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# STORIES TO LIVE BY ON THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPE

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**ABSTRACT** *In this article I want to talk about some work I have been doing with a group of colleagues at universities and in schools over the past 20 years or so. It is work that explores questions of teacher knowledge, what it means to come to know as teachers and how our knowing as teachers is shaped by the landscapes on which we come to know as teachers and the landscapes on which we now teach. I will try and make connections between what is commonly called, in Canada and the United States and here in New Zealand, standards and competencies in teacher education and some of our work.*

The sounds of talk about standards and competencies are everywhere today. Every time I meet with a new graduate class of teachers and administrators, the talk quickly turns to standards, competencies and achievement tests. Too often, the talk is filled with discussion of mechanistic knowledge, skills and attitudes, talk which seems to imply that not only do we, as experts, know what teachers need to know but that we can fill up teachers, and prospective teachers, with what they need to know. It, too often, sounds like we can transfer knowledge, skills and *attitudes* to teachers. And, too often, the talk seems to suggest that contexts, where teachers engage with students, do not influence their practice. Too often the policies seem to ignore that context makes a difference to our practice. Teachers and administrators tell me that, too often, they feel silenced in these conversations, accused of not wanting to be accountable or of being resistant to change. And, they say, this does not convey what they are experiencing. They want to engage in different conversations, with a different language, around questions of what it is important for teachers to know and how we can know what teachers know. They want to engage in discussions about teacher knowledge.

My research life has been lived in collaboration, much of it with Michael Connelly. He and I have been students of teacher knowledge for many years. When we began this line of work in the 1970s, the field of teacher thinking was just emerging in the educational research literature. Prior to that, researchers focused on teacher skills, attitudes, characteristics and methods. There was excitement throughout the research community when attention turned to teachers' thought processes. It was felt by many that this was a move closer to the experience of classrooms, a move that would bring life to the field. Even then, however, there was little talk of teachers as holders and makers of knowledge. For example, in the third edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Wittrock, 1986) the only references to teacher knowledge research were comparatively minor citations in two chapters titled *Teachers' Thought*

*Processes* (Clark & Peterson, 1986) and *The Culture of Teaching* (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986).

Following the work of Dewey (1938), Gauthier (1963), Johnson (1987), Polanyi (1958), Schwab (1970) and others, we became fascinated with trying to understand teachers as knowers: knowers of themselves, of their situations, of children, of subject matter, of teaching, of learning. We began to work with teachers to try to understand the nature of this knowledge that was expressed in teachers' practices. To reflect our epistemological interest in the personal and practical nature of education we coined the term "personal practical knowledge" *which* we defined as a term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions. Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation.

Increasingly, as our work progressed, we came to see teacher knowledge in terms of narrative life history, as storied life compositions. These stories, these narratives of experience, are both personal, reflecting a person's life history, and social, reflecting the milieu, the contexts in which teachers live. Keeping our eyes firmly on the question of teacher knowledge we realized that knowledge was both formed and expressed in context. Within schools this context is immensely complex and we adopted a metaphor of a professional knowledge landscape to help us capture this complexity.

A landscape metaphor seemed particularly well suited to our purpose. It allowed us to talk about space, place, and time. Furthermore, it had a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships. Because we saw the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places, and things, we saw it as both an intellectual and a moral landscape.

We view the landscape as narratively constructed: as having a history with moral, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions. We see it as storied. To enter a professional knowledge landscape is to enter a place of story. And as we started to pay close attention to the stories that were alive on the landscapes, we seemed to find stories everywhere: teacher stories, sometimes authentic and sometimes cover stories; stories told of teachers by others such as other teachers, students, parents, administrators; school stories murmured in staff rooms, overheard in hallways, recounted at staff meetings; stories of school told to parents, government officials, senior administrators. Sometimes these stories of school were also cover stories, composed and told in order to turn attention to other matters. These cover stories hid secret stories, stories not safe to tell. Sometimes these stories of school were in competition, a kind of tension between stories where both stories flourished. At other times the stories seemed in conflict, the tension too great to allow both stories to flourish. As we lived on the landscape, we were indeed living within a place of story.

