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The heart of teaching

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Introduction

There may be times when teacher education programs appear to their participants—students, instructors, and sometimes professors, too—as though the activity of teaching could be reduced to what is *planned*, what appears on paper in a sequential blueprint of activity, or what seems inherent in a set of resources for teaching that one might collect and develop in the course of a teacher education program. It is probably true that all of these things are helpful in preparing for a career in teaching. Included would be a set of ideas and theories about learning and pedagogy that promise excellence in practice vis-à-vis their related benefits for pupils. One's knowledge of the foundational disciplines of history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology, together with the curriculum guidelines set out by ministries of education and one's creativity and finesse in designing lessons and unit plans with outcomes identified and defended in terms of a mandated program of studies are all at the nub of this. Throw in a pedagogical approach and a set of strategies that increase the likelihood and depth of student engagement, and it seems that one is *ready* for the classroom.

It would likely be an exaggeration or, at the very least, an oversimplification to suggest that the preparation for a career of teaching *could be seen* to consist solely of these educational, technical and procedural precedents; we think it is a worthy concern nonetheless that we may at times set ourselves up with a reductionist and misleading view of what it means to *be* and *become* a teacher. Teaching and learning are fundamentally *relational* activities and this core feature—what we refer to in this article as the *heart of teaching*—can become lost in a technical rational (Schön, 1983) representation of the curriculum of teacher education, such as the one described above. What is lost in such a representation of teaching, and how one prepares for a career of teaching, is any discussion or acknowledgment of a deeper level or dimension of teaching—what Parker Palmer (1998) refers to as the *inner life of teachers*, the character and spirit of individuals who inhabit the world of education, what they bring to their careers as teachers in the form of their unique talents and personal interests, not to mention their resolve to make things work and ultimately how they remain engaged and motivated as learners themselves. Our concern may be aptly couched in Palmer's (1998) premise that, "… good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; it comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10):

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> The premise is simple, but its implications are not. It will take time to unfold what I do and do not mean by those words. But here is one way to put it: in every class I teach, my ability to connect to my students, and to connect them with the subject, depends less on the methods I use than on the degree to which I know and trust my selfhood—and am willing to make it available in the service of learning. (p. 10)

Palmer's acknowledgement of the importance of a teacher's sense of selfhood seems to run counterpoint to the meaty discourse of best practices, mandated content and measureable *outcomes* of schooling processes, but it certainly supports the view of teaching that we are resonating with in this article. His general approach provides a framework for the direction of our argument. We draw further from MacKinnon's (1989, 1996) view of *learning to teach at the elbows* as an embodied, situated, and dialogical relationship between student and coach, with situational elements that shape both them and their practices in an embodied form or *way of life*, much like the concept of *Tao* in ancient Chinese philosophy. This theory of learning to teach fits well with Palmer's (1998) attention to the *heart of a teacher*: "the place where intellect and emotion and spirit will converge in the human self" (p. 11).

Our story also tells of craft understandings, or craft knowledge (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992), related to the education of teachers and we are raising the question of how we might counter tendencies to think of teacher education programs strictly in instrumental ways? In another way, the work also speaks to a liberated view of curriculum, which places learning, knowledge and cognition clearly in a context of human agency and aspiration (MacKinnon, 2013). How might we attend more to the craft of teacher education and this relational view of teaching and learning in the way we think about our teacher education programs? And how might we represent these kinds of understandings in our teacher education programs? Are we are not in need of stories in the research literature of teacher education and professional development that attend to the relational aspects of teaching and learning and thus contribute to a different kind of discourse and understanding, not only of teaching and learning, but also of *becoming* a teacher—a discourse and understanding that would heighten our awareness of the humanistic qualities and individuality of teaching in a way that might help young teachers *bring themselves* to their careers in education?

