



*Studies
of Teacher
Education
and
Becoming
and Being
a Teacher*

Counter**narratives**

Robert V. Bullough Jr.

COUNTERNARRATIVES

SUNY series, Teacher Preparation and Development
Alan R. Tom, editor

C O U N T E R N A R R A T I V E S

*Studies of Teacher Education
and Becoming and Being a Teacher*

Robert V. Bullough Jr.

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*For my parents,
my first and best teachers*

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Introduction

Counternarratives is more than simply a collection of studies of teaching and teacher education. It represents a portion of a professional journey into the problems of teacher education and offers a reminder that educational improvement is always and everywhere dependent on the well-being of the individual teacher.

Ours is a difficult time for teachers and teacher educators. Over the past several years much criticism, often biting and unbridled, has been directed toward education and teacher education. Teachers are under constant attack, and well-funded efforts are under way to dismantle the American public school system. Although many teacher educators are quite certain their practice makes a positive difference in the lives of aspiring teachers, we have failed to convince but few of the worth of that work. The value and quality of research done within education and teacher education also have been severely criticized (National Research Council 2004), and conclusions asserting that rather little is known about the education of teachers abound (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005). The view is now widely shared that what is needed is an education science that will not only prove the value of public schooling and, perhaps, but not probably, of teacher education, and, by establishing causal links among variables, provide compelling evidence of best practices for replication across diverse educational sites (Shavelson and Towne 2002).

In her American Educational Research Association (AERA) presidential address, Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2005) argued that “from the late 1990s to the present, a new teacher education has been called for and, to a great extent, has actually emerged. This new teacher education, and now dominant set of narratives, has three closely coupled pieces: it is constructed as a public policy problem, based on research and evidence, and driven by outcomes” (4). This set of narratives underpins development of what might tongue in cheek best be described as “Baby Big Education Science,” offering normative tales of system intransigence, teacher incompetence, and program ineffectiveness that now dominate discourse.

Seeking to further develop evidence-based teacher education, but displaying a measure of generosity, the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education’s main recommendation was that

research about teacher education needs now to be undertaken using methods that will increase our knowledge about important features of teacher education and its connections to the outcomes that are important in a democratic society. We recommend attention to the full variety of research approaches available, recognizing that multidisciplinary and multimethodological approaches are necessary. (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner 2005, 31)

This is a relatively generous view of research, one acknowledging the need for education research to mature (see Mayer 2006) and acknowledging the potential value of diverse kinds of studies to the improvement of teaching and teacher education.

Unfortunately, this generous view of education research may get lost as the wider discourse is controlled by special interest groups with their “think” tanks, and especially impatient and unforgiving politicians for whom subtleties are of little interest and replicability of results and randomized trials are gold standards for research. Driven by a deep, although consistently denied, distrust of educators, school change is widely thought best achieved through mandated standards, punitive accountability measures, and expanded competition without regard for human variability. Emerging federal funding priorities and practices certainly support this conclusion—fewer funded studies, given more money and involving very large data sets, linked to a small number of comparatively privileged institutions working to influence policy to assure their continued prominence and funding.

For many teacher educators, perhaps most, the message seems to be stick to practice, leave theory generation and policy matters to others, and await your fate. As Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, and Ness (2005) observe, “This latest standards movement has left teachers to recognize that they have little control over their own fate” (104). With Voltaire’s *Candide*, we should contentedly tend our gardens.

A Chastened Ambition: “Better” not “Best” Practice

Years ago, David Tyack published the now classic *The One Best System* (1974), within which he detailed the quest for a single institutional solution to the complex problems of urban education. He concluded by arguing, in part, that “Effective reform today will require reassessment of some cherished convictions about the possibility of finding a one best system” (290). Despite the warning, everywhere, most especially including accreditation visits, one now hears earnest talk about “best practice” in education. Compared to creating a single best system of education, aiming for best practice seems harmless, a reflection of a much-chastened ambition. Nevertheless, both aims are ensconced in a shared

set of assumptions of just the sort Tyack argued needed reconsidering, assumptions that belie the complexity of the processes of teaching and learning and ignore the persistent and inevitable uncertainties of educating the young.

