

Teacher Educators and Teacher Education Reform: Individual Commitments, Institutional Realities

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I conducted a three-year study of pre-tenure professors of teacher education directly and indirectly involved in the reform of teacher education in Canada to gain a better understanding of the changes in which pre-tenure teacher education faculty are engaged and of the personal and contextual influences that facilitate and constrain their efforts to do things differently. The research approach was broadly qualitative; more specifically, I conducted my research from a life-history perspective, which situates individuals' accounts of experience within a broader personal, historical, social, political, cultural, and/or institutional context. In this article I provide an overview of the types of reform characterizing teacher educators' work and explore some obstacles to this work, highlighting the intersection between individuals' commitments to reform and institutional realities that often militate against or obstruct these efforts.

L'auteure présente une étude de trois ans portant sur des professeurs en formation à l'enseignement, en voie d'acquiescer leur permanence et participant directement et indirectement à la réforme de la formation à l'enseignement au Canada. L'étude visait à mieux cerner la nature des changements mis en œuvre par ces professeurs ainsi que les influences personnelles et contextuelles favorisant ou non les efforts en vue de faire les choses autrement. Il s'agissait d'une étude qualitative, faisant appel à une approche biographique situant les comptes rendus des expériences des personnes dans un contexte personnel, historique, social, politique, culturel ou institutionnel. Dans cet article, l'auteure fait un survol de la nature des réformes caractérisant le travail des responsables de la formation à l'enseignement et explore quelques obstacles à ces efforts. Ce faisant, elle met en lumière le lien qui existe entre l'engagement personnel vis-à-vis des réformes et les réalités institutionnelles qui souvent font obstacle à ces efforts.

Faculties of education are caught in a maelstrom of political, public, and internal pressures to improve teacher education. The persons involved in such reform activities question the assumptions about teaching and learning on which teacher education is based and advocate and practice a variety of alternative, contemporary approaches. Reform challenges the status quo of institutions and society and often meets with resistance from inside and outside university contexts — which is particularly problematic for pre-tenure professors of teacher education, mainly because their status within the academy is vulnerable. This tension between individual commitments and institutional resistance is the focus of this article.

One impetus for my study of untenured teacher educators was the observation by a number of researchers and policy writers (e.g., Fullan, Connelly, & Watson, 1990) that the future of teacher education lies in the hands of the new generation

of teacher education professors. Another impetus was the frequent and varied calls, from inside and outside institutions of teacher education, for reform of how teachers are prepared.

METHOD

My research approach was broadly qualitative, conducted from a life-history perspective, which situates individuals' accounts of experience within a broader personal, historical, social, political, cultural, and/or institutional context (see, for example, Cole & Knowles, 1995; Goodson, 1992; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). Participants in the study were one male and six female pre-tenure faculty members at different Canadian teacher education institutions. I had met two of these participants prior to their involvement in the research. I deliberately sought out potential participants from a range of geographical locations and institutional contexts (i.e., small, mainly rural institutions; mid-sized universities in small urban contexts; larger faculties of education in large urban centres) and from institutions whose expressed commitment to teaching and research varied. I gathered information using three primary methods: in-depth interviews; observations in institutions; and examination of institutional and personal artifacts.

Because this research is politically sensitive, participants are not named in any public reports on the research and I have made every possible effort to maintain their personal and institutional anonymity. They have had opportunities to respond to this writing, particularly regarding the issue of anonymity.

My analysis and discussion emphasize not the individuals and their particular stories and struggles but rather the experiences, issues, and concerns they collectively represent. The intention is to portray a collective of contemporary teacher educators—their professional identities, commitments, aspirations, passions, and frustrations. Taken together, *the participants'* commitments, *their* passions, *their* identities, *their* experiences, and *their* frustrations are consonant with those of other teacher educators I have known more informally and personally, and also with those depicted in literature on the teacher education professoriate and teacher education reform. I believe that the understandings depicted here, gathered through focused attention on the particular, reach far beyond the contexts and lives within which they were explored.