We begin with two stories: first, a lengthy story about Chris when he was a teacher education candidate in a tough first practicum. The second story is about Allan's background as a teacher and teacher educator, told to help situate his coaching of Chris. Following the two accounts, told from Allan's perspective as coach, we turn to an analysis drawing from the *coaching models* put forward by Donald Schön (1987) in his conceptions of reflective practice and practicum.

Chris' story: From musician to teacher candidate to teacher-musician

Chris enrolled in the teacher education program at Simon Fraser University (known locally as the Professional Development Program or PDP) after a successful musical career as a recording artist and performer in a well-known and very successful rock band. After about a dozen years under contract with a major record label, and having produced a handful of albums including several hit singles that aired on North American and European radio

stations coupled with years of touring on the road, the band finally collapsed and Chris—in his early thirties with a young wife and child at the time—decided to pursue a career as a teacher. His wife had done her teacher education a couple of years before and Chris had been considering a career in education for some time. He was admitted to a PDP module—candidates are grouped into small module groups with particular themes for two-thirds of the program—located in a small elementary school in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia near his home. It was during his first semester when I met Chris four years ago, as I had been assigned to his module as part of the instructional team.

One of the early activities of the program involved students sharing their "journey to PDP." They did this in pairs, and I noticed Chris quietly and modestly speaking about his experiences with the band to his partner. He had a photo of the band on stage in a large arena, which drew me in to his presentation as I had also come into teaching from a musical career and I felt that Chris and I would likely share some common ground and interest as colleagues. I was immediately impressed by how humble he was; he was not full of himself in any way, as one might think given some of our stereotypical images of rock stars. In fact, Chris appeared to be quite the opposite—a very generous and kind-hearted man who seemed to be much more keen on others and their interests than on his own self-interests.

Chris's first practicum placement was in a small inner-city elementary school where he worked with a class of grade four and five pupils. Many of the students at this school hail from difficult family contexts, often partially a result of lower socio-economic conditions. The children attending the school are not malicious in any way, but they are a challenging group for any teacher. Chris struggled in this environment; it seemed there was little he could do to get students' attention in his classroom and the behaviour of the students was fairly chaotic at first. Chris came to me for help. I reasoned that it was our connection to music that paved the way for this, as by this time we had swapped albums and several stories about our past experiences in the music business.

When I visited the classroom, I saw the same selfless qualities in Chris that I observed in his interactions with university peers. It was not just a lack of ego, he seemed hesitant to take charge of the class, and there was little if any sense of coherence to the activities or direction of his lessons. He had yet to experience what it was like to hold the attention of a group of pupils, and as a result (I theorized) there seemed to be no reason for the children to listen to him. I could not help but to wonder whether our teacher education program might be at fault, sometimes setting students up with a deceptive image of teaching that, ultimately, depersonalizes or sterilizes them as individuals. In the early months of the teacher education program, students are inundated with do's and do nots and procedural information that can be overwhelming. Worse still, students may be left with the impression that success in teaching lies in mastering these procedural elements, not ever being taught or realizing the necessary role of their own resolve to come to grips with the situation (such as classroom management) and make things work.

I suggested to Chris that he use his music as a way of finding his legs in the classroom. We worked together to plan a lesson that started with a Youtube video of his band performing one of their hits, with a prominent opening shot of him playing guitar. Once the kids recognized him, surely their curiosity and interest would be piqued. At this point, he would answer any questions they had about his band, but only if they raised their

hands, and on the condition that there would be no interruptions while someone was speaking. In this way, we anticipated there could be some flow, direction, and continuity to the discussion, a reason for the students to pay attention. The lesson worked just as planned, and this was the beginning of a turning point in Chris's practice. He managed to hold the attention of the children and have a good fifteen-minute discussion with them stemming from their questions about what it had been like to be a rock star. I suggested that a next step would be for Chris to sing with the kids, for them to make music together.

