

New-Teacher Initiative Annotated Bibliography

Introduction:

From the collective experiences of the national and local NTI teams, three major areas surfaced that needed support through the learning opportunities offered to NTI site leaders. These were 1) investigating strong models of meaningful, high-quality professional development for new teachers, 2) making inquiry a part of the way sites work with new teachers, and 3) deepening site leadership's own knowledge about the teaching of writing in order to help their newest colleagues. This annotated bibliography is a partial listing of the readings that have been most significant in the work of the New-Teacher Initiative. They address four areas: 1) the teaching of writing, 2) understanding culture and its implications for teaching and learning, 3) strengthening inquiry as a mode of learning, and 4) rethinking professional development for new teachers through participation in a professional community.

PART I: THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Hillocks, George Jr. 1995. "The Composing Process: A model." Chap. 5 in *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

In "The Composing Process: A Model," George Hillocks examines the commonly used terms "the" composing process and "the" writing process in an effort to bring out the complexity of what happens in the production of text. Throughout the chapter, he cites the work of well-known researchers of the seventies, eighties, and nineties (McCabe, Bereiter, Graves, Hayes and Flower, and others) whose theories of composing and the process of writing are landmark works in the field of writing. In some instances he argues with a particular view, and sometimes calls for a more flexible interpretation of the researcher's work. He asserts his agreement with the theory that writing is recursive, that all writing is purposive, and that the identification of stages in the process of writing is useful. He also presents his views of some of the challenges in the teaching of writing.

Drawing on his experience as a high school English teacher and a college professor and on his extensive research on writing, Hillocks looks at the process of composing as a complex task requiring four types of knowledge: content knowledge; procedural knowledge that allows the writer to use the content information; knowledge of discourse structures, i.e., the ability to write in different genres and use the conventions of punctuation and usage; and procedural knowledge that allows the writer to engage in and produce a particular kind of discourse. He acknowledges that teaching writing as a process and adopting the stages—composing, drafting, revising, and publishing—have contributed to improvement in the teaching of writing. He also

makes a strong appeal to reject a simplistic, linear model. Instead, he advocates for an inquiry approach in writing.

Based on his examinations and discussions of the theory of composing as a process, he looks at implications for teaching writing at the secondary and college levels. The chapter sets up his further exploration of writing as inquiry.

Ray, Katie Wood, with Lester Laminack. 2001. "Understanding the Essential Characteristics of the Writing Workshop." Chap. 1 in *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Katie Wood Ray, author and researcher on the teaching of writing, speaks directly to the hearts of all teachers, new and experienced, as she explores the organic nature of writing workshop in the first chapter of her book. Her casual tone and openness to share her own questions allows readers to think and reflect on their own practice.

She opens the chapter with a snapshot of a fourth grade writing workshop in action and then unfolds her beliefs on the essential characteristics of writing workshop. Supportive of articles and texts written across the field, Ray challenges the traditional topic-driven approach to teaching writing, focused on "doing" the writing process, and advocates a shift to having young writers "use" the writing process to explore and develop their own personal writing projects. To validate her values about writing workshop, Ray artfully pulls in the voices of published authors who share their own personal struggles and thoughts about writing.

PART II: CULTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Nieto, Sonia. 1999. "Culture and Learning." Chap. 3 in *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

To capture the attention of teachers and educators across all fields and grade levels, Sonia Nieto takes time in chapter 3 to synthesize research on culture and learning and then explore the multifaceted relationship between the two concepts. With a bold, passionate tone, Nieto challenges readers to think deeply and differently about the complex meaning of culture and how its partnership with language links directly to learning and success for all students.

Throughout chapter 3, Nieto supports her theories by sharing personal examples from her life as a Puerto Rican child and by referencing research studies spanning twenty years. She uses evidence from these studies to thoroughly examine the interconnected attributes that are vital to understanding culture and its implications for learning. She forces her audience to look at how a student's "home culture and native language often interfere with learning, but not because of the nature of the culture and language but because it doesn't conform to the ways schools 'define learning.'"

After reading this chapter, teachers and other educators striving to educate and empower all students will be left thinking about three distinct findings that must be addressed in the field:

1. Embracing one's native language has a positive impact on learning.
2. The teacher's role as mediator is imperative to the success of students.
3. Schools must move beyond seeing culture in isolation and see the necessity of "personal and institutional accommodations" to personal differences.

At a time where an awareness of the influences of culture is at the forefront of education, Nieto calls for "drastic shifts in teachers' beliefs and attitudes, and in school policies and practices" (p.71) in order to equitably educate all students.