As we talked to teachers, made field texts of our work in schools and wrote about our own lives, we realized that, as teachers, we live in two

fundamentally different kind of places in schools, the one in our classrooms with students and one outside classrooms with other teachers, administrators, policy makers and so on. As teachers we cross that boundary many times each day.

The place on the landscape outside our classrooms is a place filled with knowledge funneled into the school system for the purpose of altering teachers' and children's classroom lives. Teachers talk about this knowledge all the time. We all make reference to "what's coming down the pipe"; "what's coming down now"; "what will they throw down on us next?". In these metaphorical expressions we hear teachers express their knowledge of their out-of-classroom place as a place littered with imposed prescriptions. It is a place filled with other people's visions of what is right for children. Researchers, policy makers, senior administrators and others, using various implementation strategies, push research findings, policy statements, plans, improvement schemes and so on down what we call the conduit into this out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape. We characterize this theory-driven view of practice shared by practitioners, policy makers, and theoreticians as having the quality of a sacred story (Crites, 1971).

Sacred stories are ones that, as Stephen Crites writes, are so pervasive they remain mostly unnoticed and when named are hard to define. They are stories that live in our bodies. Everywhere on the landscape, teachers, principals, policymakers and researchers seem to live out the plotline that theory, mostly in the form of an abstract rhetoric of conclusions, should come down to drive practice. Mostly this abstract rhetoric of conclusions would rain down on the out-of-classroom places on the school landscape, delivered to teachers at staff meetings, professional development days, workshops, or through curriculum packages, district policies and so on. The plotline that this was the theory-practice story seemed unquestioned and unquestionable.

And the theory sent down had a shaping influence on teachers' lives on the out-of-classroom place and on the kinds of storied knowledge alive on the out-of-classroom places.

Classrooms are, on the other hand and for the most part, safe places, generally free from scrutiny, where teachers are free to live stories of practice. These lived stories are essentially secret ones. As an aside, I believe that with the increasing pressure to "produce students" who achieve well on standardized achievement tests, classrooms are becoming less safe, at least in Canada.

What I am trying to make clear here is that the professional knowledge landscape is a bordered landscape. There are in-classroom places, out-of-classroom places and off the professional knowledge landscape places. Different storied knowledge is found as we cross the border between these different places. For example, when teachers move out of their classrooms onto the out-of-classroom place on the landscape, they often live and tell cover stories, stories in which they portray themselves as expert, certain characters whose teacher stories fit within the acceptable range of the story of school being lived in the school. Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalised by whatever the current story of school is to continue to practice and to sustain their teacher stories.



To try to make this way of thinking about schools come alive, I want to share some of the work of Janice Huber, a teacher and doctoral student who wrote about her knowing and its expression in her classroom practice.

Janice is a teacher who has taught in a number of different contexts, rural, urban, international schools. She frequently speaks of an image of community when she gives an account of her personal practical knowledge. Her stories are ones of growing up in a farming family, nurtured by parents and her siblings. Her stories also revolve around plotlines of resistance when she feels others or herself are not being heard or respected. In what follows, Janice wrote of her practice in a year one and two classroom, a year when she worked with Shaun, a student teacher. She describes the beginning of the school year in an excerpt from a chapter (Huber, in press).

As the school year drew near, Shaun and I focused on the in-classroom place. When the children entered into this space we wanted it to feel warm and inviting, creating for them a feeling that it would be an exciting and happy place to live for the upcoming year. We covered the bulletin boards with colorful paper and borders, arranged the furniture so that the room felt open and inviting yet also included some quiet "by myself places." We hung messages like: "A friend is someone with whom you dare to be yourself" (Bergsma, 1983); "We are all the colours of the rainbow . . ." (Landry, 1976); and "I am special and unique". We draped a large, colourful Chinese kite from the ceiling. We organized materials for a variety of centre areas including puppets, listening, friendship, creating, writing, painting, and math. We scattered an assortment of small carpets throughout the room to give our in-classroom place a warm, somewhat cozy feeling.