For the next days, I joined Chris with his class for singing time. The two of us, with guitar and ukulele, sang with the children. I taught the kids a few of the songs I enjoyed with my own students as a grade six teacher long ago, and Chris taught them some popular contemporary songs. The music continued to be a ground that allowed some semblance of control and continuity; it could even have been construed as having developed into a place of security and comfort for the children, in that it was productive and enjoyable time spent with an element of control that was still lacking at times in other subjects and activities. So, although Chris still had to work hard to control the class, he and they both knew what it felt like to be "in control," and gradually he experienced more success in all of his teaching at the school. He no longer had to try to shout above the students and he learned how to sustain their attention and cooperation with subtle means of control through gestures and nonverbal cues. Chris's first round of practicum, which was six weeks in duration, included a three-week immersion period of teaching approximately half of a full teaching load. As a culminating activity, again with my coaching, Chris wrote a song with his students and recorded it with them. As a parting gift, he gave a CD of the song to each of the students.

In the following summer semester, during the final term of his teacher education program, Chris wrote a song and recorded it as a final assignment in one of his courses. He recorded and produced the song at my house, and I remember feeling at that time that he was now thriving in the program, simply by being himself and bringing his talents to teaching in a very rich and productive way.

As chance would have it, Chris and I became good friends and now, almost four years later, we continue to play music together in a part-time band. He completed his teacher education program successfully and was hired in the same school district as a teacher-on-call. For this past year he was given a teaching position at the same school where he had his first practicum. His position was half-time music teacher, half-time 'inspiration' teacher, which is a pullout enrichment program for creative project work. Over the year, Chris wrote songs with seven of the classes. He invited our band on the last day of the school year to accompany the students performing their songs to the school community. We made a film and a CD of the performance for the students and their families.

It was a great pleasure and an honour to be at the year-end assembly in Chris's band accompanying his kids, this time with students from all grades, not just a single classroom. It was clear to me that what began for Chris as a way to gain support in developing his presence as a teacher had grown and flowered into something very special, something at the heart of his teaching. Now he was using music in much more extensive and creative ways, not simply as a way of controlling children and establishing a relationship with them, but of furthering their learning in various topics. We've included three examples below to illustrate this:

Frogs *(Grade One)*

Frogs can jump
Frogs can swim
Frogs hibernate in the winter
Frogs climb trees
Frogs eat flies
Frogs hide in the long grass by the pond
Frog Frog Pollywog—I know an awful lot about the frog
Frog Frog Pollywog—I know an awful lot about the frog

Frogs say "ribbit"
They have fast tongues
We call frogs amphibians
Frogs say "ribbit"
They have fast tongues
We call frogs amphibians

Butterfly *(Kindergarten)*

The Caterpillar spins a chrysalis
Stays for two weeks then comes out of it
The caterpillar says goodbye
Then becomes a butterfly

I wish that I could be a butterfly today
I'd play with the bees then I'd fly away
I wish that I could be a butterfly today
I'd play with the bees then I'd fly away

The butterfly is beautiful
It flies so high up in the sky
It moves from flower to flower
It pollinates and eats nectar

Space *(Grade Three)*

Space Planets Jupiter Galileo
Mars Pluto Nebula Astronomer
Stars Neptune Atmosphere Neil Armstrong
Sun Titan Galaxy Copernicus

Why is earth the only planet that has oxygen to breathe?
Is there another planet we could live on if we leave?
What makes the sun so hot and Pluto so cold?
How do we know the universe is 14 billion years old?

Space is such a mysterious place
I have so many questions
I have so many questions about space

How does a nebula create a star?
How can we see Saturn with the naked eye when it's so far?
What would happen if I fell into a black hole?
Would it only take my body, or would it take my soul?

