparing Teachers for a Changing World*

Edited by Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005

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*Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* is an important contribution to the ongoing work to professionalize teaching through the reform of the teacher preparation curriculum. For several decades, this reform effort has included: (a) the development of standards for teaching and teacher education (Holmes Group, 1986); (b) the building of a research-based knowledge base for novice teachers and teacher education (Imig, 1992); and (c) the conducting of research on the relationship between quality teaching and student learning (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

The role of teaching in student learning and how it informs the curriculum of teacher education is at the heart of this book. Edited by Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* provides an evidence-based look at the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that characterize the teacher as a professional who is a lifelong learner committed to helping all children succeed. It brings together the research, theoretical foundations, and consensus of practitioners on teacher education into a conceptual framework that lends clarity to the purpose, content, structural elements, and pedagogies of the curriculum of initial teacher education.

The conceptual framework holds that novice teachers must have knowledge of learners and curriculum, as well as an understanding of

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teaching. It reveals the relationships between how children learn, the pedagogies that support high levels of learning, and the experiences of teacher learning. The framework also serves to organize the book. Chapters Two through Four consider theories of learning, theories and research underlying developmentally appropriate practice, and research relevant to students' languages. Chapter Five explores the teacher's role in curriculum decision making. Chapters Six through Nine address essential domains of practice and include research pertinent to teaching the subject matter and diverse learners, assessing learning, and building effective environments for student learning. Chapter Ten examines teacher development, with an emphasis on building teacher learning through communities of practice. The final chapters examine the design and renewal of the teacher education curriculum.

In each chapter, the authors present conclusions and recommendations for teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions that characterize the teacher as a professional. This review presents the authors' contributions to the meaning of professionalism and the implications of this meaning for the reform of the initial teacher education curriculum.

### The Teacher as a Professional

In *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World*, the authors present evidence in the context of a framework of teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as well as Shulman's (1998) work on professions to make the case that teaching is a profession. As described by the authors, Shulman (as cited in Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005) has identified the characteristics that denote professions, including service to society, the development of a scholarly knowledge base, practical action, uncertainty caused by client needs, experience, and membership in a professional community. For the authors, service in teaching is a commitment to lifelong learning, which carries a moral dimension of teaching that includes providing equitable and high quality learning experiences for all children and preparing children for successful participation in a democracy. Within the context of this commitment to serve, the teacher as professional has both content and pedagogical content knowledge bases informed by research and practice.

Knowledge of learners is one domain of teachers' professional knowledge. The book uses research-based evidence, housed in a framework for learning, to develop conclusions about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective teachers. By considering learning through four vantage points—the learner, the desired knowledge and skills for learning, the assessment that supports learning, and the building of a

community for learning (Bransford et al., 2005)—the authors conclude that effective teachers must be learner-centered, knowledge-centered, community-centered and assessment-centered. Additionally, as professionals, they must be able to balance these skills. Teachers must use their knowledge of their students' backgrounds, languages, and special needs, in addition to assessments of students' readiness to learn, to determine student understandings and to engage them with the curriculum. These assessment-centered teachers understand successful learning is largely culturally-mediated, requiring opportunities for learners to learn together. They recognize the complexity of learning and consider the diversity of learners when organizing learning experiences.

Among the constructs of diversity explored by the authors and included in the professional knowledge base for learning are developmentally appropriate practice and language development. Based on evidence related to learners' individual differences, levels of readiness, developmental pathways to learning, and the cultural context for learning and development supported by Vygotsky's (1978) theory of a zone of proximal development (1978), the authors conclude effective teachers understand how to gauge learner differences and can develop learning experiences that scaffold learning and help learners build their understandings.

In addition to constructing developmentally-appropriate learning experiences that respond to learner differences, teachers as professionals honor the languages that students bring to the classroom. Teachers understand their own language development and use, the variation that exists within a language, and the relationship between language and identity. Effective teachers develop learning experiences that enhance students' language by building their language repertoires.

Student language, development, and ways of learning are among the sources of knowledge that inform the teacher's professional knowledge base regarding curriculum. The authors consider curriculum to be "the learning experiences and goals the teacher develops for particular classes—both in her planning and while teaching—in light of the characteristics of her students and the teaching context" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 170). In this context, the authors present the teacher's development of a curricular vision, which includes conceptions of curriculum, the social and political contexts and aims of curriculum decision making, and their influence on classroom life, including the formal, enacted, and hidden curriculums. Curricular vision also considers the knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests of students, as well as a deep understanding of the subject matter as portrayed in the materials, technologies, standards, and frameworks that comprise the formal curriculum.

Reminiscent of Tyler's (1950) approach to curriculum development, the authors emphasize teachers' role in curriculum decision making as they engage in curriculum planning and curricular implementation. In this approach, the teacher makes decisions regarding what is taught largely based on knowledge of the social aims of education, the skills, interests, and abilities of learners, and the requirements of the subject matter. These sources of knowledge support the goals, objectives, domains of content, and learning experiences that comprise the classroom curriculum. Effective teachers create a relationship between the learner and the curriculum through developing lessons that have meaning and relevance for their students.

The domain of pedagogical content knowledge includes teaching the subject matter. This requires the teacher to develop a repertoire of strategies and representations that engage diverse learners. Effective teachers use standards to assess learners and construct developmentally appropriate tasks that support student learning. They also understand the role of formative assessment in supporting both student learning and teaching. Finally, effective teachers understand the critical relationship between a purposeful curriculum that engages and motivates students and the effective management of the classroom.

