Introduction

Gordon M. Pradl
New York University

Recently at a teachers' conference in England, I attended a "great debate" about the low morale of teachers and the general mess education is in throughout the country. In these conservative times, amid the West's declining economic power, I expected the businessman on the panel to lecture the audience on standards and the need for more assessment—why were teachers mucking about and not getting students down to the basics? Instead, when his turn came to speak, he focused on two qualities that he hoped teachers in the future would take as their paramount educational goals for children: confidence and flexibility. He wasn't concerned with employees failing to follow orders or speaking incorrectly; rather, he wanted to know where their initiative was? How were they going to adapt to ever-changing conditions in the workplace if they didn't know how to work together, how to solve problems creatively in a social setting? And what surprised me the most was his plea for drama activities and role playing in the curriculum. Through this kind of "play," he argued, students come to understand other points of view. In doing so, they end up less rigid about their own perspectives on the world and more open to negotiation and compromise, more open to change.

What this businessman was describing captures in many respects the concerns of the various educators in this volume. As they reflect on teacher change, they come face to face with a number of inherent contradictions regarding change. Such contradictions appear because the way we interpret and relate to change, both individually and collectively, depends ultimately on our social construction of it.
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Change, in other words, is not some material object or process out there waiting to be discovered. Instead, change remains what we make of it for our own purposes. Thus any discussion of change requires that we locate ourselves accurately within an arena of conflicting agendas before we are able to make useful proposals within the field of education.

The most striking conflict exists between economics and politics. One side wants change taken seriously because change is the key characteristic of contemporary economic life. On the other side are those who are interested in change because they wish to push some ideological program, one intended to distribute more equitably the potential benefits of freedom and democracy. In the first case, we’re facing brute material facts—technologies being displaced, markets disrupted, and demographic and cultural patterns dislocated. As Benjamin Disraeli remarked in 1867 about the imperative of contemporary industrial society, “Change is inevitable. In a progressive country change is constant.” In the second case, we are contesting different social visions—how should we relate to each other, what principles and values should we hold? In either case, the hardest response to face is often our own resistance.

Most of us, it seems, would simply prefer things to remain the same—the status quo looks more appealing, especially when we think that somehow we are benefiting. Accordingly, incumbency with all its faults is generally more reassuring than a future that risks being in doubt, risks placing us in some positions we are unsure of. Voters, for instance, never tire of complaining about politicians in general, but they seem particularly reluctant to challenge their own immediate representatives. Yet from any perspective it is clear that we are living in a period of rapid change and during such periods we seem especially prone to nostalgia, that frame of mind which sees change as leading us in a downward direction. Conjuring up “the good old days” remains a convenient way for us to cling to some fantasy of order and control.

The question we need to consider is what actually happens to us when we are in the process of becoming different. First and foremost this means we must give up for a time the certainty of control. To be out of control is to be thrust into a world in which we begin to doubt our present knowledge. Yet “not knowing” feels uncomfortable, so we try to avoid ambiguity and indeterminacy, try to see the world in black and white terms. As the psychologist George Kelly explains, we enter events always in anticipation of them, so it is perfectly natural to shy away from those occasions and situations where we are not prepared with a social script to meet the faces that we will meet. For instance, a
teacher whose classes center on his own talk is going to find it very hard to make room for student talk, and then to hear that talk if and when it occurs. Whether we are trying to adjust to altered conditions in our environment or actually trying to alter who we are and how we interact with those around us, change will not be easy.

In education, contrasting intentions further intensify feelings of resistance. On the one hand, are we being pragmatic and simply preparing students for life in a complex and unpredictable world of constant change? Or, on the other hand, do we have a larger mission in mind as we seek to prepare students to actually change social relationships and institutions in that world? In both instances many problems need addressing. Yet, regardless of what position or faith we subscribe to, teachers themselves need to be at the center of changing attitudes and approaches.