Space is such a beautiful place
I have so many questions
I have so many questions about space

Other songs were not about topics of interest to the students, but rather about building character and community among the students and throughout the school. At the year-end assembly these songs were received in a rich and robust way, with students, parents and staff members singing along with the student performers, waving their arms and rocking to and fro with the beat. We've included two examples of these types of songs below:

I'm Thankful *(Kindergarten)*

I'm thankful for my family
And for my friends who are good to me
And for the books in the library
I'm thankful for my teacher
And all the things she helps me learn
Like learning how to read

I'm thankful for everything
I'm thankful for you and me

Kindness Counts *(Grade One)*

You helped me tie my shoe when I was feeling blue
You came over and helped me when I scraped my knee
In big or small amounts, I know that kindness counts
In big or small amounts, I know that kindness counts

You, you stuck up for me when they were being mean
You, you made me feel liked when you fixed my bike
In big or small amounts, I know that kindness counts
In big or small amounts, I know that kindness counts

The assembly was a huge success and Chris received accolades from all quarters, from the kids and their parents, from administrators and teaching colleagues at the school. At the time of writing this article, which is just a few weeks after the year-end assembly, Chris received

notice that his position at the school had been extended another year. As a professor of education, this was a magical set of events for me that came full circle in a rich and powerful way. Seldom do opportunities come along to step into the role of a practicum coach. The way this story unfolded for Chris is very dear to me.

Allan's story: Changing structures, enabling interdisciplinary approaches

The account so far would not be complete without writing myself into the story a little further, for this story about Chris is every bit a story about Allan as well. I began my teaching career in the mid-seventies in southern Alberta. For two years, I was the science teacher in small rural elementary school, teaching science two or three periods a week to all of the intermediate students (grades four to seven). Every hour or so, these students would rotate around the school to various classrooms for science, art, music, or language arts. This was probably thought to be a proper preparation for secondary school. For me, it meant that roughly every hour a different group of kids would come to my class for a lesson in science. Near the end of the second year, the staff approached our Principal about changing the structure of the school and timetable to enable us to be generalist teachers, responsible for most, if not all, of the subjects at the grade level of our home rooms. It was agreed, and for the next two years I enjoyed a completely new life as a Grade Six teacher. We eliminated the hallway traffic and the timetable dissolved. The whole life of the classroom transformed from my hands-on, inquiry based approach in science lessons, to a fully integrated, project-based approach to curriculum and learning. Inquiry teaching in the sciences was a springboard for me. The world of teaching opened up for me in this new interdisciplinary environment.

The change of structure in the school allowed me to deepen my relationship with and understanding of my students, helping us all to find new points of connection between the curriculum and their interests and abilities. The interdisciplinary framework brought the opportunity to address the students more as individuals, finding ways of connecting their efforts together in a nexus of talent and ability that would allow them not only to take charge of their learning and develop a sense of ownership and pride in their work as a collective, but also to understand and appreciate their classmates in ways no one would have anticipated, to learn to work together in synergistic and productive ways. I learned that one can develop individuality in a diverse range of interest and talent by simply finding and using one's voice in a genuine way. This applied to me as a teacher as well as to my students. Science was still a central part of my program but there were larger more encompassing themes in the curriculum that would contextualize many of the science investigations. For example, I worked with my grade six students for two months on developing a Remembrance Day program for the school, which involved several trips into Calgary for visits with resident veterans at the Colonel Belcher Hospital where my students interviewed them about the meaning of Remembrance Day. We went to army surplus stores and to war museums so we could get our hands on flak jackets, helmets and canteens to develop our understanding of war. We got a tour of the Lancaster Bomber at the (old) Calgary Airport to see what it was like inside the aircraft. During that period our science syllabus included historical study about Radar, the Atlantic Telegraph and radio, flight, and electronics. We also engaged in media production and multi-track recording/mixing as we made our way through the production of our program. Inquiry teaching in science was a springboard to experiential learning on a larger scale and the world of teaching opened up to me in this new interdisciplinary

environment. The shift in my practice also gave way to a feeling of being in control of my teaching, which I could negotiate with the administration to create a particular kind of environment and set of conditions for learning. These years gave me good reasons to be optimistic as an educator—something I believe is central to my life as a teacher to this day.

