

INTRODUCTION

Mapping Research in Teacher Education in Canada: A Pan-Canadian Approach

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Background

What can be of greater concern to a society than the education of its children? Schooling has become *the* purpose-driven means of educating the next generation in Canada. Education has been continuously at the top of the list of the most important issues Canadians are concerned with – and it has always been taken for granted that ‘education’ means ‘formal school education’. With schooling being so important, those charged with ‘doing the schooling’ – teachers – are then central to a society’s concern for education. In a derived sense, this makes the education of teachers of great concern to Canadian society.¹

Compared to a tradition of comprehensive collections focused on research in teacher education in the USA (for instance, Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Murray, 1996), in Canada such work is sparse. To my knowledge, Wideen and Lemma (1999), Grimmert (1984) and Wodlinger (1989) represent the collections dedicated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of (then) current research in teacher education in Canada. In addition there is a small number of collections dedicated to research into specific teacher education programs in Canada, like OISE/University of Toronto (Beck & Cosnick, 2006), the University of British Columbia (Farr Darling, Erickson, & Clarke, 2007), and Simon Fraser University (Wideen & Pye, 1994; Beynon, Grout, & Wideen, 2004).

Over twenty years ago, Marvin Wideen (1984, pp. 247-248) described “some problems that any research effort [in teacher education in Canada] is likely to face”:

Three things in particular stand out. First, we have a very small [teacher education] research community in Canada. While it is much better now both in terms of numbers and quality than it was 20 years ago, or even five years ago, it is still small. The priority for most of us in faculties of education is teaching, not research; the number of educational researchers in Canada is few, and fewer still focus on teacher education. Second, we lack a research tradition in teacher education presently. Despite locating over 140 studies dealing with some aspect of teacher education, it is evident that research in the area receives low priority in most institutions. When faculty or students do select research areas to pursue through

¹ For the purpose of this paper as an introduction to the conference proceedings, I will mean ‘pre-service teacher education’ when using the term *teacher education*.

research, inquiry into how we train and educate teachers does not appear to be a high priority. When they do, what appears to occur is that individuals (faculty and students) pursue curiosities here and there with little or no reference to work conducted elsewhere in Canada. In short, research into teacher education has no tradition in which a community of scholars share a common interest and try to build on that interest from year to year. We are aware of only one institution in the country that has given research into teacher education top priority, I am aware of only one institution in the country that has made an academic appointment in an area called teacher education. The effect then, is research limited in quantity and diverse in focus. Third, we are dealing with very complex phenomenon [sic] about which we know far less than we may think. Because teacher education is so close to us it may tend to be taken for granted.

What has changed over the last twenty four years? A more precise answer to the question has to be left up to a study on the current state of research in teacher education in Canada. However, here are some of my more anecdotal observations.² In terms of numbers, teacher education research is well established in Canada. The Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE) is currently the second largest association within the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) – and since presentations are assigned by relative membership size, the number of CATE research presentations is currently the second largest at CSSE’s annual meetings, which happen in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and the Social Sciences. At least at the more recent of such meetings, CSSE delegates have been representing close to 10% of the attendees of the Federation’s annual meetings, which makes CSSE one of the largest member associations represented at the Federation’s meetings and CATE’s research presentations one of the largest in number among all member associations of the Federation, 73 of which will be represented at the Federation’s 2008 annual meeting.

Two factors, however, qualify the high number of CATE research presentations as an indication of a change over time with respect to the first two points raised by Wideen – at least to some degree. First, the number is only high relative to the Canadian researchers represented in the Federation. Fisher and Edwards (1999, p. 47) write in their social history of CSSE that there has been “the perception that CSSE was unable to attract more than about one-third of the potential membership”, that only about 60% of full-time education faculty members (1990) were members in CSSE, and that many education researchers “turned their attention south or to Europe or Australia”. The membership in CATE has overall been somewhat stable over the last twenty years.³ It also seems to be the case that Quebec education researchers, including those involved in teacher education research, are not well represented at CSSE’s annual meetings.

The second qualification has to do with a somewhat loose understanding of the domain of teacher education research. Conceptually and practically, research on student learning in

² Some of the conference discussion papers printed in these proceedings, in particular the one by Julian Kitchen, speak to some of the questions addressed in this section.

³ The membership of CATE numbered 285 in 2007, while the membership numbers from 1980 to 1995 range from a high of 353 (1980) to a low of 261 (1995) (Fisher & Edwards, 1999, p. 30).

schools, for instance, is of great relevance to the education of teachers, although it is not directly research *on* the education of teachers. A cursory look over the titles of the research papers presented through CATE at CSSE's annual conference over the last few years suggests that the conference makes room for research that is *relevant to* teacher education as well as research directly *on* teacher education.

Another observation in revisiting Wideen's assessment of teacher education research in Canada over twenty years ago concerns observations shared by many of those attending the conference of which this article is part of the proceedings. The attendees shared their observation that in particular at larger and research intensive universities professorial faculty in faculties of education try to stay away from or get out of undergraduate teaching, which is where the teacher education happens in Canadian universities.

Although certain themes in research in teacher education in Canada have been emerging over time, like social justice issues in teacher education, Aboriginal teacher education, e-portfolio use in teacher education, there does not seem to be any indication of a larger community of scholars that collaborate on teacher education research questions across research institutions and over time; a situation Wideen already identified over twenty years ago.