Looking ahead, a few best teaching practices may emerge, and these will most certainly depend for their lives upon the strength of the linkage to raising student standardized test scores (Lasley, Siedentop, and Yinger 2006). But, more likely, and assuming the ability to overcome very serious technical problems with value added studies (Martineau 2006; Schmidt, Houang and McKnight 2005), a few “better practices” or “promising practices” will be identified, *better* based ultimately upon their value within specific contexts characterized by a few variables and in relationship to a set of highly contestable propositions about what is most worth doing, being, learning, and becoming. These will, of course, like all educational practices, be wholly dependent for their impact upon the artistry and skill of the teacher when reading and then responding to a shifting and dynamic learning environment. Given the complexity of teaching and learning, where the aim is education and not training, a proper sense of humility would prohibit using the term *best practice* and also and especially temper enthusiasm for the quest.

Representing conflicts in value and interests, and speaking of “stages,” Tyack and Cuban (1995) observed that policy talk operates in cycles—beginning with the need to diagnose problems, talk moves into “policy action,” and finally, through a variety of means, toward implementation, by far the most difficult and complex stage (40). They further observe that the three stages frequently are disconnected, and that discourse and practice diverge, often sharply. Typically, a crisis thrusts them more closely together as one or another value vanquishes other values, takes center stage, and enjoys a season of rhetorical prominence while dominating problem diagnosis. Initially, the organization and structure of an education science find their purpose in shaping the discourse of the first two policy cycles. These cycles aim at agreement on definitions and actions. By creating a sense of perpetual crisis, legislated accountability measures seek to tightly join all three stages and to achieve standardized practice.

Crises, engineered or genuine, galvanize agreement, although tensions inevitably remain simmering, waiting to boil over. But a state of perpetual crisis like our own has additional effects, including growth of a widespread sense of futility among those who, having been excluded from policy discussions and always found wanting, are nonetheless charged with and held accountable for implementation. Thus at American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education meetings, one sees education deans shuffling through hotel hallways wearing long faces just as one hears from school administrators a great deal of grumbling about the original design of the No Child Left Behind legislation and its directives (but not publicly espoused intent). Futility turns to anger, as in their haste, policy makers and their allies offer sweeping solutions to problems often

not well understood and, misunderstanding human motivation, rely upon increasing standardization and threats and punishments to encourage change. Innovation does not thrive under threat, but certain kinds of research do. Behind the scenes, struggle is internalized, and resistance forms quietly. Being sensible, a measured and self-protective conservatism emerges among educators, and the impulse to innovate browns and withers.

Hopefully the education science that is emerging will helpfully inform and direct federal and state education policy makers. This, of course, assumes that when thinking about education and teacher education policy makers actually are interested in data-driven decision making, respectful of contextual differences, and most especially committed to getting the questions and the data sources right. This assumption, and hope, underpins the work of both the AERA Panel and the National Academy of Education-sponsored volume *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 2005). Clearly, much rests on the ability of researchers to wisely educate and better influence policy makers. Not only resource allocation and governance are at stake but also definitions of what counts as data and as questions worthy of inquiry (topics over which there is a good deal of disagreement). Consider: Remarkably little attention is now given to how poverty and well-being affect student learning in favor of an overly narrow focus on the presumed powers of teachers and schools to overcome the effects of inequality (Rothstein 2004). The point was nicely made nearly half a century ago when H. Gordon Hullfish and Philip Smith (1961) wrote: “Remember that miseducative conditions in a culture will cancel out the educative efforts of schools” (255).