I experienced the same shift in my practice in the late eighties when I began my career as a teacher educator in the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto. I started as a member of the Science Education Department, one of the subject based academic units in the faculty. During that first year I taught ten classes of science methods for about one hour each week. Under the leadership of a new Dean, the mono-disciplinary departments were collapsed into four and I became a member of the Elementary Education Department. In this new configuration for the second year I was assigned to work in two teacher education programs that were housed in the public schools of Toronto and developed collaboratively with the staff of those schools. I taught all of the courses in one of these programs to a cohort of teacher education students in the context of their work with the children attending the school. The program could have been described as more of an apprenticeship in elementary school teaching. This experience also extended my thinking about teacher education and I developed ways in which the academic study of education could be immersed and integrated in the practical activities associated with learning to teach in the practice setting of a functioning school. Again, the curriculum became much more holistic, embedded, and natural. These two shifts in my teaching practice—one teaching grade six in a small country school in southern Alberta, the other as beginning professor in the teacher education program at the University of Toronto—changed my life as an educator and set the stage for my coming to SFU as a member of its non-departmentalized Faculty of Education.

Analysis: Teacher educator as coach

There is more that could be said, but the stories about Chris and Allan thus far will be sufficient to illustrate our case. We suggest there may be a need to soften the rhetoric of technical rationality in teacher education by embracing the notion of the inner life of teaching—the identity and integrity of the teacher—in the way we think about teacher education curriculum, and in a way that celebrates the unique talents and interests that our young teachers bring to their careers.

The general features of Chris's practicum fit Schön's (1983) description of the professions as being messy and indeterminate *swampy lowlands* of practice, in comparison with the *hard, high ground* of university-based research. Problems do not come to the practitioner as *givens*, he would say, they must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations. With a mindset of technical rationality, for example, we could have construed the problem Chris was experiencing as his inability to apply the appropriate strategies that were taught in the program. Allan framed the problem as a lack of *intellectual continuity and context* (Kilbourn, 1990) in the initial lessons, due to a somewhat diluted presence in the classroom. He saw that what was needed was to give Chris permission to bring his musical background and success into his teaching. This would provide a means for Chris to experience the feeling of being in control and to use this to develop a more pronounced presence in the classroom and reason for the children to pay attention. Allan's take (*framing* of the problem) was that Chris needed coaching in how he could *be himself*, how his past life need not be

compartmentalized and kept from his life of teaching, and how his talent could become a central resource and *way of being* as a teacher. We think the term *coach* is appropriate, knowing that it can be interpreted in many ways, some of which carry pejorative or diminutive undertones. The poignancy of the term *coach* is that it implies the relationship is embedded in an activity and therefore admits, at least in part, teaching and learning of a mimetic nature.

Schön (1987) notes that, "a practicum is a setting designed for the task of learning a practice. In a context that approximates a practice world, students learn by doing, although their doing usually falls short of real world work" (p. 37). While it may be commonly recognized that student teachers have the opportunity in practicum to learn to recognize competent practice with the help of a supervisor or coach, the depth and nature of this relationship may be under-theorized in our current conceptions of teacher education programs. The beginning of practicum is likely to be confusing and mysterious for the student since the competence to be learned cannot simply be told to the student in a way that he or she could at that point understand. Even when the coach is very good at describing what he or she does, the likelihood of the student grasping the meaning that the coach is trying to convey is very small. Under these circumstances some students discover that they must learn the required competence for themselves; it cannot be taught. Schön's (1987) analyses of *coaching roles* and the dialogue between coaches and students in a variety of professional contexts are useful beginning points for understanding the dynamics at hand in a *reflective practicum*. He names three approaches for reflective coaching: *follow me*, *joint experimentation*, and *hall of mirrors* that provide useful metaphors or models of coaching. These are not mutually exclusive models; rather they point out three analytically distinct features of a reflective practicum that may, in the end, blend together in practice.