Not all teacher educators in the study, and presumably not all other teacher educators, would align themselves or be aligned with all of the themes identified. Each has her or his own goals, interests, perspectives, experiences, and issues shaped and driven by personal and career histories, values, beliefs, and commitments and by the contexts in which he or she lives and works. The concerns that participants voiced, the interests they articulated, the battles they fought, the frustrations they experienced, the passions they pursued, and the beliefs and values they doggedly strove to uphold were not only personal and idiosyncratic;

they were also broader and deeper themes situated within and associated with concomitant personal, institutional, and societal complexities and had far-reaching implications. It is important to acknowledge that although my research was conducted from a life-history perspective, my analysis explicitly reflects this orientation in only subtle ways. A life-history perspective underpins the research and is explicit in the analysis and discussion with reference to the nature and extent of participants' interests and activities and as an explanation for the level of their commitment, sometimes in the face of institutional structures.

TEACHER EDUCATORS AND TEACHER EDUCATION REFORM

Who Are These Teacher Educators? What Life and Career History Influences do They Bring to Their Roles in the Academy?

The teacher educators who participated in my study stand in dramatic contrast to the "typical" teacher educators described in Lanier and Little's (1986) profile of the teacher education professoriate. Mostly women, members of the group in my study are mainly approaching or past middle age; some are grandparents. All took up their tenure-track positions after working numerous years as classroom teachers, school administrators, curriculum consultants, special education/resource specialists, or staff, program, and/or community developers. Many had several years' experience teaching part- or full-time at a community college or at a faculty of education in a non-tenure-track position. Among the group were two winners of awards for outstanding theses, the winner of an award for outstanding writing, book authors, winners of major research grants, and journal editors—in short, they had made significant scholarly contributions to the field of education.

Almost without exception, their choice to become teacher educators involved career changes with high associated costs. For various reasons, they left or chose not to return to secure jobs with associated professional status and established reputations, instead taking up positions at a lower salary and with no job security, no status in the institution, no established reputation, and, therefore, minimal credibility with students and/or colleagues. In addition, there was often little technical or clerical support for their work. One stated, "I gave up money. I gave up status. I gave up all of my security. . . . But, you see, I love the work. I really, really love the work. I love teaching. I love writing. I love the flexibility." Another pointed to one of the many paradoxes inherent in their roles in the institution: although they are new to the position and among the most vulnerable individuals in the institution, they are often the people most knowledgeable about teacher education and/or change and in many cases were hired because of that knowledge. This paradox is, in fact, at the heart of much of the frustration associated with teacher educators' work. As one participant so aptly put it, "You go into something to do certain things but in order to be successful you have to do the opposite of what you went in there to do."

A tireless commitment to education and to work in general is a driving force in these teacher educators. “Education is my life,” said one, although most admitted they were being driven to exhaustion by work demands. Their commitments to teacher education and to “making a difference” seem to outweigh any concerns associated with their vulnerable status in the institution, as illustrated in this comment:

I’ve decided that I’m not going to worry. I’m going to go ahead and live a [professional] life that I feel comfortable with. If the academy turns out to be not the right place to do that—if my ideological stance is not in tune with the academy’s—then I’ll go back to the school system or I’ll do something else. I’m not going to worry about it. That doesn’t mean that I don’t care very deeply; it allows me to care more because I am intent on living my belief system.

What Are These Teacher Educators’ Aspirations and Commitments in Teacher Education and Education?

The teacher educators in this study share a desire for change. Not all see themselves as reformers in the sense of being publicly involved in reform initiatives, but all are committed to change of some kind. Their individual commitments to teacher education reform vary widely, from involvement in public institution-wide and/or community-wide efforts to private attempts to change the system. Similar wide-ranging commitments to and aspirations for change also are found in the literature on teacher education reform.

Pedagogical Reform

Given that many contemporary teacher educators come to their roles and positions after a long career in classrooms and schools, it is not surprising that pedagogical reform is a high priority for them. They bring to their university classrooms values, beliefs, and knowledge of “good” teaching that usually contrast starkly with the traditions and expectations of the teacher education classroom. Large class sizes; the physical context of university classrooms; infrequent class meetings, fragmented programs, and curricula that often are rigidly defined; and orientations (held by students and fostered by institutions) that often reflect conservative and technical views of teaching and learning to teach—all of these present challenges to their pedagogical philosophy. As they see it, their job is not to “deliver the curriculum” but to engage in and demonstrate “good” pedagogy. This goal is a constant source of tension, frustration, and challenge and one they relentlessly pursue because, as one participant said, “We have to model what we believe in. If [there is a] discrepancy between what we do and what we say we believe in, students pick up on that, whether they are kindergarten, undergraduate, or graduate students.”