The first day of school finally arrived, and with a great deal of anticipation, we met our 22 children for the first time. Our beginning work with these children focused on the personal gifts each child brought from his/her life to our classroom community and how these gifts helped to shape our in-classroom place. By imagining our in-classroom place around the metaphor of a garden, we wanted to highlight the individuality of each child and help them to see his/her place and responsibility as a gardener within our community.

We drew upon a vast collection of literature to enrich our classroom experiences. For example, we asked the children to write a poem describing the gentle ripples shaped by a pebble as it was dropped into a pond. As we discussed the life space of this pond community, the children began to imagine what kind of "ripples" they would make within our classroom community. We read *The Salamander Room* (Mazer, 1991) and asked the children to work on collaborative writing and art work illustrating what kind of "place" our classroom community could be. We read *Crow Boy*, (Yashina, 1955) and had the children write and talk about their own personal gifts. We used the story of *Swimmy* (Lionni, 1963) to help us think about what our classroom creed might be. From this story, the children developed the motto "When people love, they bring love to life".

Stories and activities such as these shaped our classroom during the months of September and October. Before long our in-classroom space became alive. Pieces of writing, a variety of art works, and photographs of the children

were hung throughout the room, in the entrance and hallway outside the classroom. During class time, the children worked at groups of desks or in small clusters throughout the room, and often we gathered together on the carpet in a corner of the room which we called the "cozy corner". Throughout the moments of each day, children's voices filled the room, sometimes quietly, sometimes loudly. At recess, it was not unusual to see the children skipping out of the classroom and down the hallway, hand in hand.

Each morning we gathered in the communal space of our "support circle" to listen to and give response to one another's writing. The children loved this time and were as eager to share their writing as they were to offer response. The making of our support circle had been an especially memorable event early in the school year. We introduced the idea of making a support circle to the children by reading *The Rag Coat* (Mills, 1991) which tells the story of Minna, a young girl who wants to go to school but cannot because she needs a winter coat. The Quilting Mothers, who gather at Minna's house to make quilts with her mother, offer to make Minna a winter coat from the scraps of fabric left over from their quilting. The Quilting Mothers explain to Minna that each fabric scrap tells a story about the people to whom the fabric belonged.

After reading the story we drew the children into conversation. The children talked about Minna's rag coat and how special it was because it was made of many different pieces of fabric. They discussed the sadness they felt when Minna's classmates laughed at her coat, and they told stories of people they knew who quilted. Threads of the garden metaphor wove into our conversation as we talked about diversity and difference and how something is even more beautiful when colours are mixed as in the rainbow. We talked about how our classroom was like Minna's coat because all of the children were different, yet we lived together in one room. We asked the children if they would like to make a special kind of classroom quilt so that we would always have a symbol of how important being different yet working together is. The children eagerly agreed and scattered themselves throughout the classroom to design their own pieces of the quilt. When all of the children had completed their pieces, we talked about how they were like a puzzle, fitting together into the shape of a large circle. After we glued the pieces together, we asked the children to move into the cozy corner, and to sit in a large circle. They immediately saw the connection we were making between how we were sitting and our paper circle. We talked about how we hoped we could meet in a support circle each day to listen to and to respond to the stories we were composing. We asked the children to describe what kind of place they imagined the support circle might be. Using words like "caring", "helping" and "encouraging", the children explained the kind of place they imagined. Throughout the fall, we enjoyed many special moments in the support circle as the children read their stories and their classmates, Shaun or I responded to their writing.

