

Cal Council at Seventy Past, Present, and Future

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I served as President of the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE or Cal Council) from the Spring of 2008 until Spring 2010. Before writing about the challenges and accomplishments we made during those years, as well as offering my thoughts on what is important in regards to our past, present, and future, I will first describe my history with the organization to give you a sense of the unique Cal Council community.

For the first 20 years of my career as an educator, I was not aware of Cal Council. From 1975 through 1997, I was a classroom teacher in multi-age, progressive elementary classrooms. The next five years, 1992-1997, I was quite busy. I was the principal at a small, K-8 public alternative school, with half-time classroom teaching responsibilities, while simultaneously attending UCLA to earn my doctorate in Administration, Curriculum, and Teaching. While presenting at the 1997 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, I met one of CCTE's past presidents, Carol Bartell, and that's how I found out about Cal Council. Carol encouraged and nurtured my development in Cal Council and soon I was a SCATE Board member! The State of California Association of Teacher Education was one of the original affiliate CCET organizations that merged to form our present CCTE.

Before becoming Cal Council President, I was an active member

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for about 10 years, serving on or chairing many conference-planning committees. I joined task forces, was a member and later chaired the Awards Committee, served as editor of *CCNews*, and was elected to the CCTE Board of Directors. Those of you who participate in our bi-annual conferences know that I have always been active musically. These are difficult times for those of us working in public service, and in particular, education. My mission is to help build morale amongst educators through the use of music and other arts-based approaches to teaching and learning. As a minstrel for the education community, I put my ideas and beliefs about education into my musical stories to try to provoke thought and dialogue through humor and song.

I see Cal Council as a place where our professional community comes together to explore ideas from all sides of the spectrum, and where all teacher educators can respectfully talk and listen to each other. We welcome plurality of thought and action; and we feel comfortable participating, deliberating, engaging in dialogue, criticizing, praising, laughing, singing, dancing, eating, and working together to advocate preparation and continuing development in teacher education. Our CCTE Policy Framework is broad, yet precise and meaningful, and it reaches out to all.

My leadership style resonates towards both Thomas Sergiovani and Magic Johnson. I know I am a success if my work makes those around me shine. I organized our CCTE Board meetings around inquiry questions and often I incorporated arts-based activities. When I convened my first meeting of the Board, we began with an activity where each participant created an aesthetic representation about themselves and then talked about its significance. Amongst the 16 who, at that time, represented Cal Council, we were: activists, union supporters, peacemakers, and social justice educators. We were collaborative educational leaders, life-long learners, teachers, teacher educators, and students. We are devoted to and proud of our families. We nurture outside interests, such as participation in 4-H Clubs, rope course development, international travel, knitting, visual and performing arts, backpacking, and gardening. We are physically and mentally active. We take care of our bodies, we take care of our elders, and we strive to take care of our planet. Like all educators we work to insure a better future. We are hopeful.

What Is Important for CCTE, Past, Present, and Future?

After establishing community, as a Board during my presidency, we turned our attention to the above inquiry question. Our open-ended exploration yielded data, which we further analyzed and used to develop actions in support of the CCTE Strategic Plan. This question is continu-

ally relevant for us and the survey the current membership completed in 2014 updates these issues. Looking back on our discussion in 2008, we were able to operationalize some of our ideas right away and some in the near future. Other ideas fell into that hopeful category of things we know are important for our mission and our world, however due to the limits of time and recourses, we dream of the possibilities and create doable first steps. Our responses fell into four categories: (1) leadership in teacher education (political); (2) leadership in teacher education (research and practice); (3) communication and collaboration with others; and (4) organizational activities and member collaboration.

Political leadership in teacher education entails being a respected and coherent voice in our profession, and bridging the gaps between our organization, governmental agencies, schools, universities, and the greater community. We continually work on improving the ways CCTE collaborates and communicates and gets our message out. Organizational strength and infrastructure is the foundation upon which all this good work depends. Regardless of economic recessions, bubbles, or varying political support, CCTE has and will continue to stand strong through the dramatic ups and downs. In the 70 years of our existence, Cal Council has developed its procedures for financial oversight and organizational leadership so that we are not a personality-based organization. We expect seamless transitions and organizational stability. Continued focused self-reflection will help us enhance our awareness of our organizational strengths as we continue to build upon them. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths. We can explore ways of creating meeting places for shared ideas, bringing together parents, teachers, scholars, administrators, and policy-makers. CCTE can become the hub and possibly organize the networking of all these stakeholders.