The kinds of pedagogical changes these teacher educators desire include: (a) a shift away from a teacher-centred, transmission model of teaching to an enquiry-based, experience-based, and process-oriented approach underpinned by “a text of questioning” and an understanding of “the authority of the self”; and (b) a preference for a learning context that fosters interaction and relational learning and that places relationships in the centre of the learning-teaching enterprise. The challenges to such changes are enormous; however, as one teacher educator put it, “I could give [the students] what they want—lots of handouts and tricks and easy answers to their how-to questions—and it would take a lot less time, but morally I’d be a wreck if I did that.”

Program Reform

Program reform is explicitly on the agenda of most teacher educators in the study; their criticisms and aspirations reflect their career histories in schools and classrooms. The fragmented and sequential shape of teacher education programs is the main target for change. One person related, in exasperation, the story of a student who burst into tears when asked how she was doing. “You’re the first one who has asked me that in such a long time,” cried the student. The teacher educator could hardly contain her frustration as she told me, “It shouldn’t be like that in a teacher education program. We should be caring for them.” The importance of caring for students and of providing emotional support and understanding was often repeated.

Lack of both coherence in a program and explicit connection between course work and field experiences is of major concern. One teacher educator stated:

I like to see the parts working together, and there are parts that are really dysfunctional in our community. I want the students to have program continuity and be able to make sense of the parts and have them connect to their life in schools.

Reform of Institutional Culture

Not surprisingly, given their extensive background and experience in schools, teacher educators initially found the culture of the academy foreign and alienating. I repeatedly heard “Where is my community?” when they spoke of feeling alone and isolated within the institution and of needing to find and associate with other like-minded individuals both inside and outside their home institutions. Despite being prolific researchers and writers with impressive scholarly achievements, these individuals commented that they were not cut out for the competition and self-promotion of academic life and communicated a longing for a more collaborative context within which to teach and work. They see conversations and connections with other teachers, teacher educators, researchers, and students as necessary for their ongoing development and as helpful in establishing goals and directions for teaching and programs.

A career history with a collaborative or community orientation is evident in the following remark:

When I worked in schools, the social aspects of life were part of what I valued about my job. But in order to get my work done at the Faculty, I have had to almost cut off the social part of my being. I wanted to be part of a community of people who talk about ideas and work together, but if I did that I wouldn't get my work done.

The isolationist culture of the academy and the lack of time to devote to professional relationships, both making it difficult to connect with people in one's own institution, were cited as major obstacles to community building.

These teacher educators also perceive the conflict between university and school cultures as a point of confusion for preservice teachers, and they are critical of the university for socializing preservice teachers to perpetuate traditional systemic and societal norms while espousing the rhetoric of critical reflective practice. One pointed out the crux of the conflict: "We want students to be critical, to examine their own assumptions, but we're not making our own practices visible and our own structures open for examination."

Ideological/Political Reform

The teacher educators in the study all hold perspectives that contrast with the traditions of the academy. As feminists, qualitative researchers, post-positivists, and/or people intent on changing the view and role of teacher education in the academy, they represent a challenge to the status quo and, at considerable personal risk, are set on highlighting this challenge. Some express efforts at change by representing themselves as "different" (e.g., as expressing alternative values and practices; as engaging in alternative forms of pedagogy and research; as making visible or problematizing dimensions of identity such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation).

Some overcame great odds even to secure a tenure-track position in an institution dominated by male administrators and senior faculty who traditionally hire women only as temporary or contract employees. Such employees, said one person, "are treated like dirt and have no say in anything." Other teacher educators continue to invest time and effort in promoting affirmative action policies and practices. One person indicated that she probably was hired *because* she was a woman and also because she had a strong research agenda—both things the dean wanted to reinforce in the male-dominated and teaching-oriented faculty. One of this person's greatest challenges is keeping a check on the tension between adopting roles she wants and adopting roles she is expected to adopt because of her gender:

Females bring a different quality to a faculty. We want women because they bring something different and we don't want to lose those things that make us different because then we become something that isn't authentic. We don't want to become male clones. . . . We have to carve out who we are.