An accurate picture of the current state of research in teacher education in Canada has to be left up to a study on this issue, but it seems to us that there is some evidence that central problems raised by Wideen over twenty years ago about the then current state of affairs in teacher education research in Canada still exist today – at least to a still concerning degree. For me, it is in particular the problem that there is – in Wideen's (1984, p. 248) words – “no tradition in which a community of scholars share a common interest and try to build on that interest from year to year” that was motivating us to conceptualize the Working Conference on Research in Teacher Education in Canada. Hans and I wanted to explore the possibilities for beginning such a pan-Canadian tradition. In the next section I will be describing my thinking around a pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education in Canada.

Pan-Canadian Approaches to Teacher Education in Canada

Pan-Canadian approaches to research in teacher education in Canada can take different forms:

1. *Joint research projects*: collaborative research projects involving researchers from different institutions from different parts of the country; this project-based collaboration can range from joint research projects to joint strategic planning of research projects where each group goes then off to do their part of the larger project.
2. *Research-based critical friends*: researchers from different institutions working in similar areas of teacher education research serve as ‘critical friends’ for each others’ research work; this collaboration can involve support in research funding applications, data interpretation support, program evaluation support, and support in understanding the implications of one’s research on policy and practice, for instance.
3. *Dissemination-based critical friends (collaboration)*: regular meetings of researchers working in the same area(s) in teacher education research to present and discuss their respective research findings; joint publications in edited books; and so forth.

4. *Research-interest-based connections*: researchers from different institutions stay in regular contact about the research area in general and their own research in the area of joint interest through bulletin boards, list-serves, meetings at conferences or other means.

The possibilities listed here are in descending order of ‘intensity of collaboration’. All of these approaches go beyond meeting once a year at CATE’s annual meeting, but they stay below an understanding of a pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education as research done from the standpoint of a common vision for teacher education or research done that is somewhere centrally coordinated. The latter would neither be possible nor desirable. The collaboration Hans and I have in mind would span across the four different forms of collaboration listed above, would be on-going, and would be an effort to link the research together in a way that provides for a more comprehensive picture of teacher education in Canada and for a better understanding of possibilities and constraints of teacher education in the Canadian context to the benefit of teacher education programming and practice. Hans and I recognize and acknowledge the great value of a multiplicity of approaches to and foci in researching and practicing teacher education. There might be some approaches that are more acknowledged by Canadian policymakers than others, but through the different levels of pan-Canadian collaboration all approaches would / could have an (indirect) impact on policy making. We can see the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE) with its already existing organizational structure as providing the support at the organizational level that is so important in building and sustaining a tradition of collaboration and ‘cross fertilization’.

I now like to argue that there is a need for a pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education – understood in the diverse sense explicated above. I see at least the following four reasons for this need: (a) to account for the complexity of teacher education and teacher development; (b) to account for a greater interest in initial teacher education in Canada; (c) to account for the impact of the globalization trend in education on initial teacher education; and (d) to account for the Canada-specific context of teacher education and development in light of a dominant literature from the USA context. I discuss each reason in turn.

(a) One aspect of the complexity of the field of study of teacher education concerns its relationship to the many other fields of educational research. A good case can be made that teacher education research as a field of study draws upon most if not all other educational fields of study, from philosophy of education and educational psychology to adult education and pedagogy. For instance, to develop a deeper understand of the field experiences of teacher candidates, teacher education research will have to draw upon questions of purpose of schooling (philosophy of education), student learning (educational psychology), teacher candidates’ learning (adult education), and the teaching the teacher candidates engage in in their classes (pedagogy).

Another aspect of the complexity of teacher education research concerns the complexity of the structure of the phenomenon of teacher education itself. In the *Report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005) the panel distinguishes nine domains of research in teacher education for each of which they review the respective US-focused literature. If, in addition to this complexity of research domains of teacher education practice, one considers the possibility of quite diverse objectives or visions of what a teacher education program is to prepare teacher candidates for, the complexity of the many factors that are of core importance to understanding teacher education becomes even more evident.

Each of the nine research domains distinguished in the AERA Panel Report can now be looked at through the eyes of that particular vision of professional practice, leading, for instance, to a research question like: ‘What are the effects of methods courses and field experiences on helping teacher candidates develop competency in the professional practice as envisioned, for instance, by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005, pp. 10-11)?’ If one also considers that the nine research domains are also interconnected in different ways, the complexity of teacher education research becomes even more daunting.

How can quality research into all these different aspects of the practice of teacher education be done without losing a sense for how all these different aspects are interconnected, and, thus, for a larger picture of teacher education practice? It is my suggestion that a pan-Canadian approach to research of teacher education in Canada in the variety discussed above can provide the necessary scaffolding for developing a deeper understanding of teacher education practice (in Canada). In particular, in order to capture the impact that *the connection between the different domains, across the different layers* have on teacher candidates development, expertise from different domains needs to be ‘pooled’ and, sometimes, larger-scale research projects need to be undertaken.