As your President, I was actively engaged in communicating Cal Council's perspective, in hopes of nudging our leaders to support people and policies that are aligned with our framework. In the summers of 2008 and 2009, I traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's Leadership Institute and their Day on the Hill. My goals were centered on gathering information, relationship building, and advocacy. Each year AACTE organizes these two events so that the leading officers of each state's affiliate organizations (such as CCTE) gather together for one and a half days of updates, inspiration, and strategy development. This is followed by another day and a half of visiting our congressional delegation to press for our causes. I knew there would be opportunities to build relationships with other teacher educators, and I hoped to establish the beginnings of relationships with staffers of representatives and senators from our state. Before my journey I read

over legislative updates, prepared talking points, and made appointments. I feel satisfied that my efforts bore fruit. I learned a great deal, and I met many people. I even feel that I helped to make some positive changes.

As soon as I walked into the room for the opening session of the Leadership Institute, Jane West, Senior Vice President, Policy, Programs and Professional Issues, and Mary Harrill-McClellan, Director, Government Relations with AACTE introduced themselves to me and asked me for my take on wording they were proposing to fix several California-specific technical issues in the legislation for the Teacher Quality Grants. I gave them my suggestions, and immediately they were on the BlackBerrys, transmitting the revised text to Capital Hill for consideration. Several weeks later I read that President Obama signed this legislation, thus eliminating a number of barriers that fifth-year programs in California would have faced in qualifying for these funds. Right away I felt that I was an effective advocate—a part of really getting things done!

The key issues discussed in 2008-2009 have profound impacts on us in 2015. We are still struggling to define what is quality teaching. AACTE has been a major player in the development of a national teacher performance assessment system (TPA), in the hopes that is a predictor of what will happen in the classroom. Will a candidate's high score on the TPA predict successful classroom teaching and student achievement? I found it ironic that at that very time I was in Washington, D.C. learning about this national effort, legislators in California were grappling with our budget crisis and considering putting our groundbreaking TPA on hiatus.

Conference Planning as a Core Activity

Planning and organizing conferences has always been one of our core activities. Twice a year we bring together a community of teacher educators for two and a half days of dissemination and discussion on key topics that impact our work. We take conference planning very seriously as it is an important contribution to our knowledge base and our functioning as teacher educators, and it is the primary revenue-generating source for our organization. At the Fall 2009 Board meeting, we discussed the importance of telling the story of our conference themes. These themes do not come randomly. The CCTE Board generates the themes and recruits and appoints the leaders of the conference planning committees, sometimes two years in advance. We are mindful and intentional as each conference builds on the themes of the past and brings new issues forward. We looked back on past themes, and looked forward to future themes. Here is a list of the bi-annual themes beginning with Spring 2004:

- ◆ “Furthering Social Justice through Teacher Education Policy and Practice”
- ◆ “Intended and Unintended Consequences of Legislative Action for All Learners”
- ◆ “Artful Teaching in Testy Times”
- ◆ “Teacher Education Alliances for Children: Getting Beyond Us and Them”
- ◆ “Promoting Socially-Just Educational Policies and Legislation”
- ◆ “Educating All Students for the Future: Strengthening the Special Education/General Education Partnership”
- ◆ “The Growing Nexus between Education and the Private Sector: Implications for Teacher Preparation and Development”
- ◆ “Assessment in the Service of Learning”
- ◆ “Got Accreditation?”
- ◆ “Internationalization of Teacher Education: Creating Global Competent Teachers and Teacher Educators for the 21st Century”
- ◆ “Teaching and Learning: Past, Present and Future”
- ◆ “21st Century Schools of Education: Responding to a Changing World”
- ◆ “Technological Knowledge, Equity, & Access: Teacher as Learner, Learner as Teacher”
- ◆ “Teacher Education in Challenging Times: Initiating Leadership to Inform Policy and Create Opportunities”
- ◆ “Closing the Opportunity Gap: How Context Matters for Teaching and Learning”
- ◆ “Reconnecting Student Voice with Teacher Education in a Globalized Society”
- ◆ “Race, Student Engagement, and Schooling Practices”
- ◆ “Clinical Practice in Teacher Education in the 21st Century”
- ◆ “Teacher Leaders”
- ◆ “Regenerating the Field: Our Future Scholars, Practitioners, and Partners”
- ◆ “New Teaching and Learning Spaces.”
- ◆ “Transforming Teacher Education through the Arts”

Key issues and themes emerge. Social justice is a thread woven

throughout all our activities. We understand that justice must be achieved in every aspect of our society, and in our conferences we grapple with how policies and practices impact concepts of human rights and equality. Through this social justice lens, we continually examine current policies, and we design activities where we share information aimed at helping teacher education programs comply with current and future requirements from Sacramento. Advocacy has become an important part of our activities, as we are now proactive, as well as reactive, to legislation that affects our practice. We realize that in order to be effective advocates, alliance building always needs to be part of it. We are continually bringing in more communities to participate in our conference planning and our conferences. We have always encouraged school-based teacher educators to join us, and in the last five years we have made major inroads in ensuring the on-going and active participation, in particular, from the BTSA and induction community, and community college teacher educators.