Central to any shift in how we view teaching and learning is the issue of authority and control. For instance, to consider using more student-centered approaches to instruction in an classroom that previously had been teacher dominated immediately exposes the teacher to the stress of having to readjust her role relationships with students. It is precisely this readjustment of role relationships that serves to pinpoint the dilemma we face in trying to bring about any kind of educational change. When teacher educators urge teachers to see beyond their traditional ways of being with students in the classroom, this is not just a matter of adding to the teachers' knowledge base. Instead, teachers are being pushed to transform themselves. This means they must have enough confidence to be flexible in living with indeterminacy: not always knowing where their control is in the classroom, not always knowing what the learning outcomes will be. If students are allowed to participate in the negotiations that determine what is to be studied and how their learning is to proceed, the teacher will have to relinquish to the students a significant amount of responsibility for initiation.

But our capacity as teachers to adapt to these new relationships is hardly unrestricted. We would certainly never claim to be educating students for obsolescence; however, we often end up doing exactly that because we have difficulty seeing the connection between learning and self-determination. Ironically, that is also the larger problem or contradiction we face in our society and the reason we keep losing our grip on how to bring about teacher change. The social message remains mixed. While we want to be ready for change, we don't readily want to give up our little stake of privilege that helps keep change at bay. These are the distribution and cost questions that all readers of this book will have to ask of themselves: Who initially will lose what? What will be the attendant compensations? What are the true implications of cre-
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Gilligan, however, wants to take our reading of this teacher's struggle a step further and see it as a "question of how or whether she can stay with Clarence and also be with the other children in her class." By shifting our frame of the situation, Gilligan is able to understand Chris' change of mind as a story about a female teacher breaking free of conventionalized images of women and self-sacrifice. In deciding to remove Clarence, Chris shifts from "trying to become the angel in the house" and so becomes more responsible for acting on her feelings in the situation. By including more of a sense of her own self in the conflict, Chris comes closer to realizing "what good teaching means: a willingness to listen more fully to her own voice in relationships and also a deepening appreciation of the relational conflicts which are an inescapable part of teaching." In emphasizing the web of relationships that surrounds teaching decisions and change, Gilligan is able to conclude: "Within a relational framework and within a culture which both idealizes and devalues women, Chris's act is an act of resistance and courage rather than an act of capitulation."

In her essay on gender stereotyping, Linda Perry continues this focus on how the perspective of care is so often ignored in education. Her illustrations of the numerous ways teachers limit the educational opportunities of female students in the classroom offers a strong indictment of a system in need of change. On college campuses in almost every area, from admissions and financial aid to campus employment and health care, a systematic pattern of discrimination works against women. Further, research has demonstrated "that when women and men engage in identical behavior, the behavior is devalued for women." We sex-segregate women by thinking of them as the "quiet and nonassertive" students in class and we also exclude them by sex-typing courses such as computer science versus business education. In sum, the picture is not a pretty one from either a justice or a care point of view, but it is successful in keeping women "in their place," in keeping their voices silenced.

Unfortunately, simply identifying an injustice does not lead to a quick remedy; otherwise the "problem" of gender discrimination would now be a thing of the past. And so Perry probes deeper to find reasons why institutional and teacher change in this area is so difficult. One explanation she pursues comes from General Systems Theory: the school as a system is often more closed than open and flexible because too frequently it protects itself by domesticating new information rather than using new information as an occasion for change. The use of "rules" helps keep old conceptions and convictions in line because they often operate at an unspoken level and so remain unexamined—we "naturally" reinforce the rough and tumble of boys on the play-
ground, but are startled when we see any girls exhibiting such behavior. Thus the rules for female behavior, while predominantly social in origin, become confused with iron-clad laws of nature. Although "biologically based behaviors do not include determination to succeed, nurturance, intelligence, kindness, seriousness, or any other behaviors that affect learning and education," educational institutions continue their deep-seated prejudices against women.

Change in this crucial area can only come about when the various parts of the system are considered as a whole. Thus Perry, and Cheris Kramarae who responds to her essay, see the importance of flooding the entire educational enterprise with alternative options for countering gender prejudice. Again, an ecological perspective allows us to acknowledge that the context of each learning event experienced by a woman suggests yet a larger context. Until all these various contexts are in alignment, it is easy for students to retreat into preexisting stereotypes. For instance, the materials of any course offer opportunities for engaging women's perspectives and accomplishments, but the teacher simultaneously needs to be sensitive to nonexist language use and aware of gender issues in the conduct of classroom activities. Further, there should be an awareness of how the classroom climate also helps to contribute to the larger school or campus climate. Each and every day-to-day behavior in all these spheres is not only mutually supporting, but provides the social basis for encouraging individual teacher change. If we fail to see these connections, we'll lose the opportunity to move toward a society in which, as Perry puts it, "educational and life experiences are based on abilities and aptitudes rather than on biological sex."