The coach must at first try to discern what the student understands, what he or she already knows how to do, and where the difficulties are. These things must be discovered in the student's initial performances. In response, the coach can show or tell, that is, demonstrate a particular technique that he or she thinks the student needs to learn, or, with questions, advice, criticism and instructions, describe some feature of practice. The follow me model is basic to the reflective practicum and underlies the other two models. The coach models actions to be imitated and experiments with communication, testing with each intervention both the diagnosis of the student's understandings and problems, and the effectiveness of his or her own strategies of communication. The student tries to make sense of the coach's demonstrations and descriptions, testing the meanings that have been constructed by applying them to further attempts to display skilful practice. In this way the student reveals the sense he or she has made of what has been seen and heard. Imitation is seen to be a highly creative process. Students sometimes emulate their coaches thinking this is how to achieve the same success. Coaches can sometimes be surprised to find their own actions and mannerisms mirrored back to them in the student's practice, seeing their actions in a new light in the practice of another. There may also be aspects of the coach's practice that the student consciously avoids and seeks not to emulate. Trust is central to this relationship, as the student may not know what the coach is in search of, or how to recognize it when it is found. The follow me model can readily be detected in the account of Chris's progress in the classroom. It was as though Allan had said, *follow me … we'll show the kids your band to get them interested in music, and then we'll sing with them.*

The joint experimentation model takes an exploratory, analytic stance; the coach joins the student in experimentation in practice, testing and assessing the student's ways of framing problems and acting in uncertain situations:

> In joint experimentation, the coach's skill comes first to bear on the task of helping the student formulate the qualities she wants to achieve and then, by demonstration or description, explore different ways of producing them. Leading the student into a search for suitable means of achieving a desired objective …. From her side, the student's *artistry* consists in her ability and willingness to step into a situation. She risks declaring what effects she wants to produce and risks experimenting with an unfamiliar kind of experimentation. … The coach works at creating and sustaining a process of collaborative inquiry. … [he] puts his superior knowledge to work by generating a variety of solutions to the problem, leaving the student free to choose and produce new possibilities for action. (Schön, 1987, p. 296).

Elements of joint experimentation can also be picked out of Chris's story, as the entire plan rested on the hypothesis that, once he established a coherent storyline in the classroom that captured the interest of the kids, we could then work on putting in place some rules of conduct they might learn to abide. One can see in the story how the hypothesis was tested and how Allan, as a coach, worked at creating and sustaining a process of collaborative inquiry. One can also see in the story how trust was built as best it might be given the circumstances.

The hall of mirrors model of coaching points to how the coach's handling of the student mirrors the practice that the student is attempting to acquire. Their engagement and relationship serve as mirrors for reflecting on the practice of teaching (the children), running parallel to their own learning as partners in the practicum.

> In the hall of mirrors, student and coach continually shift perspective. They see their interaction at one moment as a re-enactment of some aspect of the student's practice; at another, as a dialogue about it; and at still another, as a modeling of its redesign. In the process they must continually take a two-tiered view of their interaction, seeing in in its own terms as a possible mirror of the interaction the student has brought to the practicum for study. In this process there is a premium on the coach's ability to surface his own confusions. To the extent that he can do so authentically, he models for his student a new way of seeing error and 'failure' as opportunities of learning. … But a hall of mirrors can be created only on the basis of parallelisms between practice and practicum—when coaching resembles the interpersonal practice to be learned, when students recreate in interaction with coach or peers the patterns of their practice world, or when … the kind of inquiry established in the practicum resembles the inquiry that students seek to exemplify in their practice. (Schön, 1987, p. 297)