Becoming more influential in Sacramento is important (and exciting), however teaching and learning is what we are all about. Our conference themes always return to our practice—exploring pedagogy aimed at improving teaching and learning for all. Sometimes we narrow the focus, like when we have an arts-based theme, or technology, or when we explore ways of supporting special needs children. We frequently look for ways to support each other in the administration of our teacher education programs by looking at current public education issues, such as accreditation or assessment. During my presidency, the “arc” of conference themes began with a discussion where we questioned the viability or effectiveness of professors and teachers still using textbooks as the foundation of their teaching practices. We wanted to understand how young people are really learning. Although we are still committed to the importance of linear, text-based teaching and learning, we were interested in exploring other ways of inspiring and motivating those who have been using the World-Wide-Web their whole lives. We came up with a trilogy, where the first conference, Spring 2009, examined the past, present, and future of the general concept of teaching and learning. Our keynote, the eminent educational historian, Larry Cuban, provided an overview of where we’ve been and why we are where we are. We experienced tried and true forms of learning, even a “fireside chat.” The conference ended with a glimpse of the future. The George Lucas Educational Foundation and contributors to its *Edutopia* publication guided participants, through film and digital technology, to discover the intersection between cognitive sciences and how younger generations are wired for learning and project-based learning.

The next conference took what we learned about teaching and learning, past, present, and future, and narrowed the focus to examine its

impact on teacher education. We learned more about how 21st Century youngsters are learning, particularly how video games can have high levels of instructional value. We heard representatives from cutting-edge schools describe new worlds of education. Much of the changes we see are a result of the Internet, and the devices that are continually being invented, promoted, used enthusiastically, and becoming obsolete within five years. More so than ever before, the work our youngsters will be doing when they grow up and take jobs has not even been invented yet. It makes sense that the third conference in the trilogy was based on technology. It was followed by a conference that re-examined our place in the current policy arena. Another conference looked at teacher education from a global, multinational perspective.

Significant Achievements

I have described to you my leadership style and the key issues for CCTE. When we elect a president, that person commits to six years, two as president-elect, two as president, and two as past-president. This system insures stability and CCTE Presidents who are knowledgeable and confident. The following is what I feel are our most significant achievements during my two years as your President.

Alliance Building

Alice Bullard and I worked with the Board to explore ways to expand our membership by bringing in the BTSA community. Alice organized a trip to Sacramento where several of us met with BTSA leaders to explore possibilities. Our efforts resulted in BTSA leaders becoming new members, leaders, and eventually board members of CCTE. Focusing on another constituency, Cindy Grutzik has made significant progress in bringing teacher educators from community colleges into Cal Council conferences and committees. Expanding our membership is one of the best ways we can remain strong during these challenging times.

Increased Visibility

Our Policy Committee produced a one-page brochure we give to policy-makers and others who want a quick and accessible way of finding out what we do and what we stand for. I have worked with the Policy Committee and the Board, and sent letters to President Obama, Governor Schwarzenegger, and other political and educational leaders. Some of these letters expressed the Board's stance on state and national legislation; others expressed our support (for or against) appointments of various people in leadership positions. These letters were posted

in *CCNews* for our members to read. We explored mainstream media by posting our response to an OpEd piece on the *L.A. Times* blog. We wrote a letter to the U.C. Berkeley Dean, urging continued support for DTE, their fine teacher education program. I have teamed with Board Members and had face-to-face meetings with several of our legislators or their staff. Two times we arranged to have State Assemblymember Julia Brownley speak at our conferences. I represented Cal Council at AACTE's Leadership Institute for State Chapter Leaders and I met with a full day's worth of California's Congressional Delegation during the AACTE Day on the Hill in Washington, DC. When I returned I reported in *CCNews* the most up-to-date information concerning the education agenda from a national perspective. Readers of *CCNews* were among the first in the nation to learn about the Obama Administration's priorities for Race To The Top funding.