While Janice wrote more in her chapter about the complexities of her practice, I hope I have given a sense of her teacher stories to live by. So far, it seems as if Janice and Shaun and the children lived in a perfect world, a place I think I would want to be. Children were learning to read and write, learning



what it meant to build and live in community, constructing subject matter knowledge in an integrated way.

But, to stop here is to miss the larger landscape of the school. What were the school stories and story of school in which Janice and Shaun's stories of their classroom were embedded? And how might those school stories have shaped their teacher stories?

While Janice has written about this, we can engage in a more imaginative task. In my years of research and teaching, I have worked in many schools, coming to know the school, stories and stories of school that characterize their landscapes and that shape the teacher stories and stories of teachers who live there. As I sketch these two landscapes it is possible to imagine Janice and Shaun on them and to consider how their teacher stories might be shaped by living.

These accounts are fictionalized but portray schools with which many of us can identify, for we may have known similar landscapes.

### **Blueberry Hills School**

As I enter the foyer of Blueberry Hills School, I am confronted with a wall display of school achievement scores, the academic rankings of the students in the honour rolls. My gaze is taken to the announcement board, beside the rankings, where there is posted the district achievement test rankings of schools in the area with Blueberry Hill's ranking noted. There are numerous banners proclaiming the school and student standings from various competitions from science fairs to sports days. As I move around the school to have conversations with administrators and staff members, I am told that students and teachers work hard to ensure good results on district and provincial achievement tests. The story of school told to visitors is that Blueberry Hills School is dedicated to ensuring students earn top grades on district and provincial achievement tests. This is a school where parents are assured that achievement is the school's top priority. While the school may have had lower scores before, that was no longer acceptable in this new story of school.

School stories have plotlines composed around award days, sports days, competition among students within and between classes, a team spirit of healthy competition among staff members, graded report cards, and expectations that parents will do homework with their children each night. Increasingly, a school story is that students who do not fit the norm should be segregated in district sites for special needs such as for children with developmental delays, children who are gifted and talented, children with behavior extremes and so on.

### **Strawberry Lane School**

As I enter the foyer of Strawberry Lane School, I am confronted with quite a different range of displays. There are stuffed animals everywhere, including a giant stuffed bear. There is a bench close by to the giant toy that encourages children and others to sit down. Everywhere I can see there are small three-

foot-high bookshelves, all of them filled with books. Covering the tops of them are stuffed bears, display books, and small collections of interesting objects. Posters and signs with messages such as "Friends Live Here" and "Everyone Can Make A Difference" are posted on walls and display boards. The walls are filled with children's art work and photograph displays of staff and students. As I move around the school to have conversations with administrators and staff members, I am told that this is a school that believes everyone is a learner and that everyone has talents and gifts. The story of school told to visitors is that Strawberry Lane School is dedicated to helping children learn. This is a school where parents are assured that learning is the school's top priority. School stories have plotlines composed around student portfolios as a way of documenting student learning, stories of resistance to Board mandates that do not begin with each child's learning as a starting point, staff collaboration in order to enable cross-graded and cross-aged grouping, integration of children with special needs into classroom settings, parents as partners in decision-making and in education, and developing children's knowing in art, humanities, science, physical education, and so on.

Both schools are considered "good" schools by the district in which they are situated although Blueberry Hill's plotline more easily fits with the latest plotline of achievement. The principals of both are considered strong administrators.

I sketched these two schools' professional knowledge landscapes as a way of creating imaginative contexts for the teacher stories Janice and Shaun were living on their in-classroom place. Positioning Janice and Shaun in these different school contexts might shape them in different ways. The story of school and school stories in each of them create quite a different influence.

Imagine for a moment Janice and Shaun at Blueberry Hills School. Would their teacher stories be congruent with the plotline of the story of school? Would the borders between their in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place be a tension-filled crossing for them? What stories of them might be told?