MacKinnon (1989) presented a study of practicum in a secondary science teaching context, focusing on the processes of problem setting and reframing as the starting point for reflection-in-action. I analyzed conversations between student teachers and their supervising teachers (coaches) using Schön's (1987) ideas about a *reflective practicum* to interpret the events and dynamics of practicum. I referred to the collection of pertinent occurrences in the

practice setting as the domain of *practicum phenomena* in order to represent a shared world of lived experiences between the coach and novice teacher. This approach, together with ideas about the role of language in mediating experience, led to the conceptualization represented below in Figure 1, in which a student teacher and a sponsoring teacher (coach) are shown in dialogue about the practicum phenomena in which they are both immersed, each witnessing from his or her own point of view, and drawing from ordinary language and experience in the case of the novice, and thematic, pedagogical language and experiences in the case of the coach. This is not simply a one-way street, with the student teacher learning from the coach. It is very much a dialogical process that involves the exchange of pedagogical knowledge and understanding, through demonstration and description on the part of the coach, and imitation and construction on the part of the student teacher. The coach learns just as much, if not more, from the student, observing in practice the elements at hand—the failures, struggles, and eventual successes that are embodied in the student's performance in practice.

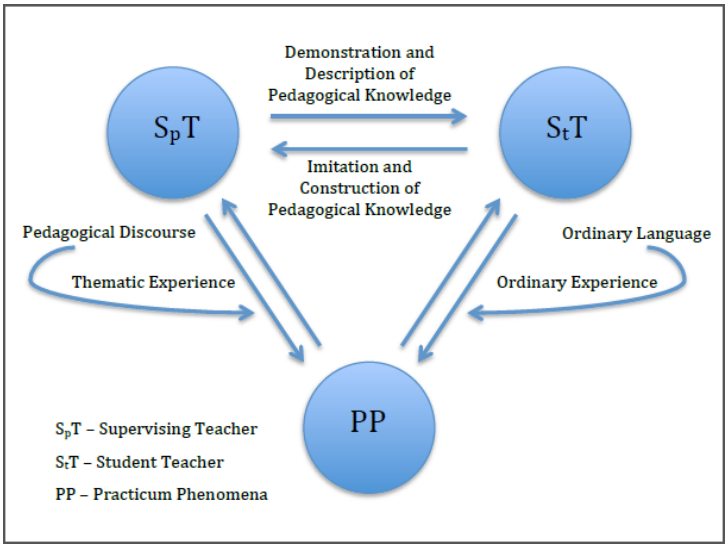

Figure 1: Reflective Practicum (adapted from MacKinnon, 1989, p. 112)

From these beginnings, the coach constructs a diagnosis of what might be missing in the novice's practice and begins to design a way of creating the conditions required to cultivate the desirable features. The coach works the situation with the materials available in the practice setting. In the story of Chris, this included my knowledge of Chris's background and talents. What we hope to portray in the heuristic shown in Figure 1 is the dialogical relationship of the coach and student teacher as it is embedded in the practice setting. One part of their dialogue consists in *learning at the elbows* (MacKinnon, 1996) embodied in the enactment of various theories-in-use as these unfold dialogically between the coach and student teacher in the practice setting, including manners and gestures and other non-articulated aspects of the practices that are shared, sometimes unwittingly, between them. Another part of this is their spoken dialogue, construed as being in motion from a state of incommensurability (as though they were speaking two different languages) to a state of shared understanding that emerges over time in the practice setting.

Based on the conception above, the coaching session is theorized to bring about new ways for the student teacher to think about teaching and new possibilities for *being* in the classroom. In this way, learning about pedagogical discourses and knowledge as well as skills and dispositions presented by the coach takes place in an embodied form. The coach, in turn, learns through watching the student teacher in the classroom, focusing on the successes and challenges experienced by the novice in practice as an arena for discovering what it is that needs to be learned. But again, this is not a straight forward matter; there is a problem in finding the problem and the coach must construct his or her understanding of the problematic situation and the various solutions that arise as means of addressing or solving the problem.