The teacher educators share a commitment to changing the perception and status of teacher education within both the faculty and the university. They strive for a shift away from teacher education as a technically and practically oriented discipline to teacher education as a discipline that places value on research and scholarship while honouring the importance of practice and service to the profession and community. Such an agenda carries with it a heavy research and writing commitment along with demands and expectations associated with teaching and related activities. Despite difficulties associated with advancing an alternative ideological and political agenda, it is, as one teacher educator put it, "incredibly exciting pushing the boundaries of what knowledge is." And this is the motivation and intention underlying broader efforts of social reform.

Social Reform

Career antecedents related to community development and social reform, like those related to teaching and working in schools, strongly influence teacher educators' perspectives and goals. In the words of one teacher educator with an explicit agenda of social change:

The schools need us, the community needs us; they are in crisis. There's a moral responsibility to reach back to my roots as a teacher and to my roots of working with oppressed people and to find ways to make space for them to do things.

For this person, reform involves encouraging preservice teachers to question societal and institutional structures and practices of power and control and their impact on schooling, education, and society. The result is that "students begin to be social activists," which promotes social change.

Where and How Do Individual Career Histories and Aspirations Intersect With Institutional Realities?

Within faculties of education, there is a strong will to challenge and change convention. Still, change is slow and often not substantial. Institutional forces that resist change and strive to maintain the status quo seem to overpower individual efforts, particularly when those individual efforts are made by the least powerful members of the academic community— untenured professors of teacher education.

Challenges to Pedagogical Reform

It is not easy to practice one's beliefs when such practice is at odds with the traditions and structures of the institution and the expectations of students. Aside from doing what most good teachers do—closing the classroom door and teaching as and what is thought best—teacher educators struggling for pedagogical reform can do little to change the system. One described the incongruity between the course outline she submitted to be kept on file and the “real” course outline she followed:

My course is experience- and discussion-centred; this course outline appears very theoretical and text driven. I can't teach this [text-driven] way; I need to respond to student needs as we go through the course. But the [other faculty] would freak if they saw my real course outline, so I didn't put it in the book [of course outlines kept on file]. This isn't a battle I need to fight. I'm not going to convince them [other faculty members] to work in this way, and I don't even want to.

Sometimes the teacher educators seemed ecstatic over even small changes they effected. One person found that large class sizes and an infrequent meeting schedule prevented her from establishing the kind of relationships with students she deems necessary for good teaching. After insistence and much convincing of colleagues she was able to adjust her course schedule so that she had more control over class size and could meet with students for an extended period throughout the year. She described even this small change as making a “huge difference in [her] life.”

The obstacles to change in teaching orientation are many, including classroom space, large class sizes, timetabling, program design, and rigid adherence to status quo perspectives and traditions. Teacher educators intent on practicing their beliefs work within the confines of program and institutional structures at considerable costs in time and energy. For example, if student-teacher relationships are central to one's notion of good teaching, good teaching will require spending significant amounts of time outside class to get to know students and to respond to their issues and concerns. Self-imposed time demands and placing value on teaching takes time away from research and writing, which makes it almost impossible to meet both the demands of the institution and one's own standards of good practice.

Many teacher educators identify students as the greatest obstacle to pedagogical reform. Students entering teacher preparation programs bring their own histories, preconceptions, and expectations of teaching, learning, and teacher preparation. In university classrooms, most expect to receive rather than create knowledge, to listen and read rather than enquire and converse. Regardless of the type and extent of program information provided, when the university curriculum is teacher preparation, most students expect to be told how to teach and to be

handed strategies and techniques to help them painlessly deliver curricula. When these preconceptions and expectations are challenged, students often respond antagonistically. One teacher educator commented:

[Students] don't want us to change the rules in the middle of their [educational] game. . . . They take this [revised] course thinking they're going to be told how to teach and they say, "We're not learning!" They don't realize that they can't teach without understanding who they're teaching and their place within the school.

Another summarized it this way:

Anybody involved in conceptual change and doing the kind of work I do is going to run into people who don't agree with the philosophy. [The students] won't engage in enquiry. They want to be given the goods, the recipes, the formulas. They say the foundations [of education] courses are irrelevant. They come in and want to teach the way they were taught. They find schools changed and they're mad, especially [at] anyone who wants them to think through the changes, what the issues are, and how they're going to have to come at teaching in a different way.