Context and Counternarratives

To a certain degree living and working within complex institutions like schools and universities will inevitably bring a measure of double-mindedness. It certainly has for me. But double-mindedness is becoming a necessary way of life among educators. Of course, tension, contradiction, and paradox abound in teaching (Kennedy 2006) and probably always have. Sometimes teachers know the good but, as Shakespeare reminds us, they, like others, simply lack the energy, commitment, or moral imagination to do what they know should be done: “It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching” (*Merchant of Venice*, Act I, Scene II). Yet conditions are changing and something greater is now at stake. St. James’s warning comes to mind: “Double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8).

A new managerialism has emerged that emphasizes what Stephen Ball (2003) has described as “performativity,” where educators are “valued for their

productivity alone,” and authentic social relations are replaced by “judgmental relations” (224). Performativity invites “fabrications . . . versions of an organization (or person) which [do] not exist. . . . [Rather] they are produced purposefully in order ‘to be accountable’” (ibid.). And, inauthenticity results. Clearly, education suffers when teachers must live dividedly and deeply so, when they consistently find themselves needing to engage in actions contrary to their most fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning in order to satisfy one or another set of externally imposed mandates. Some years ago I described this condition at its extreme as producing a sort of “professional schizophrenia” (Bullough 1982), a condition resulting from feeling or being compelled to work against what one believes and of being pulled in multiple directions by conflicting but always insistent claims. Under such conditions, work slowly becomes joyless. It is little wonder that there is a growing shortage of aspiring teachers. The word is getting out, and teachers are spreading it.

As every teacher knows, to teach is to live on and find pleasure living on the edge, in a shifting, tightly packed, and often very noisy life space, one forever opening and closing in unpredictable and often delightful ways. Exposed and vulnerable, teachers offer themselves to those they teach, and they testify of themselves and of what is of most worth, and as they do so they anxiously look for the signs of recognition and engagement but find also signs of rejection. As David Patterson comments: “Those of us who are teachers cannot stand before a class without standing for something . . . teaching is testimony” (1991, 16). Despite their vulnerability, consistency of commitment and action is expected of teachers, especially by the young, who scan constantly the moral horizon hoping to gain their bearings. As a moral relationship, the nature of teaching places teachers on that horizon, and so it is offstage where teachers compromise and backstage where they keep their inner disappointments and concerns hidden from view. Insofar as the dominant narratives support performativity, they give little hope for the resolution of inner dividedness, and divisions necessarily widen. So, one wonders, of what does the deeply double-minded teacher testify?

This is where the need for *Counternarratives* arises, for stories that recognize and respond to the complexity of teaching while honoring the hopes and dreams and legitimizing the problems and concerns of teachers working in specific contexts and with specific students. Such narratives embrace the lives lived beneath the much-desired generalizations promised by education science and the systems that encourage “fabrications.”

On Teacher Education

For teacher educators, like teachers, the otherwise expected challenges of teaching are made much more difficult by the context of teacher education

and the highly charged and very public debates raging over purpose and value. Here too arises the need for *Counternarratives*. Friends and foes alike frequently and roundly criticize teacher education, and not always with knowledge and understanding. Among the friends, no critic has been more insightful nor more understanding than has John Goodlad. In *Teachers for Our Nation's Schools* (1990), he accurately and painfully portrayed the problems of teacher education in research institutions, persistent problems I have come to know well over the past thirty years. Writing in 1990, he concluded that in research universities the norms of the arts and sciences dominated, and in the pursuit of an illusive prestige, education faculty often distanced themselves from teacher education and the concerns of teachers. Adjunct faculty bore most of the burden of teacher education. External agencies set teacher education policies, and there was comparatively little “curricular autonomy” (Goodlad 1990, 93). Relationships with students often were strained, and placements were made for practice teaching with comparatively little regard for cooperating teacher quality. Preparation programs did little to influence the beliefs and expectations about teaching that beginning teachers brought with them: “Their preparation programs are simply not powerful or long enough to dissuade them from what has already been absorbed from role models” (Goodlad 1990, 149). Little attention was given to socializing students to a professional ideal, and surprisingly little attention given to the moral and ethical issues that Goodlad thought ought to command the interest of educators. Where foundations courses existed, they were separated from methods classes. The values of individualism dominated: “They come through their preparation as individuals [and are] likely to take responsibility only for their individual classrooms and assume that someone else will take care of the rest” (Goodlad 1990, 265–66). Students entered and left their programs with a “very practical orientation—an orientation that leads them to judge all education courses by utilitarian, instrumental criteria” (Goodlad 1990, 213). Accordingly, the “socialization process appeared to nurture the ability to acquire teaching skills through experience rather than the ability to think through unpredictable circumstances” (Goodlad 1990, 215). Technique mattered, and learning to fit into and survive within “an operational role in the classroom” mattered most (Goodlad 1990, 251).