Conferences and Publications

I participated in Search Committees for new editors for both of our journals—*Teacher Education Quarterly* and *Issues in Education*. Our journals and newsletter have grown substantially in both content and reputation, and this growth continues as we assure stable transitions whenever we have new editorial teams. Our conferences were expressly linked, with themes such as those that explored contemporary ways of reaching and educating the youth, the ones we call “digital natives.” Board discussions resulted in well-connected conferences that were thematically built upon each other. There was a significant increase in the number of proposals for research and practice sessions. We accommodated this growth by taking two actions. We sometimes doubled-up the number of presentations, so presenters shared a room and a time slot. We also transformed what used to be the most challenging time slot (late Friday afternoon) and incorporated a more active format that can accommodate many more presentations. The Friday afternoon poster session with wine & cheese is now a time that participants look forward to—a place for conversation and connection, as well as getting up-to-date on current research and best practices.

Economic Stability

The Great Recession still affects most of us, but CCTE is in the black because we confronted our economic issues several years ago. In 2006, the Board formed the Budget Committee, where we recognized the several years in which CCTE expenditures were greater than our income. At the time we had a five-figure deficit. We carefully analyzed organizational expenses and income of our journals, newsletter, confer-

ences, and other activities. Some of our adjustments actually added value, like when we transformed *CCNews* from a paper-mailed newsletter to an online, electronic newsletter. This action saved thousands of dollars in our operational budget, yet it expanded the possibilities, so that the newsletter now has more photos and much more content.

In spite of all the budgetary adjustments we made, we needed to do more because we were not making progress in paring down the deficit. In 2007 we examined three alternative approaches for a 2007-2008 budget. One approach would have maintained the general nature of the 2006-2007 budget; a second approach would have involved some significant cutbacks; and a third would involve raising the CCTE dues and conference registrations with the goals of assuring continued operations without cutbacks, while simultaneously retiring the deficit and establishing a reserve fund. Rather than stay the course, or cut back, we chose to move ahead and embrace the third approach. We recommended, and the board approved, four provisions: (1 & 2) raising the dues and conference fees; (3) prohibiting exceeding any budget lines without prior approval of the Budget Committee; and (4) stipulating ceilings for various areas of conference expenses. Over the years membership levels, both institutional and individual have grown, and CCTE activities have remained strong. It took us four years. Not only have we restored balance between income and expenditures, but we are also accumulating a healthy reserve that builds each year.

Building Community

In 2009 Virginia Kennedy led the Board into online communicating using Google Groups. I explored ways to modify the format of Board meetings with the intention of incorporating some community building, and creating space for open-ended inquiry—in-depth discussion.

Issues That Still Need Work

There are, of course, still issues that need consideration and work by the CCTE leadership and membership.

Nurturing Leadership

We still have difficulty being able to identify a full slate of at least two candidates for each of our leadership positions. I understand budgets are tight and when that happens workloads increase and resources for travel disappear. We need to work together to help cultivate people to become future leaders in Cal Council. We need to find ways of bringing new attendees to our conferences, and approaching strong teacher edu-

cators to join us as committee members. As people become active in our committees they become known and later nominated to run for leadership positions. We also need to continue to focus on achieving participation from throughout the State of California in order to regain the balance that we should have with leadership and membership coming from both the north and south.

Advocacy

One way we can increase the possibility of policy-makers seeking our expertise is to support peer-reviewed educational research policy briefs. This intersects with our belief that we must develop our roles as leaders in teacher education research and practice. Imagine if CCTE became a clearinghouse for the field and established a formal research agenda. We could develop common frameworks for vital issues, such as TPAs. We could develop seamless connections with community colleges. Our current initiative, the CCTE Quest for Teacher Education Research, holds the promise to make this dream become a reality.

Remembering Our Past

We have just begun to organize, and hopefully, archive 70 years of CCTE historical documents. We have a treasure trove of CCTE historical documents. How will we care for it and make it available for future educational historians?

Thriving During The Economic Crisis

The economy is the overriding issue. For those of us at public universities, support for travel is a thing of the past. CCTE's major activity and primary source of income is our bi-annual conferences. We need to insure our conferences remain essential and stimulating so that our members continue to attend—even though more and more are using their personal funds. We also need to show appreciation and maintain the support we do get from the private institutions that are shouldering more of the burden in so many ways. The economic crisis makes these times deeply challenging for teacher educators. We are showing tremendous resiliency and creativity, as well as determination and commitment to our organization.