The most potent forum for students' expression of dissatisfaction is instructor and course evaluation forms. And, as one pre-tenure teacher educator stated, "When you know that students are evaluating you based on what they want and expect, and your career is at stake, that's scary." Another commented on the role of student evaluations in this way: "I want them to see for themselves. I want them to believe they learned it on their own and to not 'see' me. On the evaluation form, however, it looks like I did nothing." No matter how confident one is in one's teaching ability and no matter how strong one's commitment to change is, that confidence and commitment can be shaken by being told, as one teacher educator was, "You are the worst teacher I have ever had in my entire life. You won't tell us how to do it!"

This is not to suggest, however, that all students respond adversely to changes in how they are taught. And it is not to suggest that teacher educators are blocked by student responses. When asked to describe the good points and highlights of being a university teacher educator, participants consistently responded, "the students!" As one put it, "Teaching is important to me; it is integral to my sense of myself to be a good teacher and to be in good relationships with students. I get so much satisfaction out of that; if there's no tenure down the road, then so be it."

Challenges to Program Reform

Program reform seems most hampered by institutional structures, institutional politics, and colleagues resistant to change. One participant said:

I keep thinking, “Why hasn’t anything changed?” and then I look at the institution. The whole timetable militates against it! I see my students once a week, and they may not see each other in the interim either. Now that’s discontinuity for you. . . . And we’re supposedly preparing them so that they’ll have continuity with their students. How will that happen if we aren’t modelling it in our program?

The program changes most likely to be implemented are small-scale or short-term. In several institutions the successful development of a cohort model to facilitate a more integrative and coherent program was possible only as a pilot project requiring just the dean’s approval. It was impossible to get sufficient faculty support to institutionalize the change. One person, who agreed to be responsible for proposing and facilitating program changes, voiced her skepticism about effecting change this way:

I think [our committee] did a really good job of consulting all the stakeholders but only faculty have a vote on changes and they don’t begin to react until voting point, when it becomes a political game. . . . The proposed changes may not carry; the alternative is to stay the same, which is not good enough! My whole thrust is toward improved program design but if [the proposed change] does not carry I might just retreat into my own thing like most people have done.

The teacher educators in this study repeatedly commented on the political character of change and on the various stalling tactics used to impede movement. “It is very difficult to change programs,” said one, “because people get rooted in their disciplines.”

Challenges to Cultural Reform

For those who see themselves as community members and not rugged individualists, working in a university context can be daunting because the culture does not operate on norms of collaboration and community. Challenging the norms of any culture is a monumental task, and the process is slow and arduous. Lack of time and the diverse roles and demands of teacher educators’ work are the greatest obstacles to changing patterns of interaction in faculties of education. As well, the competitive aspect of university culture helps to keep people separated rather than connected, a condition that causes much concern for people used to being and wanting to be part of a collaborative community.

One person who had experience working in several university contexts commented on the pervasiveness of university culture even across institutions with dramatically different structures. Her poignant description of that culture explains some key challenges to reform:

It’s a male-dominated culture that works a fair amount on lobbying and head butting. . . . It’s certainly a culture that is resistant to self-examination and resistant to any kind of change and very good at manipulating things to make it look like change does happen.

In this study, the women spoke repeatedly about the difficulties associated with becoming familiar with the norms of the faculty culture and with gaining access to important information. One described her experience as “being on the outside . . . not having access to the different [information] loops.” It is difficult to influence a culture without even having access to it.

Challenges to Ideological/Political Reform

Despite the prevalence and wide acceptance of alternative-framework research in the educational research community, many teacher educators found themselves alone in their institutions in trying both to engage in qualitative research and to promote it among students. They expressed frustration and concern that their scholarly work might not meet the standards set by their institutions. Said one:

I have begun to understand that a professional school in a university faces special challenges in demonstrating scholarship. I knew the words before but did not truly understand them. . . . I know the book I’ve just written is academically solid. What concerns me is that it probably won’t be viewed [in my university] as “real” research.

Another explained how a proposal for research funding was rejected by an internal institutional review committee because it was qualitative.