These were, and to a degree still are, the problems of teacher education (Levine 2006). Fortunately, there has been considerable although uneven improvement particularly because of growing interest in and commitment to building public school/university partnerships (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, and Goodlad 2004; Smith and Fenstermacher 1999) and to paying much greater attention to the social systems, like cohorts (Mather and Hanley 1999; Darling 2001) and mentoring (Giles and Wilson 2004; Young, Bullough,

Draper, Smith and Erickson 2005), that support and enhance student learning and community building. Nevertheless, to a degree these have been weaknesses of the programs within which I have taught.

Confronting Self

In the early 1980s I lead my first secondary cohort at the University of Utah. This proved to be an extraordinarily difficult teaching assignment, but one I was required to accept despite a desire to associate more directly with foundational studies and minimize my involvement in teacher education. I planned and then, with the help of a graduate assistant, coordinated and taught the courses that formed a year-long and full-time program for a group of about twenty-two teacher education students. Together these students completed curriculum and methods classes and practice teaching and participated in a weekly problem-solving seminar tightly linked to the work they were doing in the schools. At that time I did not think of myself as a teacher educator and was one of those education faculty members Goodlad identified as distancing themselves from teacher education and the concerns of teachers. I was deeply conflicted. Most particularly, the few connections that then existed between my scholarship and my teaching practice were flimsy and strained.

Spending a year with a group of students forced me to attend to their personal and developmental issues and concerns. Sometimes, as Guskey (2002) has noted, changes in practice must precede changes in belief. While working with these students I began to face myself and reconsider my commitments. I asked, but had only unsatisfactory answers for, the “who” question Parker Palmer poses: “Who is the self that teaches? How does the quality of my selfhood form—or deform—the way I relate to my students, my subject, my colleagues, my world?” (1998, 4). I noticed that some students seemed to ignore what I taught while others grabbed hold of it easily, as though what I had to say confirmed but failed to challenge beliefs. While struggling with this issue, I began exploring the role of life history as the backdrop against which students become teachers. Paul Klohr planted that seed when I was a graduate student at Ohio State, a seed that grew in the hands of the reconceptualists in curriculum theory (Pinar 1975) and has since sprouted abundant fruit (Day, Stobart, Sammons, and Kington 2006; Goodson 1992; Goodson and Sikes 2001; Richardson 1996).

My second cohort began a change in me. Quickly I bonded with this group that was composed of smart, interesting, and sometimes confrontational and often very funny people. I found myself heavily invested in their learning and in their school successes. Almost despite myself, their disappointments became my disappointments. I worked very hard with, and on behalf of, this

group, but when the year ended, I felt a measure of disappointment, although I did not quite know why. I needed to dig deeper and more fully confront myself (see Day 1999, ch. 2); I needed to become a student of teaching (Bullough and Gitlin 1995; Dewey 1904). That summer I contacted a member of the cohort, Kerrie Baughman, and we began the series of studies that led to the publication of *First-Year Teacher: A Case Study* (Bullough 1989). Kerrie proved to be one of my best teachers. I also completed a series of essays that formed *The Forgotten Dream of American Public Education* (Bullough 1988), which was an attempt to settle my thinking and to present foundational issues in ways accessible to beginning teachers and others interested in education.