(b) More recent developments in education and educational research in Canada suggest that a greater interest in teacher education research in Canada has been emerging aside from the interest among the CATE membership. There is, first, the publication of the Accord on Initial Teacher Education (ACDE, 2006) by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) in 2006 (in the following ‘the Accord’). Several events and sessions at research meetings have been organized to promote the Accord and to link it to teacher education in Canada. Calls for submissions to two special issues for the Canadian Journal of Education have just been published, one of which is built around the Accord; as the call for that special issue reads: “This special issue of *CJE* will engage a critical perspective to expand the themes of teacher education for the twenty-first century and world as envisioned in the Accord on Initial Teacher Education.”

Second, there is currently under way the *Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in Canada*, commissioned by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education (www.saeec.ca). SAEEE claims on its website that this study is “the first pan-Canadian study examining pre-service training programs for teachers”.

In the following I want to discuss several reasons for why a pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education in Canada is needed or, more carefully, is beneficial to teacher education in Canada in the light of these greater interests in teacher education research. The greater interest in establishing normative programmatic principles for initial teacher education, as exemplified by the deans’ Accord, needs to be accompanied by research. This will help with the *promotion* of those principles, as is suggested in the Accord (ACDE, 2006, p. 2):

By developing shared goals and principles and by undertaking cooperative research and data sharing, ACDE can enhance the profile of initial teacher education within all its member institutions and more broadly, promote greater understanding of the complexities and merits of teacher preparation programs to the public at large.

Teacher education research, however, will also be needed to support the *adequacy / understanding* of those principles. The first listed principle in the Accord, for instance, reads: “An effective teacher education program demonstrates the transformative power of learning for individuals and communities.” (ACDE, 2006, p. 4) It is only within a particular context of a program and the teaching and learning that happens within that program that “transformative power of learning” can be understood in a way that is meaningful for our engagement with the world; as all normative statements, the Accord’s principles for teacher education are about human engagement with the world. The principles, however, are intended to be pan-Canadian. Thus, there is also the need to understand the principles across particular contexts *while* grounded in the specific understandings within those contexts. It is here in particular where the value of pan-Canadian research approaches can make a difference. Taking into account what I previously said about the complexity of the field of study of teacher education, such research needs – or is at least better off with – a pan-Canadian approach. Also, as normative principles about effective teacher education programs, the adequacy / understanding of the Accord’s principles need to be confronted with case study research on exemplary teacher education programs (Howey & Zimpher, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 2006), the latter of which needed to have established a sense of what it means to be an ‘effective teacher education program’ prior to its inquiry. Such confrontation involves, thus, more pan-Canadian oriented teacher education research.

Another reason for why a pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education in Canada is needed in the light of the greater interests in teacher education research has to do with the expansion of private or semi-private interests into teacher education (research), as exemplified by the SAEE teacher education study. The study is funded, according to the SAEE website, by the Donner Foundation (www.donnerfoundation.org) and the Max Bell Foundation (www.maxbell.org). I do not want to get into the particularities of the funding history of these two funding agencies, rather I want to raise it as a general issue that private foundations provide funding support with quite substantial amounts of money for research into teacher education in Canada. As is generally true for all such foundations, the websites of the Donner Foundation and the Max Bell Foundation make clear that they provide funding for (research) projects in order to have a desired impact on Canadian society. If and to what degree the sociocultural and sociopolitical perspectives of such foundations impact the actual research and the reporting of it has to be decided for each case, but I do have concerns for principled reasons if pan-Canadian research projects in teacher education are primarily or exclusively commissioned or funded by private or semi-private foundations. I want to stress that I do not see teacher education research undertaken, commissioned or funded by private or semi-private agencies and foundations as problematic *per se*. The SAEE study, for instance, is clearly filling a void – and raises the question, why there had been such a void in the first place. Public research funding for education in general and for teacher education in particular is relatively small in size. If publicly funded teacher education research wants to have an impact on and support policy making, pan-Canadian projects with pooled funding and expertise seem a good way to go about it.

(c) In 1999 the Canadian ministers of education have signed an agreement-in-principle on ‘teacher mobility’ as part of the labour mobility chapter of the Agreement on Internal Trade (see www.cmec.ca/else/agreement.en.stm). The aim of this agreement-in-principle is

to reduce barriers to teacher mobility. It is intended to allow any teacher who holds a teaching credential in one province or territory to have access to teacher certification in any other province or territory in order to be eligible for employment opportunities in the teaching profession.
(Council of Ministers of Education Canada, n.d.)

The mobility provisions in the agreement include two levels for inter-provincial teaching credentialing. At the first level, the provision lays out a set of minimum requirements that *all* applicants for inter-provincial credentialing need to fulfill. While this first level secures for all provinces that certain requirements that each of them considers central are met by all those who actually teach in their respective province, the second level regulates how inter-provincial credentialing takes into account the different certification requirements that exist in different provinces. In the most common cases, a teacher who is certified in one province gets at least a temporary teaching certificate in any other province he or she moves to to allow the teacher to work in the receiving province without delay (first level). The teacher then has to use the interim time to meet the specific credentialing criteria for the receiving province that he or she has not yet met (second level). If a teacher meets all those criteria from the outset, the moving teacher immediately receives permanent teaching credentials for the receiving province.

While this is an agreement-in-principle, the provinces of Alberta and British-Columbia have already ratified a Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement in April 2006 (www.tilma.ca). Generally, the labour mobility article in the agreement provides for any occupational certification from one province being recognized and leading to certification in the respective other province (Article 13). At the moment, the agreement, however, allows for exceptions to such inter-provincial recognition. In the case of teacher certification, teachers with British Columbia teaching credentials receive full credentialing in Alberta, while teachers credentialed in Alberta need “additional training and certification” for credentialing in British Columbia (TILMA, 2006, p. 28). However, the agreement articulates the intent by both provinces to work on the elimination of these exceptions.