Would Janice, with her story of children as having unique gifts, feel at ease with the focus on achievement tests? Or might she feel tension as she glanced up at the display board which ranked her students' scores against each other? Would she be comfortable with encouraging her students to compete against each other to win science fair prizes?

As she crossed the border from her classroom to the staffroom for meetings and professional deliberations around report cards, grading and curriculum, might she feel tension? And how might she be storied by her colleagues and administrators on the landscape? Would her focus on building and sustaining of community be seen as irrelevant to student achievement?

And, of course, because this is an imaginative task there are no answers about how Janice might experience life on the landscape of Blueberry Hills School. But, before we leave the landscape, wonder with me about how this landscape might shape Janice's teacher story to live by. Could we imagine that she might begin to distrust her knowing, her story to live by? Immersed within a landscape where the story of school conflicts with her teacher story, might she lose confidence in her knowing? Or might she learn to burrow into

her classroom, coming out only when necessary and, when she does, staying silent or, perhaps, telling a cover story which fits within the plotline of the story of school? And, if so, imagine the part she might or might not play in school reform initiatives. Would she embrace new school reforms that come down the conduit? Would she learn to restory or change her teacher stories as she stays in her classroom? Or might she begin to resist the story of school?

If we placed Janice and Shaun in Strawberry Lane School, would their teacher stories be congruent with the plotline of the story of school? Would the border between their in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place be a tension-filled crossing for them? What stories of them might be told?

Would Janice, with her story of children as diverse but valued members of a community, feel at ease with the focus on learning? Might she feel the time she spent on support circles and response communities was worthwhile? Would she feel comfortable with the talk about learning as she crossed the border from her classroom to the staffroom for professional development meetings? Would she be at ease resisting board mandates that did not begin with children's learning at the center? How might she be storied by her colleagues and administrators on the landscape of Strawberry Lane School?

Trying to understand the possibilities of diverse professional knowledge landscapes within which Janice and Shaun might be positioned was a way for me to try to explain our work on teacher knowledge. I told the stories to show how we developed our understanding of the landscape, that is, through living with teachers on their landscapes and hearing their stories and to open up questions of what might happen when new reforms are mandated and sent down the conduit to the landscape. Using the distinctions among teacher stories, stories of teachers, school stories and stories of school to understand teachers' lives on the landscape draws our attention to two key points, that is, both to the complexity and to the moral side of life on the landscape.

### **First, the Complexity Point**

As I related Janice and Shaun's story and positioned it within two different professional knowledge landscapes, I made it seem as if there were only one teacher story within one story of school. I spoke only of Janice and Shaun. Even there we could imagine how their stories would be interconnecting and reflexively shaping other stories. Complexity was apparent. However, it is clear that when we attend to a school landscape, we are attending to many teachers, each with many stories.

Mary Catherine Bateson (1994) writes of this complexity in the opening pages of *Peripheral Visions* when she describes being with her young daughter at a ritual slaying of a sheep in a Persian garden. She writes: "I was in that garden as a learner, an outsider, and yet because I was there as a parent I was simultaneously a teacher, an authority" (p.5).

In that quotation she speaks of the multiple stories she was living and of the ways she was positioned relative to the other characters in her story. Later she writes of the context when she writes:

Meeting as strangers, we join in common occasions, making up our multiple roles as we go along - young and old, male and female, teacher and parent and lover - with all of science and history present in shadow form, partly illuminating and partly obscuring what is there to be learned (p.6).

We, too, had a sense of the complexity that faced researchers trying to understand teachers' lives when, in 1990, we wrote:

The central task is evident when it is grasped that people are both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others. For the researcher, this is also a matter of growth toward an imagined future and, therefore, involves retelling stories and attempts at reliving stories.