Pat Diamond's essay continues a concern for honoring the perspective of the teacher who desires or is in the midst of change. "The challenge for in-service teacher educators," Diamond suggests, "is to help teachers see themselves as capable of imagining and trying alternatives—and eventually are self-directing and self-determining." He is very aware of their resistances; nevertheless, he believes teachers can be "given opportunities to experience themselves as self-fashioning people who can make themselves into what they want to be." The social arrangements and conventional wisdom in schools, however, seldom permit opportunities for self-reflection and growth. Because teachers frequently conceive of control as operating externally to them, the excuse "They won't let me!" can serve as a powerful rationale even when, as Diamond's research has shown, there is no basis for such a conclusion. The task, then, is to create conditions that support teachers in articulating and testing their educational beliefs and theories in action. Confidence, or how teachers feel about them-
selves, is again a crucial change factor as Diamond seeks to help teachers get in touch with their own agency.

By using the idea of a “fixed-role,” an approach from Personal Construct psychology pioneered by George Kelly, Diamond shows how playing with a teacher’s script and self-image might allow these teachers to distance themselves from their routines and begin experimenting with their own teaching practices. The two case studies he presents reveal no magical results, but they do encourage us to see change as a multidimensional partnership. In a “what if?” mode, teachers begin to experience how alternatives in vantage point can get them closer to the consequences of their behavior. Such a trying of alternative roles needs a protected interpersonal space, one which offers options, not judgments. Teacher educators might help teachers move beyond feeling stuck or ineffective through taking seriously each teacher’s vital contribution to the process of reflecting on existing educational practices. Change, Diamond reminds us, is empowerment, not imposition: “Construed as it is from a given perspective, any teaching can always be varied, while ever higher levels of self-consciousness can be attained. . . . By first knowing their own frames of reference and then by struggling to look at things in other ways, teachers can change.” And as James Britton underscores in his response to Diamond’s essay, we are very much back to matters of drama when we take George Kelly’s ideas to heart, for “what is involved is ‘make-believe’—a role familiar from most people’s childhood.”

Laura Martin’s essay extends our inquiry into the reasons why professional relationships that facilitate rather than direct are so important for teachers attempting to take on new roles in the classroom: “The situational constrains and historical work patterns in schools mean that teachers’ daily practices actually may work against taking a scientific approach” of “reflection and analysis.” Arguing against teacher isolation, Martin borrows the ideas of Vygotsky, who emphasized how it is the interpsychological connections between two or more persons that determines the intrapsychological learning within the individual. In other words, what new information we take in and how we shift our perspective is deeply dependent upon the social web of meanings that we share and articulate with those with whom we are learning.

Describing three teacher in-service projects, Martin concludes that change depends very much on teachers learning “new communication strategies and new ways to organize information environments.” But such learning only happens when the teacher is experimenting with new practices within her own socially constituted “zone of proximal development.” In his response to her essay, Denis Newman builds on
this idea by calling for further inquiry into how teachers, within their own supportive professional communities, come to build the confidence that undergirds change. In attempting to understand from a Vygotskian perspective the resistance of teachers to new ideas and practices, both Martin and Newman confirm how much more we need to study the actual social processes involved when teachers collaboratively construe and try new teaching behaviors as part of their own commitment to learning.

Jan Sinnott invites us to see teacher change in terms of the “dialogue quality of reality.” By examining the “new” sciences—from quantum mechanics and chaos theory to cooperative evolution and cognitive theory—she challenges us to join their innovative reconceptualizations of knowledge and knowing. Knowledge in this world of science is characterized by open and relational social systems rather than closed and isolated individual systems. Drawing on the nature of inquiry and theory building in current science, Sinnott constructs a model of the teaching process that would be compatible with these changing realities, but she also makes note of those factors, such as the bureaucratic and authoritarian structures of schools, that serve as “roadblocks to change in the classroom.”