In its 22 September 2007 edition the *Globe and Mail* (p. A13) featured an advertisement by US-based Deamen College (www.daemen.edu/Canadian), located near Buffalo. The advertisement was directed at Canadian university graduates to recruit them for its teacher education program that prepares Canadians for certification in Ontario with classroom observations and teaching practicum placements in Ontario schools.⁴ A colleague of mine in charge of the teacher education program at one large Ontario university told me that such accredited US-based institutions pay money to schools for practicum placements, which contributes to the challenges of her faculty’s program to find adequate placements in schools for its teacher candidates.

These two examples illustrate two policy-driven trends in teacher education in Canada in times of economic globalization: the trend toward centralization of certification and the trend toward globalization in the education of Canadian teachers. Currently, I can only see the beginnings of these trends, where provincial control over certification is still written into agreements and the education of teachers still bound to provincial certification standards and a form of program accreditation. However, they are trends, and with all trends, one needs to look into the direction they point into. The already established centralization of teacher

⁴ Notably, they also advertise for a master’s degree “in just 16 months!”

education certification in the UK and the de-regulation of teacher education in the USA and both their implications for teacher education and the teaching profession need to be kept in view when assessing these trends in Canada.⁵

I believe that a pan-Canadian approach to researching teacher education is greatly beneficial for teacher education in Canada in light of these two trends. As Grimmett suggests (this volume, p. 47), with a lack of research on governance and policy in teacher education in Canada, Canadian policy makers will be more susceptible to American trends in certification issues in particular and teacher education governance issues in general. If teacher education research is to impact policy making in Canada with a pan-Canadian orientation – and I think it needs to – it greatly benefits from a pan-Canadian orientation and with pooling the funding and personnel resources in some form to better address the pan-Canadian context of teacher education governance and policy making. This argument does not just have implications for research in teacher education governance. As the discussion of the deans' Accord above suggests, governance and policy issues in teacher education are linked directly to (all) other aspects of teacher education like programming and pedagogy and, thus, research in those areas can contribute directly or indirectly to matters of teacher education governance and policy making.

(d) In the executive summary of the AERA panel report mentioned above (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005) – the most up-to-date meta-analysis of research on teacher education in the USA – the panel acknowledges the sociopolitical embeddedness of the framing and focusing of their meta-analysis (*Executive Summary*, 2005, p. 3):

It is important to note that the work of the panel is situated both within but also outside of the contemporary policy and political scene. On the one hand, the panel's work responds to the policy context of the time, and our choice to evaluate the empirical evidence about some of the teacher education issues that are of most interest to decision makers has been influenced by current policy debates. On the other hand, explicit in the panel's working assumptions is a critique of the current policy focus and considerable skepticism about the feasibility of producing the kind of evidence that many policymakers now seem to want – research that settles the teacher education 'horse race' once and for all and declares a clear winner.

The sociopolitical and sociocultural context of teacher education in Canada is quite different from the context in the USA. To give one example, the USA has been undergoing a de-regulation of teaching certification, resulting in a wide variety of alternative certification routes and, as a consequence, has led to a wide variety of alternative teacher education programs. These programs are alternative in the sense that they are different from traditional teacher education programs as they still exclusively exist in Canada. Zeichner and Conklin write about the situation in the USA:

⁵ See Peter Grimmett's discussion paper in this volume (pp. 41-58); see also Young (2004) and Zeichner (2006).

According to Feistritz and Chester's (2003) report on alternative certification in the United States, 46 states and the District of Columbia currently have some type of alternative teacher certification program, whereas in 1983, only 8 states reported that they had alternative routes to teaching. . . . State requirements concerning alternative certification programs vary. For example, only 13 states require any classroom training prior to a teacher's assuming full responsibility for a classroom, and only 19 states require a mentoring component (Education Week, 2003). (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005, p. 656)

In Canada, on the other hand, teacher education is across the board university -based, consists of university courses and practicum teaching in school settings; certification is granted on the basis of a successful completion of these programs, which result in most cases in a university degree, a bachelor of education. The university programs need to meet a minimum requirement set out by the respective provincial government or certification body (teacher colleges in British Columbia and Ontario), like a certain number of practicum days and the exposure to particular content, like multicultural and aboriginal education. Aside from those requirements, the program design is left up to the respective institution.

What does this difference in the Canadian and US context for teacher education mean for teacher education research in Canada? Certification requirements frame any teacher education programming, since university-based teacher education programs are only meaningful as long as they lead to certification by its graduates. As I argued for the previous aspect, with a lack of research on governance and policy in teacher education in Canada, Canadian policy makers will be more susceptible to American trends in certification and governance issues. If teacher education research is to impact policy making in Canada – and, again, I believe it needs to – the specificity of the Canadian context needs to be given high priority. A pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education seems to us more suited to address and keep in mind this Canadian context, because it creates a Canadian context for doing, disseminating and discussing research in teacher education by Canadian teacher education researchers. They might right now orient themselves stronger towards, particularly, the educational research community in the USA and other English or French speaking contexts for disseminating and discussing their research, and, thus, will by necessity have to place their research in some way into these other sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts.