Other studies followed, and gradually the problems of teacher education became much more personal and more intriguing. Research is, after all, the best form of professional development: Principles emerge from practice; we practice our principles, and in practicing and confronting our limitations often we discover just what those principles are, and in the process something profound about who we are and what we most value is revealed. And we change as a result. Attempting to listen more carefully to my students, I began gathering data from my classes and used the data to rethink my actions—course content, instruction, and organization. With my students I openly explored what we were doing and why, and I solicited feedback and criticism from them (see Featherstone, Munby, and Russell 1997; Cook-Sather 2002). Exit interviews were conducted and written evaluations invited and taken very seriously. A series of articles grew from this work, some touching on life history and others on teaching metaphors (Chapter 11) as a means for helping beginning teachers think productively about themselves as teachers. Still others explored what I came to call personal teaching texts (PTTs), case records of a sort, as a means for building program coherence and for helping beginning teachers take greater responsibility for their development (Chapter 10). The initial focus on metaphors came from spending a year and a half in Kerrie's classroom and coming to realize how central nurturing and mothering were to how she thought about teaching. Only later would I realize that others were working along similar lines. The results of this work eventually were brought together in a single volume, *Becoming a Student of Teaching: Methodologies for Exploring Self and School Context* (1995), written with Andrew Gitlin. By 1990, I had become a teacher educator and found myself needing to work on the problems of teacher education.

Local Studies

Twelve chapters follow, divided into the following four sections, "Historical Studies," "Studies of Becoming and Being a Teacher Educator," "Studies of Becoming and Being a Teacher," and "Program Studies." Each chapter was

previously published between 1991 and 2006. An Afterword follows, in which I share a set of principles for teacher education drawn from an analysis of the studies presented here and from reflecting on my experience as a teacher and teacher educator. Every chapter offers a counternarrative, presenting a view of teaching and teacher education and of learning to teach, which in various ways challenges the now-dominant narratives. They represent comparatively small stories, but, as I will argue, it is within such stories that life finds its fullest, although not only, meaning. The Afterword represents an attempt to speak and reach beyond the local studies presented. My hope is that readers will engage in a “critical conversation” (Loughran 2006, 165) with the text, comparing and contrasting experiences, beliefs, and practices. The first two chapters, “Pedagogical Content Knowledge circa 1907 and 1987,” and “Teacher Education Reform as a Story of Possibility: Lessons Learned, Lessons Forgotten,” are historical. They are included not only because they are reminders that knowing the past is often helpful for thinking about the future, but also because they underscore how the past quietly shapes the present and often without the awareness of those who have been shaped, sometimes twisted, by it. Moreover, these two chapters underscore how misguided many critics are in their claims that teacher education offers little value to improving the education of the young. The problem is often a failure of memory. There is a desperate need for teacher educators to reclaim our collective past and to begin to build a shared memory, in part because memory is necessary to building programs of research of the sort Shulman (2002) has described. Perhaps more importantly, both resistance and innovation frequently begin in the recovery of memory, a reclaiming of the past. With the exception of these two chapters forming Part 1, the collection is composed of local studies, results of “practical inquiry” (Richardson 1994), or self-study (Allender 2001; Loughran 2006; Loughran, Hamilton, LaBosky, and Russell 2004; Samaras 2002).

There are two answers to the question “Why local studies?” One is easy, the other is hard. The easy answer is that local studies are what I like to do, give me pleasure, have been encouraged by the institutions I have served, and have enabled program improvement. My experience echoes the words of Samuel Johnson, in response to James Boswell’s comment that his journal was filled with “all sorts of little incidents,” Johnson remarked: “Sir . . . there is nothing too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great knowledge of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible” (Pottle 1950, 305). Being fully purposeful, local studies moderate feelings of futility by revealing unrealized possibilities within current practices. The hard answer points toward a complex set of issues, contextual and conceptual, leading toward the conclusion that quality education is heavily dependent on teacher research (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1999) and self-study (Hamilton and Pinnegar 2000).