Palmer, Parker J. 1998. "The Heart of a Teacher: Identity and Integrity in Teaching." Chap. 1 in *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 9–33. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Does a teacher's personal identity have a place in the classroom? Parker J. Palmer, a highly respected writer and educational activist in the field of higher education, contends that although techniques, methods, and subject matter are necessary resources in the world of education, they are not all-important. He reasons that the strength of teachers is in connecting themselves, their subjects, and their students.

As Palmer works with leaders from universities to corporations, he gathers life stories about identity and integrity battles. In this chapter he compares and contrasts several of those stories in an effort to encourage teachers to intentionally choose connection over isolation. He argues the relevance of this issue for new and experienced teachers as they struggle with programs and methodology that are scripted and forced upon them, and acknowledges the effort and courage teachers need as they struggle to build and maintain relationship in teaching.

Palmer asks the question, "Where do reality and power reside?" and guides the reader to realize the difference between power and authority in the teaching culture. He suggests that connections can occur only if we are willing to challenge the culture of teaching, and he offers suggestions for tackling those challenges both personally and professionally.

PART III: INQUIRY AS A MODE OF LEARNING

Cochran-Smith, Marilyn. 2002. "Inquiry and Outcomes: Learning to Teach in the Age of Accountability." *Teacher Education and Practice* 15 (4): 12–34.

In this article Marilyn Cochran-Smith, currently Professor of Education at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College, looks at the complexities of supporting inquiry as a valuable part of preservice teachers' education in an educational environment that increasingly uses student testing to assess teacher preparation and performance.

In the first section of the article, she clarifies some of the terms and language associated with inquiry. For example, she makes the distinction between inquiry as ongoing interrogation of one's practice over the life span of teaching as opposed to inquiry as a project or activity over a limited period of time. She looks at the construct of "inquiry stance" by explaining how she and her long-time co-researcher Susan Lytle see "inquiry as stance" as the ways teachers and others who work in inquiry communities position themselves in relation to their knowledge making.

In the second section, she looks at some of the ongoing debate regarding teacher education and the trend toward evaluating the outcomes of teacher preparation through the use of students' standardized test scores. She asks two critical questions she considers essential to the debate: 1) What should the outcome of teacher education be for teacher learning, professional practice, and student learning? 2) How, by whom, and for what purpose should these outcomes be documented, demonstrated, and/or measured? She advocates for a broadening of the outcomes of teacher preparation to include the ability to evaluate student learning, the skill of developing meaningful and rich learning experiences for all students, the ability to examine one's assumptions and values regarding issues of race, gender, equity, and access, and the capacity to work toward social justice.

In the third section, she presents samples and discusses the work of three of her preservice teachers who engaged in an inquiry into their teaching as a part of their undergraduate education. Her discussion makes visible how engaging in the activities of inquiry (observing, questioning, documenting, researching the work of others, sharing work in an inquiry community, analyzing, and taking action) gave future teachers the opportunity to raise questions about student learning, teacher practice, curriculum development, assessment, and larger social and political educational issues. Cochran-Smith's detailed examination and discussion of the conflicts and contradictions inherent in teachers' taking an inquiry stance toward their own teaching and learning invite reflection on a number of important teacher preparation issues.

Hubbard, Ruth Shagoury, and Brenda Miller Power. 2003. "Try to Love the Questions Themselves. Finding and Framing a Research Questions." Chap 1 in *The Art of Classroom Inquiry: A Handbook for Teacher-Researchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Researchers Hubbard and Power dedicate the first chapter of their book *The Art of Classroom Inquiry* to the idea that wonderings about our own classrooms and students develop into questions for research. Teachers and researchers are challenged to feel the tension in their classrooms as a starting point for the evolution of larger issues.

Having worked across the country in the field of teacher research for fifteen years, Hubbard and Power take time in this chapter to discuss the importance of purposefully framing the question so as to keep the research process open to “continual discovery.” They recommend keeping the question unrestricted in order to allow various outcomes to emerge. To assist the reader, Hubbard and Power include a list of sample questions that developed from real-world observations in classrooms with students. For example, *What happens when my students attempt peer mentoring? How do students communicate their mathematical thinking during whole-group discussion?* One’s observations around these questions can be a starting point to research. The authors also give the reader permission to take time to observe and explore. When this happens the question evolves and deepens.

Hubbard and Power make the abstract nature of inquiry concrete by including the personal experiences of teachers from different fields and grade levels. First grade to high school teachers share how their questions emerged from their own practice and then led to discoveries that changed their thinking. The authors conclude the chapter by motivating the reader with a list of six suggestions for pursuing questions in one’s own practice. The first suggestion is simply to keep a journal and write in it each day.