As Julian Kitchen in his contribution to this volume argues (this volume, p. 91), US research contributions to teacher education are of great value to the Canadian context, in particular, since many aspects of the school system as well as of teacher education programs are similar in both countries. The point here is not to challenge this argument, rather it is to argue that there are central differences in the educational contexts in both countries and that those need to be given the attention in teacher education research in Canada that they require.

By organizing the Working Conference on Research in Teacher Education in Canada Hans and I wanted to rekindle the tradition of providing a pan-Canadian perspective on research in teacher education in Canada. As argued above, we consider the timing of the conference as very opportune. In the next section I talk about the conference itself.

The Conference

About the Conference

In order to explore the possibility of and maybe set the stage for a pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education in Canada, Hans and I conceptualized a meeting that would bring together a group of researchers with interests in such research. Rather than the usual paper presentation format, we wanted to provide opportunities for the researchers to have in-depth discussions about and explore possibilities in research in teacher education in the Canadian context with colleagues interested in the same research domain from across the country. For that purpose, we needed to keep the attendee group relatively small, which is why we wanted to go with an invitational conference. To reflect these characteristics of the conference, we conceptualized an invitational working conference on research in teacher education in Canada.⁶

In our invitation we announced the purpose for this working conference as follows:

- to review Canadian teacher education research to date
- to identify key areas and themes for research in teacher education
- to initiate clustered pan-Canadian teacher education research projects on identified areas of teacher education
- to establish lead groups of researchers in different jurisdictions
- to identify sources of scholarly and financial support
- to extend dialogue across provincial and territorial boundaries within Canada (but not the exclusion of course, of our international partners).

To provide focus for the discussions, we conceptualized different working groups in each of which one particular area of teacher education research would be addressed. One challenge was to have enough working group themes to capture at least what we would consider central aspects of (initial) teacher education, but, on the other hand, not having too many working groups to either have to have a large number of attendees or to have working groups that were too small. For the purpose of the conference it was important to us to keep the conference small enough to also allow for relationship building across the working groups, because many researchers would have interest in more than one working group and also because relationship building was a central part of the agenda. For that reason, for instance, we planned joint meals for the participants as an informal opportunity for getting to know each other better, professionally and personally.

We have, then, organized the conference around the following six themes, which formed the themes for the six working groups each participant assigned her- or himself to:

- Teacher education governance, policy and the role of the university
- Aboriginal teacher education and Aboriginal perspectives in teacher education
- Understanding of practices in teacher education related to diversity, identity and inclusion, and demographic challenges

⁶ ‘To confer’ comes from the Latin *conferre*, with *com* meaning ‘together’ and *ferre* meaning ‘to bring’, ‘to carry’: We wanted to *bring together* those like us interested in exploring research in teacher education within the Canadian context.

- The nature, role, and place of field experiences in teacher education and relationships with schools
- The education and professional development of teacher educators
- Teacher education program reform and development

Within each working group, we envisioned, participants would review what we know about each of the areas, identify key issues and questions for research in the area, and explore diverse approaches to inquiry within the area.

In order to have pan-Canadian representation, we sent out a letter to all deans of education with the invitation to identify two members of their faculty who have a research interest in teacher education and might be interested in at least one of the six themes. We extended our invitation for representation to the Association of Canadian Deans of Education, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and the Council of Ministers of Education (Canada).

At the conference we had teacher education researchers from the following 18 universities and 2 organizations attending: Alberta, Brock, Calgary, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface/Manitoba, Laurentian, Lethbridge, McGill, Manitoba, OISE/Toronto, Ottawa, PEI, Queen's, Saskatchewan, SFU, Sherbrooke, UBC, Victoria, York, the Manitoba Teachers' Society, and the Manitoba Ministry of Education, Citizenship and Youth.

The Discussion Papers

In order to provide each of the thematic working groups with a potential starting point for their respective group work, we intended to invite one Canadian scholar for each of the six theme groups to prepare a paper describing their view of

- the current state of affairs of research in Canada with respect to their theme,
- central issues to be addressed in research in Canada with respect to their theme,
- a design of a research program that allows such research to be undertaken.

We were able to arrange for discussion papers for all but the second theme (for an overview publication on this theme, see Archibald et al., 2002). The respective discussion papers were then distributed prior to the conference to the participants of the respective working group.

In his discussion paper *Teacher Education Governance, Policy, and the Role of the University* (this volume, pp. 41-58) Peter Grimmett (SFU) discusses teacher education in Canada from the perspective of governance and sociopolitical context. He illustrates the importance of giving attention to these perspectives by discussing what he calls the effects of de- and over-regulation on the governance of teacher education in England and the USA, hoping that these experiences allow the framing of research questions for the Canadian context "that enables teacher education to avoid the more deleterious effects of well-meant but intrusive policy on the practice of rigorously preparing culturally responsive and contextually relevant teachers for a diverse, multicultural context." (this volume, p. 41). Grimmett identifies three central issues to be addressed in teacher education research in the Canadian context with respect to governance issues: (1) professional governance of teaching, which needs to be strengthened by critically investigating it; (2) governance and policy in teacher education, which Grimmett sees as under-researched, a state that "contributes to the susceptibility of Canadian policy makers to American trends" (this volume, p. 47); (3) policy context of teacher education, in particular the current move in Canada toward 'labour mobility'. Grimmett argues at length that university

can and should play an important role in the formulation of policies that affect the governance of teacher education in Canada, in particular by contributing research and critique on the three central issues listed before; he argues that through the ACDE's *Accord of Initial Teacher Education* (ACDE, 2006) teacher education institutions can bridge as well as buffer external demands. Accordingly, Grimmett describes as the foci of the four research programs for teacher education in Canada to examine professional governance, the policy context of teacher education, the implications of labour mobility agreements on teacher education programs, and the potential of the ACDE's *Accord*.