Those of us who see our arena of action as the local, who seek better practices from the study of our own practice and work context, may not recognize our research as connected to the concerns of policy makers or of Baby Big Education Science. Yet clearly it is, just as it is linked to the wider practice and study of teacher education. Local studies open up for discussion what Darling-Hammond (2006) has described as the “black box of the [teacher education] program—inside the courses and clinical experiences that candidates encounter—and . . . how [the] experiences programs design for candidates cumulatively add up to a set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that determines what teachers actually do in the classroom” (303). However, connections must not be taken for granted—they must be made, especially if they are to have any influence on policy. Policy and policy makers operate at multiple levels, and spheres of influence range outward. To extend their reach and increase their influence, local studies need to be connected, and this requires paying careful attention to literature reviews and to the need to describe clearly the research methods used, underpinning assumptions, the settings within which studies are conducted, and failures as well as successes. In addition, local researchers need to recognize that to answer the “so what” question necessarily means moving outside of and beyond a specific location, cautiously perhaps, to engage with others who share similar concerns but who work elsewhere. This points toward the need for the much-neglected work of synthesis (Zeichner 2007). In this way, larger narratives are formed around which like-minded communities may coalesce. To invite engagement and comparison, local studies need to be made transparent (Loughran, Berry, and Tudball 2005), such that *your better practice* can be compared to *my practice* with relatively little guesswork and with a reasonable degree of precision. And to this end, concepts need to be defined and used consistently (Zeichner 2007). Comparisons of this kind invite reimagining of practice and encourage cycles of testing and refinement which, in any case, is the only sound basis for developing and sustaining quality programs and for program improvement.

This said, when facing powerful forces supporting increasing standardization and the nearly overwhelming demands of continuous and very public assessment, local studies have a value that often is ignored and seldom appreciated. Stephen J. Gould (1996) nicely makes the point: “[O]ur culture encodes a strong bias either to neglect or ignore variation. We tend to focus instead on measures of central tendency, and as a result we make some terrible mistakes, often with considerable practical import” (44). Some years ago, John Goodlad (1994) expressed a profoundly important insight about the motivation of educators: “Good teachers are driven in their daily work by neither the goals of improving the nation’s economic competitiveness nor that of enhancing the school’s test scores. Instead, they are driven by a desire to teach satisfyingly, to have all their students excited about learning, to have their daily

work square with their conception of what this work should be and do” (203). He further argued that exceptional schools become that way “primarily by paying close attention to their own educational business and largely ignoring the changing exhortations of a national reform crusade” (ibid.). Quality is undermined when, under pressure of an “ethics of competition and performance,” creative compliance and opacity become dominating educator concerns (Ball 2003, 218). Goodlad’s argument holds true for teacher education as well: Exemplary programs arise from inspiring and thoughtful teachers whose work is supported by good, well-designed, and *honest* local research, studies that speak directly and forcefully to the challenges of the students taught and the programs within which they study.

Local studies have revelatory and disciplinary functions; comparing results reveals where central tendencies collapse and where prejudices lie hidden. As Paul Feyerabend (1975) argues, “All methodologies, even the most obvious ones, have their limits” (32), and limits are located through comparison. Moreover, by attending carefully to outliers, theories are tested, perhaps revealing something profound, “that the eccentric can be used to explain the central, rather than the other way around!” (Toulmin 2001, 30). Put differently, local studies “account for the particular” (Kelchtermans and Hamilton 2004, 803) and encourage (drawing on Garrison 1997) “outlaw” thinking, non-normative discourse that enables the raising of questions that reside outside of established methodological parameters and taken-for-granted system imperatives.