One way to challenge judgements and decisions about research that are rooted in a positivist tradition is to secure a position as a decision maker on committees that review cases for tenure and promotion and proposals for research funding. Such responsibilities make additional time and workload demands that exacerbate the problem of an already heavy workload—a persistent dilemma for teacher educators who want to promote alternative-framework research that includes a feminist perspective.

For another teacher educator, whose self-prescribed agenda is to elevate the status of teacher education within her institution, the research-teaching dilemma is cast differently. In an institution that sees itself as a teacher “training” institution, where little value is placed on research and related activities, where workload and accountability demands are rigidly set, and where faculty are viewed as factory workers, advancing a research agenda is “after hours” work. She and other teacher educators do research and writing at night, on weekends, during “holidays,” and “on the sly.” The lack of resources for acquiring academic and professional publications in educational and teacher research also inhibits efforts to promote new perspectives on teaching and teacher education. Preservice teachers, therefore, also have limited access to published research on teaching.

There is irony in the fact that schools of education—themselves victims of the elite, patriarchal culture of the academy—are no less guilty of the same attitudes and practices. In both the faculty and the student populations there are serious inequities explicable along lines of social class, seniority, ethnicity, and

gender, including a gross underrepresentation in positions of authority of members of groups other than the dominant one. It is easy to see how the status quo is perpetuated. "I'm always surprised," said one, "by the animosity caused by the fact that I'm a woman." This person went on to comment on how she perceives that her presence as a woman and researcher poses a threat to some faculty members and how, as a result, she has been "under extra scrutiny."

There's a sense that I was given extra privileges [in my contract] because I'm female and it's not all right [according to some men] to give women privileges. It's okay to give men extra privileges because that's what we've always done but we can't do that for women.

Challenges to Social Reform

We in schools of education have to figure out what our role is. The whole idea of education's role as transmitting the values and culture and knowledge of our society is a real barrier to change. Preservice teachers come in with a very clear sense of what teaching is, and if we give them what they expect and what they think they need, they will value that but we will be perpetuating the status quo. If we try to shift [our orientation] and teach to transform rather than transmit, then that is not what they are seeing in schools, so the [teacher education] program appears irrelevant. . . . We have to work in both [schools and universities] at the same time.

The challenges to social reform are broad and deep and extend well beyond the academy. Responsibilities for and challenges to social reform are situated within social institutions themselves, and therein lies the paradox. Study participants who focused on broad reform efforts commented on the necessity for stakeholder groups to work together on a common agenda. But, as one participant observed:

The reform agenda is not around programs and how to make things different; the agenda is around money. We, in universities, need to recognize that and learn how to respond creatively to government decisions [that challenge a different agenda].

Obstacles and Issues for Untenured Teacher Educators

The challenges previously identified face anyone involved in reform efforts. The teacher educators in this study face additional difficulties by virtue of their rank, status, and experience in their institutions. The predominant themes and issues defining their special struggles are: first and foremost, the tenure system; striving for balance in various aspects of their lives within and outside the institution; lack of time to meet self- and institution-imposed demands; the difficulty of figuring out the politics, rules, and norms of the institution and broader academic community; and workload. At times, it seemed almost impossible for some to convey in words the passion and emotion they felt when talking about one or another of these issues. In some cases, strong words were chosen. For example,

in a conversation about the hierarchical character of the university and the tenure system, one person made this poignant statement:

The academy is a place where people use people, especially people who are vulnerable and who have a lot to lose. Those are the people who do all the work. I don't want to use people. I want to collaborate. I've never used anyone in my life. I've never left a trail of abused, used people behind me. . . . In any community where people don't do their share or where the younger and more vulnerable get to do more work, that's using. That's a user relationship; it's not equitable. If you were tenured you could make a more equitable situation for yourself but when you're untenured you can't.

In spite of what might be interpreted as a "healthy" attitude toward the threat that the tenure system poses—"Maybe we've reached the stage in our lives where we're saying, 'To hell with it. Let's just get on with it and do whatever needs to be done'" —a preoccupation with the process of awarding tenure was nevertheless evident among the study's participants. In addition to speaking about the issues of vulnerability and insecurity, which impinge on perceived freedoms, many spoke of how the artificial separation of responsibilities into teaching, research, and service to meet tenure requirements also constrains their work. Most spoke of the tension between following one's own interests and pursuing activities that "count" more toward tenure.