Past, Present, and Future

My final thoughts concluding these musings on my years serving as your leader, are intended to provide a broader picture of what I feel is the importance of our work.

Teacher Education Past

I recall a conversation I had in the year 1972, with my master teacher in Chula Vista, right before I began student teaching. I had tutored in her classroom previously, so she trusted me and was eager to support my development as a beginning teacher. “Jim,” she said to me, “Don’t pay attention to what they taught you over there at the university. Here are my files and you are free to use any of them. This is the real world.” The manila folders she handed me contained dittos for low-level recall and respond, right-answer lessons that I discreetly never used.

During my formative years as a classroom teacher, I actually did not think about whether or not university-based teacher education programs were in sync with my world as a classroom teacher. I was fortunate to teach in progressive, alternative schools where I was supported to teach according to my training, my dispositions, and my beliefs. However, during the 1990s when I was a doctoral student, I came to understand that this separation between the beliefs promoted in the university and the practices of the public schools is a major and enduring issue confronting teacher education. I focused my scholarship on professional development schools and school-university partnerships as ways to bring together the worlds of theory and practice. What if medical interns were told by their supervisors in the teaching hospitals not to pay attention to what their professors taught them in medical school? That is exactly what happened in the medical field, but they rectified the problem more than 100 years ago, when they developed a system that requires partnership between medical education and practice.

My scholarly activities provided me opportunities to become involved with partnerships that brought university professors into children’s classrooms and classroom teachers into teacher education programs. An example of our successes is Tara, a University Intern who wrote an arts-based, socially just, multi-day social studies unit that incorporates all the different ways that children learn. As a University Intern, Tara completed her teacher-credentialing program in one year while simultaneously maintaining full classroom responsibilities in the most challenging of school settings—a public school in South Los Angeles where all the children were either African American or Spanish speaking and living in extreme poverty. More than half of the teachers did not have teaching credentials. Our professional development school-university partnership transformed that school into a school with a stable faculty of credentialed teachers skilled in pedagogy that values the cultural richness that their students bring. For several years Tara implemented this unit in her elementary classroom, and she also steadily raised funds, so after two years she was able to organize a field trip to Santa Barbara

as a culminating activity—making the students' studies come alive and offering her students a world that they had never before experienced!

Teacher Education Today

Today, Tara has been promoted “up the ladder” several times and has left the classroom. Unfortunately, social studies instruction is also missing from the classroom. Now my credential candidates are student teachers preparing for a time in the future when they, hopefully, will be hired to run their own classrooms. Student teachers report to me that their master teachers will not give them time to teach social studies lessons because virtually all of the school day is scheduled for programmed instruction in Language Arts and Mathematics—what’s on the high stakes tests.

My career in the university has been dedicated to closing the gap between theory and practice and currently I find myself in the contradictory position that my beliefs about teaching and learning are in strong opposition to the practices mandated on the public schools. In the past I encouraged teachers to open their doors and collaborate. Now I help them find ways to surreptitiously incorporate hands-on, arts-based activities to support deep understanding, while always being vigilant to defend themselves when the curricular, pacing plan “police” make unscheduled visits to check up on them. Project-based learning in support of the Common Core Curriculum gives us hope that teacher educators will become more aligned with school-based practitioners, but so much of this is highly politicized. We will see what plays out in the near future.

Teacher Education Future

What will be the role of teachers in the future? Will teachers become low-level technocrats, reciting scripts, and monitoring worksheets? Will online teaching replace face-to-face discourse? Money, power, and politics certainly will continue to impact the profession and I strongly align with teachers and scholars who are dedicated to supporting rich and rewarding professions in education that stimulate critical thought, social justice, and deep understanding. This is a watershed moment in our society and before we fight to get back what we know was good, it will behoove us to step back and take a look at the ways young people are learning today. When children go out to play, they are no longer going out. They are sitting in front of computers and using their thumbs to play computer games. Students are sitting in classes text-messaging during instructional time. University students may or may not be using their electronic devices for instant research and note taking, however many are simultaneously surfing the web and “multi-tasking” while

professors are trying to engage them. Does it make sense for professors to have students purchase textbooks? What will be effective ways of helping students learn what we want them to learn? In what ways are young people learning and how is it different from the ways we learned? How can we work with and motivate our students so we can capitalize on their interests in technology? The future of teacher education will always be rich with research questions leading to essential projects that will engage us, and CCTE will always be learning and growing with the times.

Happy Seventieth Birthday, Cal Council!