Terry Carson contributed the discussion paper to the theme *Understanding of Practices in Teacher Education Related to Diversity, Identity and Inclusion, and Demographic Challenges* (this volume, pp. 65-72). In it he approaches the issues of diversity and identity in teacher education through the question 'How do we create spaces for learning to teach for the teacher candidates?' and from the perspective that learning to teach is a "psychic event", an event in which teacher candidates negotiate their (teaching) identity. In the first part of his paper, Carson focuses on the negotiating of teaching identities that he says is going on in teacher education when the "internally persuasive discourses" in teacher candidates (in form of deeply held beliefs and orientations) encounter the "authoritative discourses of teaching" of university courses and practica. He asserts that "teacher education is poorly equipped to help student teachers learn for the inevitable resistances to difficult knowledge" (this volume, p. 67), and that "the problem of teacher education [lies in] a failure to appreciate what is at stake in the psychic event of learning to teach" (this volume, pp. 68-69). It is within this understanding of the role of negotiating teaching identities in learning to teach that Carson frames (at least in part) the issue of diversity and teacher education. Encounters with cultural diversity, Carson argues, provide poignant instances of such negotiating and often "resistance to difficult knowledge" when "the ego ideal of tolerance and acceptance is disorganized by another's reality of experiencing racism and intolerance" (this volume, p. 67). Reporting on experiences with the Diversity Institute that was created in 2005 at the University of Alberta, Carson exemplifies in the third part of his paper the challenges that teacher education faces when attempting to support teacher candidates' negotiating of their teaching identities with respect to diversity.

In his discussion paper *Experiencing the Field in Teacher Education* (this volume, pp. 77-85), Jim Field addresses as the main question what part the field experiences play in becoming a teacher. As Field writes, most of the paper is lifted off a handbook to be read by those involved in the teacher education program at the University of Calgary – students, university instructors and teachers. The paper lays out central assumptions that the teacher education program at the University of Calgary makes and upon which the program builds its answer to the question what part field experiences play in becoming a teacher. Two assumptions are central. The first assumption is that learning to teach involves only partially – and not even as its primary objective – learning the technical aspects of teaching. The primary objective is to develop teacher candidates, as Dewey says, into "thoughtful and alert student[s] of education" (see the quote and reference in this volume, p. 79). This assumption is directly linked to the second fundamental assumption, which is concerned with the question what orientation towards the world characterizes such thoughtful and alert students of education. The second assumption is that at the core of thoughtful and alert students of education is an inquiry stance, where inquiry is "the fundamental process of coming to know and to be, as a learner and a teacher" (this volume, p. 79). The focus of the inquiry process is what Field calls the pedagogical relationship between the student(s), the teacher and the curriculum. "Inquiry

begins . . . when we are challenged by the mystery of a situation, and we face the challenge” (this volume, p. 80). It is teacher candidates’ prolonged engagement in schools that provides for the experiences from which the inquiry stance is to be developed by moving the focus of inquiry from the students to the teacher to the curriculum as teacher candidates move through the program.

In his discussion paper *Towards a Pedagogy of Teacher Education in Canada: Advancing Teacher Education Practices and Programs through Faculty Development* (this volume, pp. 89-114) Julian Kitchen addresses the fifth working group theme: the education and professional development of teacher educators. In the first part of his paper, Kitchen argues for teacher education as a specialized field of study with a “body of knowledge”, which is why “the professional development of teacher educators is necessary” (this volume, p. 90). In this part, Kitchen argues with a focus on the North American context, that the teacher education reform efforts in the 1980s and 1990s have led to publications over the last couple of years that provide now a compendium of “foundational understanding of teacher education”, and “we then need to build on this base to develop a body of teacher education knowledge, practices and programs appropriate to the Canadian context” (this volume, p. 91). Kitchen reviews a couple of prominent US and Canadian works that he considers articulating this foundational understanding of teacher education. He then discusses the need for developing a pedagogy of teacher education as central part of the professional development of teacher educators, referring to self-study of teacher education practice as the centre piece of this professional development. In the second part of his paper, Kitchen identifies a number of challenges and impediments to the reform of teacher education on the basis of the already existing body of knowledge of effective teacher education: the often antagonistic commitments by professorial teacher educators to the field as well as to academic research, the lack of attention to and required support for teacher educators from the field, the lack of concern for teacher education by many professorial faculty members, and the lack of a professional development culture in teacher education faculties. In the last section, Kitchen discusses concrete ways in which this lack of a professional development culture in teacher education faculties can be addressed. The suggestions he provides are such that they also address other challenges and impediments discussed in the previous section of his paper.