Sinnott’s useful presentation provides more than enough reach to take seriously the fact that all teachers already act in complex ways. We need, however, to investigate further how they are denied realization of their own processes of genuine learning. How might such teachers come to acknowledge that their personal “knowing” is relational and probabilistic, not unitary and absolute? The flexibility required to flourish in schools marked by these new conditions arises in those teachers who are supported in their creative disorder, so once again the challenge is social and institutional and not a matter of blaming individual teacher victims.

In her response to Sinnott’s essay, Diane Lee further elaborates on activities that would be consistent with this vision of dialogue: more room for the personal and the affective dimensions of our lives, more story telling and reflective writing, more student choice, more interrelating of the subject matter areas—all things that would usefully disrupt the flow of any conventional teacher-centered classroom. In short, the accommodating teacher in this instance would have to surrender a certain amount of control and simultaneously risk being more vulnerable, and so teacher educators will need to pay careful attention to the psychological costs involved.

Margaret Vaughan’s essay reports her own growing awareness of the importance of carrying on dialogue with teachers. Because there are few structural or administrative incentives for teachers to alter what
they are currently doing with students, business remains pretty much
as usual. But, as Vaughan struggled with the recalcitrant, she realized
that "focusing on the resistance of teachers implies that the fault lies
with them, just as teachers ultimately blame their students . . . the
most fruitful approach is to assume the problem lies within us. It is our
job to ensure change, not our students'". Telling teachers something
new only worked when they were already positioned to understand its
benefits. In most other instances, Vaughan as teacher consultant finally
had to work in "concert" with others—"when trying to change the
behavior of someone else, more often than not, my behavior had to
change first."

This lesson effectively counters any notion that change can come
about from some top-down, formulaic directive. Teachers have theo-
ries and intentions that must be considered and like most persons, they
are resentful of advice that hasn't been asked for. As Joan Stein er
argues in her response, assisting teachers in exploring the origins of
their practice invites a dialogue between teachers and teacher educa-
tors. Describing her positive experience with mainstreaming, Steiner
shows how a policy of heterogeneity encourages teachers to be more
permeable to change. Exchanging stories becomes a way for teachers to
learn from each other.

The rhetoric of teacher empowerment and change often does not
come from those who are listening closely to teachers themselves.
Joseph Janangelo seeks to expose certain misleading tropes used by
various educational critics to characterize a teacher's role in a liber-
tory pedagogy. Identifying "muses," "performers," "prophets," and
"martyrs" as enforcing reactionary and romantic stereotypes of teach-
ing, Janangelo argues that such images "delude teachers about their
personal and professional responsibilities, disempower them from
making significant changes in their working conditions, and discour-
gees them from seeing themselves as worthy of better treatment by the
academy." At the heart of his critique is a concern that those who cry
out most militantly for teacher change are frequently stuck in their own
rigid agenda, having lost the ability to be "polyphonic." Teacher
bashing, in the name of whatever honorable cause, only perpetuates
divisions and further resistance within the profession. Teachers grow
in confidence and become more flexible when they concentrate on
what they can accomplish rather than dwelling on feeling guilty for all
the things they will never get done. Without a realistic and sympa-
thetic picture of the conditions of teaching, much radical discourse
ends up dissuading rather than persuading.

In her response, Lil Brannon takes exception to Janangelo's con-
flating of "images of critical teaching with liberal romantic images that
have captured the popular imagination." She too rejects these images, but on gender grounds. Painting the teacher as a self-effacing, solitary servant plays into the patriarchal system of domination and thereby misrepresents how the "critical teacher" depends upon social alliances, which in turn sustain the moral orientation of care. Brannon also champions narratives of teaching when she points to "the power of discourses outside those 'typical' of educational inquiry—the stories of teachers—that pose problems about the role educational research plays in the daily life of the classroom." Such discourses, however, are "often dismissed as merely anecdotal and certainly unscholarly."

Brannon wants to stop the objectification of "teacher" that constitutes so much of educational criticism. "Instead of constructing alliances with teachers," she points out, "the educational research enterprise is dependent on finding fault with what teachers do." Taken together, Janangelo and Brannon provide compelling arguments for putting teachers, rather than "experts," at the center of our efforts to bring about educational change.

Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe further extend our understanding of the relationship between change and cultural values by offering a sweeping critique of how the strategic employment of technology is fundamentally shaped by existing social patterns and beliefs, especially in education. They argue that although more student-centered approaches to learning are evident in schools today, introducing the computer into teaching environments does not guarantee the triumph of this trend. As long as teacher-centered practices predominate, the computer as a tool for learning actually reinforces hierarchical teacher control and continues to marginalize already underrepresented student groups in our society. Because of this, Hawisher and Selfe emphasize, "reform efforts, especially when they are computer-supported, must proceed simultaneously on at least two levels if we hope for success: in local arenas—in the minds of individual teachers and students and within computer-supported learning spaces—and in the broader political arenas where social and political policy is made."

Use of the computer in schools has frequently disappointed the expectations of those educators who saw it as a powerful force to help democratize classrooms. Hawisher and Selfe trace the history of this disappointment, especially in the area of computer-supported writing, but they note two powerful applications—computer-based conferences and hypertext—both of which could augment educational change by encouraging students to gain significant control over their own language activities. Gary Graves' response to the Hawisher and Selfe essay shows equally the power and the optimism of their analysis. When we
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ignore the larger contexts and belief systems that constrain what is possible in individual classrooms, we frustrate the change process. Telling the story of these larger cultural imperatives helps us to set a broader base for collaborative change among teachers at all levels.

The concluding essay by Phyllis Kahaney helps us to comprehend how our view of knowledge is an important prerequisite to change. The teacher’s perspective on knowledge and how she “knows” that knowledge serve to position the teacher’s social relationships within the educational system. It is more helpful to see change, Kahaney emphasizes, as part of “an ongoing process called ‘learning,’ instead of as a product or a ‘thing.’ ” To illustrate this, she features an instructive anecdote about two teachers struggling to change. One senior professor, who initially appeared resistant to the ideas Kahaney was presenting in a Writing Across the Curriculum seminar, ends up excited about tryout new interactive methods in his classroom. In contrast, a junior faculty member, who at first presented herself as looking for new teaching approaches, shut down in the process of the seminar and retreated back to the safety of her lectures.

This surprising reversal in response to the kinds of open changes being encouraged by Kahaney brings us back to the relationship between confidence and flexibility. The younger teacher unfortunately was under great threat to prove herself, which weakened her sense of confidence and gave her a greater need to control her classes. This caused her to lose the kind of openness and flexibility required for an attempt at student-centered approaches. But even more important, her view that she was in control of knowledge prevented her from taking seriously the role of students in the making of meaning. In contrast, the senior professor was at a stage in his career where he had little to lose and so could be more “playful” with the ideas that Kahaney was urging on him. Once again, holding different intentions and understandings of how meaning is made leads to quite variant results in the classroom. Therefore, unless teachers are able to voice publicly their own concerns and understandings regarding knowledge and control, it is difficult to know where the change process is to begin.

As an ensemble, these nine essays lead us inexorably to conclude that, despite the urgency of educational change, the teacher who is changing is clearly at risk. However, a community of teachers working together, telling their stories, and experimenting with alternatives can provide a significant compensation for those who initially experience themselves losing power and control over their students. Once we understand that change involves the long and difficult process of teachers gaining their own agency and altering their perspective on
knowledge and relationships, we will be well-advised to foster those democratic conditions which best encourage *confidence* and *flexibility* within teachers themselves.

Educators at any level who are committed to changing school practices must understand that such change depends upon a prior political commitment. Democratic beliefs and attitudes must come to characterize all the various networks of social relationships that mark the teaching/learning enterprise: teacher and student, teacher and teacher, teacher and administrator, school and university. One symptom of the status and hierarchical pattern that undermines teacher change resides in the presumably innocent but degrading term, "training." This concept from the heyday of "behaviorism" implicitly encourages us to see change as coming from without, as something that is done to us. The use of such terminology exposes the fact that teachers finally are looked down upon, as rats running through someone else's maze. Truly respecting each teacher's capacities and perspectives, and accepting their key role as reflective professionals in instituting change, would suggest replacing "training" with the word that should bind us all together, "education."

In short, the real struggle here is to take teachers seriously, to understand what they are saying. Teacher educators must join as partners with teachers in the hard work and play required to shift perspectives and try alternatives. Without such joint effort and mutual respect, teachers' voices will remain silent and their energies will go elsewhere. Yet, with such an effort, change can become central to learning itself and thus part of the ongoing human endeavor.