A commonly talked about but elusive goal is finding a balance both within one's work and between work and personal life. The teacher educators spoke in vivid terms about their workload and about feeling unable to meet the high expectations and demands of their jobs. This situation is exacerbated for those involved in reform efforts because time spent on reform activities is diverted from activities valued by the university tenure system.

That the tenure system is central in teacher educators' lives is also evident in their sense that they are unable to become sufficiently familiar with the culture and context within which they work and within which they hope to facilitate change.

I have lived in chaos. I don't understand the structures within which I work. I don't understand the politics. And I've been too busy to figure them out. If I spent my time trying to figure them out, I wouldn't get my work done. I have been so product-focused because I want to be the one who says whether I'm staying here or not. And so I've flown by the seat of my pants.

Clearly, reform of any kind is complex. To expect change to happen quickly and without difficulties is unrealistic. Despite challenges to change and despite frustrations experienced by individuals who want things to be different, it would be untrue to say that change efforts are in vain or that all efforts meet with resistance. As one person pointed out:

It's easy to focus on the problems because that's what we need to work on but, on the whole and in spite of the small number of faculty who try to ensure that things stay the same, this is a good place for someone who wants to make change. A lot of people have changed their thinking, are ready to listen, and are ready to absorb new ideas. I've been able to accomplish a lot considering that I never started out with an intention to make change.

Others commented that there were small groups of individuals in their institutions interested in change and keen to explore and support new ideas.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS: GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS

If the future of teacher education in Canada is indeed in the hands of the new generation of teacher educators, it is a classic good news/bad news situation. The good news is that the hands that will shape and mould teacher education over the next several years are highly competent, committed, and caring ones. The not-so-good news is that, in many ways, those hands are tied and their ability to effect any creation or re-creation is severely curtailed. There are reasons to be hopeful and optimistic about the future, but there is also cause for concern. Whatever the nature, origin, and intention of the commitment to reform teacher education, each attempt at reform challenges the status quo. Given the obstacles to reform identified in this study and elsewhere and given that institutional forces serve to perpetuate rather than challenge convention (Cornbleth, 1986; Wisniewski, 1996), the question remains "How *can* substantial teacher education reform ever happen?" It behooves all of us in teacher education institutions, and especially those with aspirations to achieve substantive and meaningful change, to listen carefully to the tensions that define the intersection between teacher educators' commitments to reform and the institutional realities that facilitate or constrain the realization of such commitments.

Why, we need to ask ourselves, do the very institutions created and sustained to support the development of new ideas at the same time seem to work against change, especially against change involving critical self-examination of values, goals, policies, and practices? In a recent critical commentary on the reward structure of the academy, Skolnik (1998) attributes the academy's antiquated management practices and its failure to practice espoused values to a reward system that "elevates individualism over community, competition over collegiality, quantity over quality and secrecy over openness" (p. 16). I hear echoes of the teacher educators' comments in this analysis.

The reward system is a menacing and unmovable barrier to reform; its threat and force emanate from the standards and values underpinning it. They have shaped and defined normative practices in the academy. As Skolnik observes, and as the teacher educators also made clear, it is not for extrinsic rewards that professors work as hard as they do at what they believe in. Their motivations are

rooted in their ideological and moral commitments to themselves; to their students; to the programs, departments, and institutions within which they work; to the field or profession; to society; and to the global community. When those commitments challenge the status quo, the barriers to change become evident.

A serious re-examination of the current reward system is necessary if those most vulnerable are expected to and want to be involved in reforming the very system that may well punish them for their efforts. Such an examination would involve not just a superficial scanning and modification of standards or expectations but a serious and extensive institutional self-examination of values, goals, policies, and practices. This exercise and process would need to be followed by a commitment to reform that is both articulated and upheld. Without such a re-examination and public commitment to realign institutional structures to match and support espoused commitments to reform, it is likely that the adage “the more things change, the more they stay the same” will continue to describe the state of teacher education in Canadian universities. It also is likely that the new generation of teacher educators, bequeathed responsibility for shaping the future of teacher education, will continue to struggle against great odds and at considerable costs to create better ways of educating teachers and, ultimately, students.

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