Tom Russell contributes a discussion paper to the sixth working group theme: teacher education program reform and development (this volume, pp. 117-123). In his paper he first addresses the question of the current state of affairs of research on the theme in Canada.⁷ He asserts that teacher education reform is too often seen as being separate from reforming, changing, and improving teaching in schools; both, however, should be seen as located on the same continuum in Feiman-Nemser’s (2001) sense, a continuum that reaches “from preservice preparation through induction and initial professional development to continuing professional development” (this volume, p. 117). Russell sees the traditional division of labour between universities (course work) and schools (practicum) and the resulting perception of a theory-practice gap in teacher education by teacher candidates as a manifestation of the lack of perceived and experienced continuity between the different phases of learning to teach. Drawing on Linda Darling-Hammond’s (2006) three fundamental problems of learning to teach, Russell discusses central difficulties in learning to teach, difficulties that, he suggests, are

⁷ This first part is mostly a reprint of a publication by Martin and Russell (Martin & Russell, 2007). To be consistent, though, I will refer in the following only to Russell as the author of the position paper.

often not seen, not acknowledged and not given enough attention in teacher education programs and their courses. In the second part of his paper, Russell identifies a number of central issues that should be addressed in research in teacher education program reform and development. He, particularly, points to the underdeveloped status of teacher education as a subject of inquiry in faculties of education as a potential major obstacle to improving teacher education: “Without a critical mass in a faculty of education to act as a professional learning community, research on teacher education is as readily ignored as teaching pre-service candidates is avoided in favour of graduate teaching and supervision.” (this volume, p. 121) In the last part of his discussion paper, Russell responds with eight suggestions to the question what the design of a research program can look like to allow research on teacher education reform and development to be undertaken.

The Introductory Essays

There are two essays included in this volume that were scheduled as introductory presentations for the conference. The first one is a revised version of a lecture given on the first night of the conference by Anne Phelan (UBC).⁸ The lecture was given as the 2007 Jean Irvine Lecture on Teacher Education at the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. We were fortunate that it was possible for the Dean of Education to schedule the lecture so that it would fall on the evening of the first day of the conference. The following comment is based on the revised version of the lecture printed in this volume.

In her lecture, Phelan discusses and warns of the shortcomings of an instrumentalist approach to teaching, teacher education and teacher education research, be it intentionally or by practice. The change toward a focus on outcome in education in general, Phelan observes, has teacher education researchers focus in their research on matters that would establish and protect teaching as a profession and university-based teacher education as the legitimate way of preparing for that profession. Phelan sees such utility or instrumental approach to teacher education research as an example of the problematic but wide-spread means-end thinking in education, where the focus is on the means (“in order to”) to achieve a particular end without engaging in questions about the adequacy of the end (“for the sake of”). Such instrumental thinking in teacher education research, she argues, can actually undermine teacher autonomy and teacher responsibility, because means-focused research can translate into paternalistic ways of influencing practice and into neglecting teaching and teacher education as forms of praxis, and, thus, undermine the very end for the sake of which the research was done in the first place, like “research carried out in the name of justice can be unjust, after all” (this volume, p. 28). Phelan does not deny the value in conceiving teacher education in terms of “production”, however, to do so solely, she argues, is to neglect teacher educators’ responsibility to help teacher candidates “discover their own worthwhile lives by helping them acquire the requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions or virtues to succeed in teaching” (this volume, p. 28) and is to neglect that means-end thinking needs to be seen in concrete contexts and the relationships that characterize these contexts. “Thinking responsibly in teacher education research” (this volume, p. 28) means for Phelan to not give in to the first impulse to ask and rush to answer the question ‘What do teachers need to know and be able to do?’, but rather to pause and “asking in Socratic style, what do we mean when we say . . . ?” (this volume, p. 29) and to

⁸ We are grateful to Anne Phelan as well as Peter Lang Publishing Group for their permissions to reprint a revised version of the lecture in these proceedings.

struggle and work with the “perplexity” and “unease” that will result from such pausing and questioning. With reference to Hannah Arendt, Phelan suggests for such thinking about teaching, teacher education and teacher education research: “Raising questions without providing neat answers was a key purpose in thinking” (this volume, p. 29).

In the introductory essay that I contributed to the conference (this volume, pp. 33-39) I discuss how the question “What is the purpose of teacher education?” does and should impact on research in teacher education. If teacher education is preparation for something, this purpose question provides at least a central part of the answer to the question what teacher education prepares *for*. Drawing on different teacher education research examples, I illustrate the different roles that the question of the purpose of teacher education plays in *research* on teacher education.

Contributions in the Large-Group Discussions

On the first half-day of the conference a discussion was scheduled to allow all participants to engage in a more general discussion within the large group before the participants would break out into their respective smaller working groups the next day. The title of this discussion session was “Where are we and where do we need to go in research on teacher education”. The discussion was facilitated led but rather participants contributed freely to the conversation. Following I summarize the points raised by participants in different contributions to the large-group conversation. (The points were reconstructed from notes I took.)

Three larger themes emerged from the discussion contributions. The first theme is built around issues of need and focus of research in teacher education in Canada:

- We have no good sense of programs across the country.
- It is important to know what is going on across the country (program model; alternative approaches).
- We need to have / do research that helps policy makers to see what is going on in schools.
- There are groups that are looking for our research to help with change.
- We need to research what makes a difference in programs (efficacy studies).
- Are we attending to what students are experiencing in schools? Are we attending to the world experiences in schools? Are we looking out to society in our concern for teacher education?
- The qualities in teacher education that really matter have to be seen over a longer period of time [not just within the constraints of initial teacher education programs].
- Thinking of teacher education as a field onto itself limits the influence of other fields on the education of teachers. We need to look outside.
- We need to be conscientious about the nomenclature we use. “Teacher education research” is different from “research on the education of teachers”. The latter is long-term and starts early with the upbringing of (future) teachers.