What we are emphasizing in our story is the possibility that the conceptions and expectations of the student teacher may have been skewed by the very notion of what it means to become a teacher, a conception that we may find unwittingly embedded in the rhetoric of best practices, standards and outcomes in teacher education programs. This seems to be a plausible explanation, though we acknowledge it has not been demonstrated empirically by the story itself. Some readers might even consider the idea to be a straw man, which would be a legitimate criticism on empirical grounds. Considering the plausibility of the idea, however, it is useful to dwell even for a moment on the incommensurability, first of all between expectations that may form around the discourse of technical rationality that are associated with the standards/testing agenda on the one hand, and the *relational* view brought by the coach, on the other hand, with his advice to engage the musical talents from a former life to scaffold a new one as a teacher. On the former side, we have the expectations built around a view of the teacher who is washed clean of any unique personal idiosyncratic tendencies and has been tested and proven to deliver the required content. On the latter side, we have a story that tells of the individual fit of a young teacher with a particular background and set of talents who may have simply needed permission to be himself in a difficult situation as a way of finding his legs as a teacher. On the former side, we have the question from the novice, *what strategy should I use?* On the latter side we have the coach's answer, *stand tall with your music and give them a reason to listen—the solution is inside you.*

While the majority of our work together has been presented through the lens of the teacher educator half of us (Allan), the final word comes from Chris:

> *The mentoring experience with Allan four years ago set my teaching practice on a trajectory that has become very fulfilling as I begin only my 2nd year as a music teacher. The permission he gave me to "share myself with the kids" has changed the way I think about being with children in the classroom. My primary goal now is to introduce music to students as a fun and connecting experience that will create a lifetime appreciation for it. I want to create an opportunity for children to develop a lifetime interest in music the way opportunities in our childhoods did the same for Allan and myself.*
>
> *As Allan mentioned, one of the ways I have brought myself (that is, integrated my former life as a songwriter) into my teaching/practice is to write songs with my classes about their learning. I like the notion of connecting music to other parts of their lives and education. I*

> *believe working with music in this way creates an emotional bond to the subject matter that deepens their understanding and interest.*
>
> *That 1st song Allan and I wrote with my practicum class 4 years ago started a learning journey for me through which I have developed a process for writing songs with young children that they can feel a sense of ownership over. The end of year assembly was a chance for the children to perform their songs, showcasing their creativity and musical growth, as well as the depth of understanding of their chosen interest/topic. I was very proud of the work we had done and the songs and performance that came out of it. Over this past year I see the sharing of my own talents and life experience becoming a gift for those students that I hope will spark their own love of music and learning and be a beginning step on the path of their own creative journey.*

Conclusion

Let us return to the question of how we might help young teachers find the heart of teaching, or *their* heart in teaching. It may not be helpful to produce new courses to add to the syllabus on "finding yourself as a teacher," or "connecting your past life to teaching." Perhaps we need fresh perspectives on supporting the art of coaching for reflective practice in practicum. One route is to contribute to the research literature on teacher education and development, and we acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of those who have extended such opportunities with the creation of this *Journal*.

We see the contribution of our work in terms of two dimensions. First and foremost, our work contributes to a perspective about a way of life in classrooms that rests on a sense of selfhood of the teacher and the relational aspects of teaching that can be difficult, if not impossible, for a student teacher to learn to appreciate in a practicum situation. We posit that the rhetoric of outcomes based education and standards in curriculum may stand in the way of nuanced understandings of teaching that might better support the development, or acknowledgement of teachers' identity and integrity in the process of becoming a teacher.

The second contribution of this work is a revitalization of a particular rendering of practicum vis-à-vis Schön's notions about reflective practice. We offer our account to underscore the relevance of Schön's research and to illustrate his ideas about coaching for reflective practice in the hopes of forging a way forward in the project of humanizing the curriculum of teacher education.

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