The teacher as professional enacts pedagogical content knowledge in the context of the uncertainty created by learners' individual differences and the changing dynamics of classroom life. Amid this complexity, the teacher participates as a member of a community of practitioners who collaborate in support of student learning and who have the habit of mind to inquire continually into and improve their practice. The authors describe a lifelong learner as an adaptive expert, a professional who balances efficiency and innovation (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005). The characteristics of a professional discussed within the book's evidence-based conceptual framework concern the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective teachers, which inform the reform of the curriculum of initial teacher education.

### The Curriculum of Teacher Education

The book bases the framework for professionalism and the evidence-driven knowledge base, on student learning, curriculum decision making, and pedagogical content knowledge. While the book sets forth several intended outcomes of teacher preparation, there is one overarching purpose, which is "to prepare teachers to exercise trustworthy judgment on a strong base of knowledge" (Bransford et al., 2005, p. 2). This purpose is driven by the authors' recognition that teaching is a profession with

both moral and knowledge dimensions. These dimensions shape the teacher who, as a professional, is a lifelong learner.

To support teacher education in developing teachers who are lifelong learners, the book presents core ideas to frame the knowledge, skills, and dispositions based in teacher education. One core idea is engaging beginning teachers in a critical examination of their beliefs and assumptions about the meaning of good teaching. This examination is intended to help novice teachers develop images of good teaching and sound professional dispositions. This core idea considers the larger issue of early socialization in teaching, including the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) and its role in the developing beliefs that novice teachers hold about teaching.

A second core idea is novice teachers should have a conceptual framework that allows them to organize content and pedagogical content knowledge in a way that facilitates their ability to retrieve and act upon knowledge. In addition, teacher education must help novice teachers learn to take control of their own learning and manage the complexities of life in classrooms through the tools of reflective practice—inquiry and analysis. Finally, the curriculum of teacher education must prepare the novice teacher to work as a member of a collaborative community of practitioners.

Given the core ideas guiding the curriculum of initial teacher education, the authors delve into the knowledge base—the content—of the curriculum. This knowledge base is the content deemed essential, based on research and professional consensus. It is important to note the authors recommend this knowledge base be “conceptually organized, represented and communicated in ways that encourage beginners to create deep understandings of teaching and learning” (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 366). This recommendation invites a consideration of the structural elements of the curriculum.

In their review of seven successful teacher education programs, the authors identify characteristics of a high quality teacher education curriculum. Such programs provide a cohesive curriculum and a variety of field experiences integrated with coursework, as well as include opportunities for novice teachers to practice and reflect on their practice. They are guided by essential understandings and have a conceptual framework to “help students understand the big picture and how ideas and theories fit” (Darling-Hammond, Pacheco, Michelli, & LePage, 2005, p. 406). Additionally, these programs provide extended clinical experience and have clearly defined and articulated standards of practice, as well as a common core curriculum grounded in knowledge of learner development, learning, subject matter, and pedagogy. Finally, effective teacher education programs collaborate closely with reform-minded schools.

In addition to the structural elements of successful teacher education curriculums, the authors introduce pedagogies that support high quality teacher learning. The authors note that these pedagogies build dispositions and practical strategies that promote habitual reflective practice and include the use of portfolios that contain demonstrations of practice through videotapes and other artifacts of practice. They also include the use of case methods that promote theory-to-practice linkages and include the use of autobiography to reflect on entering and developing beliefs. Finally, these pedagogies include opportunities for inquiry into practice.

Overall, the authors examine the curriculum of teacher education in response to three key questions. What kinds of experiences do children need in order to grow and learn to develop the confidence and competence they need to succeed in life? What kinds of knowledge do teachers need to facilitate these experiences? What kinds of experiences do teachers need to develop knowledge? (Bransford et al., 2005, pp. 20-21).

### The Reform of Teacher Education

The authors recognize that reform of the curriculum of teacher education and the role of teacher education in building the profession must be systemic, involving relationships among the policy, higher education, and public school communities. They acknowledge that the historic policy context of teacher education, which involves licensing, accreditation, and certification, distinguishes teacher education from preparation for other professions and this has been problematic in building teaching as a profession. They note that within the university environment, in particular, teacher education has not always been considered a priority and it often struggles within a context of limited resources and requirements of the tenure process. Amid these constraints, the authors recognize the symbiosis that must exist between education and teacher education and between the study and practice of teaching; a relationship that requires strong collaborations with reform-oriented schools.

In this larger context, the book strengthens the concept of professional preparation by asking initial teacher preparation to look deeply at the relationship between teacher preparation and student learning. The key questions posed earlier prompt teacher education to consider its curricular conceptual framework, meanings for professionalism and the development of teachers, coherence and articulation with the field of practice, pedagogies, and the essential understandings about learning and learners, teacher learning, the curriculum, and teaching.

The book further challenges the initial teacher preparation curricu-

lum by asking it to examine areas of the curriculum where there is variance across programs, such as assessing learning and working with English learners with special needs. Ultimately, the book seeks to bring commonality to the curriculum. This effort is found in similar efforts seen in the history of the transformation of medicine, law, and other professions, which in the twentieth century, sought to promote professionalism through rigorous professional education programs with an evidence-based knowledge base, set of pedagogies, and clear vision of the professional.

*Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* clearly defines the characteristics of the teacher as a professional. In an atmosphere in which the public discourse so often questions the efficacy of teacher preparation, this book, in organizing research and theory into a conceptual framework, solidly establishes the evidence-based knowledge base of teacher education. At the same time, it challenges reform in teacher education to use what is known about learning, teacher learning, and successful teacher education to create the coherence and commonality in the curriculum that support the development of the teacher as lifelong learner.

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