I want to highlight for you that each teacher lives out multiple plotlines, and these plotlines are always subtly shifting. For example, in the story of Janice that I shared I spoke of two plotlines: one of community and one of resistance. And these were only two of many possible plotlines in her storied knowledge. I shared nothing of Shaun's stories and of how Shaun's and Janice's stories intersected. There are, as you know, many stories within us all. As we try to understand teachers' knowledge as lived and told in stories on the landscape, we see that not only are there multiple stories in each teacher's life but also many teachers, each of them living out multiple plotlines. And within schools, there are also multiple stories of school and school stories which, in Bateson's words, partly illuminate and partly obscure what is there to be learned.

In order to understand our own and others' stories there is another layer of complexity. As I noted earlier our stories as teachers have been shaped by all of the school stories and stories of schools that shaped us in the past as well as the ways the multiple stories in our present places continue to shape us. These past and present stories of school continue to shape our knowing.

What is important here is to recognize that multiple stories of all kinds are being lived and told at any one time. These multiple stories are always intertwined one with another. Janice's stories of herself as a teacher are composed around multiple plotlines of herself as teacher, as rural child, as daughter, as sister, as friend, as teacher-researcher. Her stories revolve around many plotlines, the two I focused on were plotlines of community and resistance. We know almost nothing of the past stories that shaped her. We imagined her as living within two different landscapes and imagined, briefly, how the landscapes might have called forth different stories from her and might have shaped her knowing.

Understanding stories of school, school stories and teacher stories as multiple and as nested allows the possibility that teachers may break free from cover stories and begin to tell stories that would disrupt, conflict with, the school stories and stories of school. For example, we might imagine that Janice might have, living out a story of resistance, begun to disrupt the story of school

achievement at Blueberry Hills School. This possibility could have led to new ways to restory her teacher story and the stories of school on the landscape. We might also imagine that she might have burrowed into her classroom, until eventually the stress of living a secret story might have led her to leave.

### **Second, the Moral Point**

The *professional knowledge* landscape is a moral landscape. None of the stories are value-neutral. They are all moral. Together these complex, interwoven teacher stories, school stories and stories of school create a highly moral landscape, filled with stories which prescribe character parts and plotlines.

But not only the stories of school and school stories are moral as they lay out plotlines for characters to live out. Teacher knowledge as expressed in practice and in story is a moral knowledge. When we hear teachers' stories, we hear moral stories, stories filled with the person's sense of what is right for children. For example, Janice's story is not a neutral one. She lives a story in which children learn to live in community with each other, to respond to and to have responsibility for each other, for themselves and for their community. Subject matter knowledge of literacy is taught in the context of their lives. The stories of school at Blueberry Hills and Strawberry Lane are also moral stories. There is a sense of the right way to educate. And teacher stories such as Janice's may well fit with or be in conflict with school stories and stories of school.

As we continue living and telling our stories and hearing and responding to others' stories, we need to be mindful both of how our teacher stories have been shaped and continue to be shaped on past and present landscapes and how the landscape with its interwoven stories is shaped by our telling. So given this view of teacher knowledge and their contexts, what does this say about school reform in general and reforms such as teacher competencies in particular?

Talk of school reform is everywhere today where I live. Whether it is of new curriculum packages in math and science, provincial achievement test programs, safe and caring school curriculum and professional development packages or teacher standards and competencies, reform initiatives inundate the landscape. Most of these initiatives are designed in policy rooms and, in our language, are shipped down the conduit to the school landscape where they are to be implemented.

However, as I hope I have made clear, there are seen and unseen stories at work on the landscape. Teacher stories are lived, told, retold and relived, sometimes shaped to fit within the stories of school being lived and told within a particular school, sometimes in conflict with the stories of school and sometimes kept secret as cover stories are told. Sometimes the teacher stories compete with or conflict with other teacher stories or with stories of school. But at any one time many stories, many stories of school, many school stories and many teacher stories are kept alive through the retelling and reliving of stories. The stories are kept alive in such ways as school structuring of time and place, for example, through 45-minute class periods, through 200 day school years, through the physical organisation of space into individual

classrooms. Stories are also kept alive through parents', children's and administrators' stories and in teachers' lived and told stories. These stories stay alive on the landscape long after we might imagine them to be gone.