The second theme that emerged from the conversation is built around the dual role that academic teacher educators play, namely their role as teacher educators and their role as researchers in the field of education:

- We have to take two *stances*, as teacher education practitioners and as researchers.

- We should define our work as research *and* practice where we conceptualize teaching as scholarship.
- Our intense involvement in teacher education practice functions like a drain on our resources. When do we write?

The third theme of the large-group conversation is built around the contextual conditions for our work as teacher educators and educational researchers:

- We need opportunities for the ‘big discussions’.
- We already have talked about the issues 50 years ago.
- We do not have enough communication with each other.
- We need to create a collaboration of young colleagues.
- We need to create structures that make things/change happen, including structures that allow us to write.
- Face-to-face connections are important.

The Working Group Reports

Each of the working groups was invited to prepare a report at the end of the conference that would summarize the working group discussion. These reports are included in the proceedings and are grouped with the discussion paper of their respective working group. I see a number of research projects, even programs that can be derived from the working group reports. Just to give two examples. In the report of the third working group on *Understanding of Practices in Teacher Education Related to Diversity, Identity and Inclusion, and Demographic Challenges* it states (this volume, pp. 73-75):

The project of teacher education and of teacher education research should be mindful of the task of the public school.

- Enhance the life chances of all students.
- Educating a public for a democratic society.
- Personal and life sustaining social reconstruction (as opposed to social engineering).

More normative oriented research can inquire into the task of public schools in Canada that teacher education (research) should be mindful of or into the notion of a democratic society in the Canadian context. More empirically oriented research can inquire into stakeholders’ views of the task of public schools in Canada or into the underlying assumptions about that task as they manifest themselves in schooling and teaching practices in Canada. Some working group reports point quite explicitly to possible questions and foci of research in teacher education in Canada, as is the case here in the following excerpt from the report by the sixth working group on *Teacher Education Program Reform and Development* (this volume, pp. 125-127):

What research is needed?

- We should research what we are doing in our programs.
- We should research what the assumptions are that underpin our programs.

- Following up on graduates of our programs is crucial.
- We need research on the process of teacher education.
- Can we follow up with discontinuing teachers? Why do teachers leave?

Where We Might Go from Here

Many participants of the conference said explicitly how they appreciated the opportunity they had through this conference to engage with colleagues from other parts of the country in fairly in-depth discussions about issues in teacher education (research) that are so important to them as educators and researchers. It is difficult at this time to gage the impact that this opportunity will have (had) on the participants and beyond of creating connections and motivation for engaging in pan-Canadian approaches to research in teacher education in Canada. These proceedings are another step toward supporting the required continuity of opportunities for such conversations, and Hans and I hope that the proceedings will draw others who did not attend the conference into the conversation. One other concrete outcome of the conference is that a number of groups of conference participants will present at CSSE's annual conference in Vancouver in 2008.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) has not too long ago created funding for Strategic Knowledge Clusters with the following objective:

The overall objective of the Strategic Knowledge Clusters program is to build upon and add value to research supported through SSHRC's other programs by supporting Canadian researchers in their efforts to develop and sustain creative, innovative knowledge mobilization networks that lead to increasing the impact of research on policy and program development.
(www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program_descriptions/knowledge_cluster_e.asp)

In my view, Strategic Knowledge Clusters funding provide a possible funding structure to support the creating and sustaining of pan-Canadian research in teacher education in Canada. Several of the discussion papers and working group reports in this volume as well as some points raised in and documented from in the large-group discussion suggest, some very concretely, specific foci for such research and what organizational support and structure can support such joint efforts.⁹

I would like to end this introduction to the proceedings by quoting from the letter of invitation Hans and I sent out for this conference, expressing our excitement and hope for the project of a pan-Canadian approach to research in teacher education in Canada:

As teacher educators, it is our view, that given the considerable length of time that such an effort was attempted, it is an opportune moment to initiate and implement a program of systematic and broad-based pan-Canadian research into teacher education. The release of the *Canadian Deans of Education Accord on Initial Teacher Education* provides an impetus and possible parameters for such research, and is exemplary of a shared vision

⁹ See, particularly, the research program and focus recommendations in the discussion papers by Grimmett, Kitchen, and Russell.

about teacher education, and how it might live well in the contexts of our different jurisdictions. It is also significant that there have been a number of teacher education conferences recently hosted by different universities, and several teacher education programs in Canada have been or are in states of review. Not least, the *Canadian Association for Teacher Education* has become much more active in recent years on focusing on teacher education and advocating for a greater research presence in the area.

The interest in teacher education is reflective of the particular contexts in which we work, and the kinds of demands (in terms of expectations for teacher preparation, concerns about resources for teacher preparation, and the challenges posed by demographic and cultural changes in our communities, for example). Such challenges pose legitimate reasons to thoughtfully engage in research about teacher education, and how to foster understandings of good teaching and educational practices.”

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