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If you are searching for a compendium of state-of-the-art research which discusses major trends, offers differing perspectives, and challenges teacher preparation in theory and practice, this is your resource. The volume is sponsored by the National Academy of Education under the auspices of its Committee on Teacher Education (CTE). Its focus is on the curriculum of teacher education combining what research and practice say about efficacious learning and teaching and the learning of teachers.

The editors are well-established in the teacher education arena. Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford hold endowed professorships in their respective institutions. Furthermore, each contributing author is a similarly distinguished scholar or researcher or practitioner in the learning sciences or subject matter fields. Short biographies are provided for each contributor. In order to ground their research in this area, the CTC partnered with eight cooperating public and private universities. Focus groups were conducted and recommendations were offered.

The primary audience for this research is teacher educators as well as policy makers who support the efforts of schools and colleges as they work to improve the initial preparation of teachers. The title suggests a future emphasis and what this curriculum should accomplish in a diverse, multicultural world. The secondary title is as intriguing with its focus on teacher learning and doing. In my estimation, a portion of regularly scheduled faculty meetings should be devoted to the fruitful and enlightening discussions found in this volume. Boring information-sharing meetings would give way to stimulating and thought-provoking meetings which will exercise the brain power of a creative faculty. The discussions should also generate an action plan for program evaluation and reflection

There are twelve stellar chapters organized into two major foci. A solid introductory chapter provides the scope and sets the tone for the following chapters. A major thrust here is a graph of the conceptual framework for understanding teaching and learning. It provides the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that novice teachers must cultivate in order to be successful in the classroom and to make teaching and learning come alive. Eight chapters guide the curriculum development process under the rubric of core concepts. Three chapters are applications-based. A generous set of references support the chapters. A name index is provided and a very helpful subject index completes the volume.

While each chapter deserves to be individually discussed, I have chosen instead to spotlight five that represent “must reading”. We begin with the Introduction chapter because of its conceptual framework that permeates all other chapters. A strength here is the research scenarios used to discuss relevant issues. They provide substance and evidence to the teaching process. As an instructional technologist with background in curriculum

development, I am interested in learning theory so Chapter 2 “Theories of Learning and Their Roles in Teaching” is noted. This chapter reviews current thinking on the subject. It uses a how people learn framework. It discusses knowledge centeredness, the nature of expertise and knowledge organization. I wish the chapter had explored the nature of expertise and novice more fully. This topic deserves its own chapter. Learner centeredness and metacognition are similarly discussed. Unfortunately, the scope of the paragraph on transfer is limited. A chapter on transfer of learning would be appropriate too. I do respect the authors’ treatment of community centeredness with its emphasis on the social nature of learning. This aspect is adequately explored in other chapters. A fourth discussion is assessment centeredness that involves more than designing and developing tests and grading them. Perhaps the strongest aspect of this chapter is the section on putting the how to learn framework into action. The chapter helps the prospective teacher begin to think about learning and its implications in teaching. Chapter 5 “Educational Goals and Purposes: Developing a Curricular Vision for Teaching” is very interesting and perceptive. Its focus is on the gestalt, the overview of what teachers need to know to be successful in the classroom. It provides a vision for the formal curriculum, the enacted curriculum, and the hidden curriculum. It makes the case for why curriculum and its development should be part of teacher preparation. It discusses components of curriculum planning with focus on educational purposes, learning experiences, and evaluation. It looks at the roles that solid instructional design and technology play in curriculum planning. If I were to suggest only one chapter to our teaching education faculty for reflection and action, this would be the one. Diversity in the classroom manifests itself in a variety of ways. However it is envisioned and actualized in the classroom environment, new teachers must be mindful of the differences in student expectations, experiences, and needs and they must be prepared to address them through effective pedagogy and curriculum planning. Chapter 7 “Teaching Diverse Learners” sheds light on this topic. It also discusses implications for teacher education founded in the belief that all students can learn. The last chapter of note in the “parade of stars” chapters is Chapter 11 “The Design of Teacher Education Programs.” It is a wake-up call for teacher preparation programs to seriously review and reflect upon what they do to organize teachers’ learning experiences. After a discussion on basic issues of curriculum and program design, the authors review successful program characteristics and explore current and emerging pedagogies that preparation programs currently use. All this with the understanding that there is no single best way to prepare teachers for the job that lies ahead.

There is no doubt in my mind that this volume is a pivotal piece of instruction in teacher education. Deans of education and chairs of curriculum councils in teacher preparation institutions should make this required reading for their faculties. It should then be followed by an action plan, which provides suggestions for improving an institution’s philosophical mission, an analysis of current curricular offerings and their rationale, and a review of cutting edge pedagogies and technologies to prepare tomorrows teachers.

About the Reviewer

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