The future of teacher education most certainly rests on our ability to sustain a generous view of research. Quality experimental studies are desperately needed to successfully make the argument for the value of public education and teacher education to doubting policy makers and to making a case for the trustworthiness of educators. But so too are quality local studies needed that speak directly to the challenges of improving practice and policy—small stories that test larger narratives. Local studies serve as a direct means for generating, exploring, and testing theories and established policies and practices and for building and extending the conversation about quality teaching and teacher education. This said, perhaps above all else the value of local studies is to serve as reminders that beneath central tendencies and the much-publicized efforts to raise standardized test scores are living people, individuals working in extraordinarily complex settings and striving to make sense of their lives and work as best as they can to live undividedly, and for whom teaching is first, foremost, and always a personal and profoundly moral relationship (Ayers 1993). Research that does not support and strengthen such relationships will most certainly fail over time and likely do a good deal of harm along the way.

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PART 1

Historical Studies

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CHAPTER 1

Pedagogical Content Knowledge circa 1907 and 1987: A Study in the History of an Idea (2001)

Introduction

Since the 1980s in the United States teacher education has undergone consistent scrutiny and frequent attack by politicians and policy makers concerned with the quality of public education. Responses to these attacks have varied, but generally they have centered on the need to professionalize teaching, including the need to raise academic standards for admission to teacher education and to assure better-quality teacher education. Doubts about the value of teacher education have resulted in the creation of alternative routes to initial teacher certification and in efforts to make a case for teaching as a unique intellectual enterprise involving special forms of knowledge and skill. This chapter is concerned with an aspect of the later issue, of making a case for teaching as involving unique forms of knowledge and of the challenge of teacher educators to make the case convincingly to critics. The focus is on pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The purpose is to locate weaknesses in the case and in the concept as a basis for considering possibilities. A turn toward the much-neglected history of teacher education in the United States is necessary to accomplish this aim.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge 1987: A Response to the Critics

Following the publication of “Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform” (Shulman 1987), it seemed as though a shift was about to take place in how teacher educators thought about the knowledge base of teaching. In the article Shulman argued for the value of pedagogical content knowledge as the foundation of teacher education: “Pedagogical content knowledge is of special interest because it identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching. It represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for

instruction. Pedagogical content knowledge is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from that of the pedagogue” (1987, 8). Pedagogical content knowledge is concerned with how teachers reason pedagogically.

The timing of Shulman’s article could not have been better, and quickly pedagogical content knowledge slipped into teacher educator rhetoric. Teacher educators were eager for a more adequate response to the growing criticism of teacher education and for a better means of supporting arguments for teaching as a profession. As Shulman noted, several reports of the period (Holmes Group 1986; Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy 1986) argued that better schools would follow teacher professionalization. The problem was that the “advocates of professional reform base their arguments on the belief that there exists a ‘knowledge base for teaching’—a codifiable aggregation of knowledge, skill, understanding, and technology, of ethics and disposition, of collective responsibility—as well as a means for representing and communicating it. . . . The rhetoric regarding the knowledge base, however, rarely specifies the character of such knowledge. It does not say what teachers should know, do, understand or profess that will render teaching more than a form of individual labor, let alone be considered among the learned professions” (Shulman 1987, 4).

The attack on teachers and teacher educators was intense, scathing, at the time. Starting with *A Nation at Risk*, “The Commission found that not enough of the academically able students are being attracted to teaching; that teacher preparation programs need substantial improvement. . . . Too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students. The teacher preparation curriculum is weighted heavily with courses in ‘educational methods’ at the expense of courses in subjects to be taught” (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983, 22). Release of the report was page A1 news across the United States: “Mediocre education puts the nation at risk” (Deseret News, April 30, 1983, A1). Teachers and teacher educators felt the sting and rebuke. Centering its case on the need to professionalize teaching, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy argued in *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* that standards needed to be raised: “Teacher education must meet much higher standards. The focus must be on what teachers need to know and be able to do. Raising standards for entry into the profession is likely to give the public confidence that the teachers they hire will be worth the increased salary and worthy of the increased autonomy we advocate. These policies will most certainly fail, however, if the education of teachers is not greatly improved. Otherwise, new teachers may be unable to perform up to the new expectations” (1986, 69).

Teacher educators seemed to respond to the challenge to teacher education in *Tomorrow’s Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group* (1986). The