Hubbard and Power suggest that teacher research not only builds understanding around new knowledge and empowers teacher-learners, but allows us to better understand our students and the broader context of their world.

PART IV: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR NEW TEACHERS

Feiman-Nemser, Sharon. 2001. “From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum to Strengthen and Sustain Teaching.” *Teachers College Record* 103 (6): 1013–1055.

While at Michigan State University, the author co-directed a field-based teacher education program and conducted research on teacher education, new-teacher induction, and mentoring in the United States, England, and China. In this paper, in order to motivate dialogue, Feiman-Nemser advocates the development of a structured curriculum for teacher learning over time. She examines conventional teacher-learning programs generally packaged as preservice or induction programs, and suggests strategies for sustained teacher learning that include continuing professional development that values teachers as constructors of knowledge.

Educators and policy makers searching for meaningful ways to reform and sustain traditional teacher preparation, induction, and professional development will find this resource useful for stimulating conversation and debate about teachers as learners. Feiman-Nemser argues that simply supporting new teachers is inadequate and that student needs can only be met by ongoing professional conversation, inquiry, and close examination of teachers' work over time.

Feiman-Nemser has researched and written extensively about teacher education and mentoring and is considered one of the foremost experts in teacher induction. This paper was commissioned by the Strengthening and Sustaining Teaching Project. The author includes recommendations and findings from several studies conducted between 1997 and 2000. She provides a well-organized and articulated argument for the transformation of teacher learning for the purpose of strengthening and sustaining teaching.

Lieberman, Ann, and Diane R. Wood. 2003. "The 'Model' and the 'Work': Creating a Social Context for Learning." Chap. 2 in *Inside the National Writing Project: Connecting Network Learning and Classroom Teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ann Lieberman and Diane R. Wood's book is the result of a two-year study of the National Writing Project. As they state in the preface and first chapter of the book, they conducted this study to understand why this professional development organization was so highly valued among classroom teachers. Over the two-year period they looked closely at two National Writing Project sites: the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Writing Project, an urban site, and Oklahoma State University (OSU) Writing Project, a site that serves urban, rural, and suburban areas. They spent extended time at each site documenting their observations; interviewing directors, summer institute participants and teacher-consultants; and visiting the classrooms of six teacher-consultants.

In chapter 2, "The 'Model' and the 'Work': Creating a Social Context for Learning," Lieberman and Wood describe the teachers-teaching-teachers design established by James Gray, the National Writing Project founder. They describe the summer institute model's three main components: teachers (K-college level) write daily in a workshop structure, and share their writing and respond to each other's in small response groups; they read and discuss professional literature from the field; and they demonstrate aspects of their practice for their peers and receive helpful feedback in a supportive community that values their knowledge and respects them as learners and inquirers into the craft of teaching.

These researchers discuss what they identify as a set of "social practices" that are at the core of the National Writing Project's work with teachers. These include honoring teacher knowledge, guiding reflection on teaching through reflection on learning, and turning ownership over to learners. This accurate, insightful and well-documented description of how these social

practices create professional communities that transform the practice and the professional identities of teachers is a valuable text for anyone interested in understanding the work and impact of the National Writing Project.

Nieto, Sonia. 2003. "What Keeps Teachers Going?" *Educational Leadership* 60 (8): 14–18.

This article serves as a synopsis of Sonia Nieto's book *What Keeps Teachers Going?* A professor emerita of Language, Literacy, and Culture in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Nieto addresses her concern that urban public schools are failing. She believes that these schools' students, our most vulnerable students, need the best teachers—those with high, consistent expectations of themselves and of students.

In 1999 and 2000 Nieto collaborated with seven respected urban teachers in the Boston Public Schools to reflect on the question "What keeps teachers going—in spite of everything?" This article reports the findings of the inquiry group. Their discourse, as Nieto says, did not solve the problems of urban schools, but the process helped articulate some reasons why teachers stay in teaching.

The group reports seven reasons urban public school teachers choose to continue teaching. Among the rationale for teachers staying in the profession is that teachers' identities are closely connected to their teaching in and out of the classroom, which can be seen in their involvement in issues of social justice. Another reason teachers stick with the profession is that they never let what Nieto calls "anger and desperation" about the injustices students face interfere with their focus on students. As Nieto lays out the findings, the voices of these seven teachers in Boston mirror those of teachers in urban schools across the nation.

Summing up the inquiry group's findings, Nieto challenges teachers to commit to high-quality public education, and strongly urges teacher educators to refocus teacher preparation on meeting the needs of students in urban schools, to redesign professional development as an approach that builds on teachers' professionalism and intellectualism, and to prepare teachers for what she calls "public service."