Currently we are writing about one school where we have watched the shifting stories of a school's professional knowledge landscape over almost 20 years. As we try to reconstruct the shifting teacher stories, school stories and stories of school, we liken the landscape to an archaeological site. All practices do not change at once. At any one time practices in which we participated were shaped by earlier stories.

Lived and told *or* lived and untold stories from earlier times are always present on the professional knowledge landscape when school reform is proposed. The landscape is not a blank slate on which new stories may be written by reformers. And yet, too often, reformers shipping new policies down the conduit act as if they can reconfigure the landscape in this way. Imagine, for a moment, the new policy of standards and competencies shipped down to the landscapes of Blueberry Hills and Strawberry Lane schools. Would these policies alter practices in the same ways? Would the policies be shaped to fit the landscape?

### **School Reform from the Standpoint of the Landscape**

How could a story of school reform be otherwise? Let me recap where I have been and imagine for a moment as we do, that teachers, as holders of personal practical knowledge, live on a landscape. Each of the teachers and principal come to the landscape living and telling a complex set of interwoven stories of themselves as teachers of children in this school, of the community, of the school board, of successes and failures in the long term and in the short term. Their individual stories are shaped by living on a narrative landscape with its own network of stories: other teachers' stories, school stories, stories of school, stories of how this school is thought of by the administration, stories of what parents think of the school, stories of children. As the teachers and principal live together on a landscape, each with their own stories in a landscape of stories, a story of school begins to emerge that draws from the web of stories. These stories are rooted temporally as individual stories shift and change in response to changing events and circumstances. Changes in the story of school ripple through the school and influence the whole web of stories. Others, such as parents, also influence, and are influenced by, the shifting story of school.

Unlike a problem-solving situation, where a problem can be defined somewhat in isolation and solved somewhat in isolation, the landscape is a living place, a place with a history, with dynamic internal goings on, with continuing interactions and exchanges with community, and all of it aimed into the future in sometimes cloudy and sometimes clear ways. It is a place of relationship among people and their stories positioned differently on the landscape, among the past, present and future.

In another place, and trying to take the long view on school reform, we characterized this shifting landscape by using Geertz's (1995) metaphor of a parade. Each participant on the landscape, in the parade, has a particular place and a particular set of stories being lived out at any particular time. Our



influence on the landscape, in the parade, is uncertain. We cannot easily anticipate how our presence, our innovations, our stories, will influence other stories. The parade proceeds whether we wish it to or not. How might one enter the parade and live out a role as a reformer? As we enter into the professional knowledge landscape as reformers intent on improving schools we use a metaphor of "joining the parade" rather than one of "parachuting in" or being "funneled in". Given a notion of the landscape as a parade, as a changing organism composed of multiple nested stories interacting and changing over time, a narrative map might be a way of getting a sense of the changing parade. Living with teachers such as Janice and Shaun on their landscape might allow us to begin to compose such a narrative map. And, as we try to compose this shifting, changing map, we might begin to understand something of the landscape, the parade.

We do not imagine that a narrative map would be easily constructed but such a map might allow *us to see the direction of the parade* for schools such as Blueberry Hills and Strawberry Lane. Rather than trying to stop the parade or walking against the direction of the parade, we imagine reform to be best accomplished by entering into and walking with parade participants. Walking along with participants, trying to hear their stories, trying to tell our own, and then trying with them to understand the interconnected web of stories, might make it possible to gain some sense of the interwoven narratives. For example, if our reform interest is in coming to understand and improve classroom practice, one of the purposes of the competencies reform, how could we walk along the teachers of the imagined Strawberry Lane and Blueberry Hills Schools to introduce this possibility? Would it be possible to join in conversation with principals, teachers, parents, and children about what such an initiative might mean in each context?

Such narrative mapping would allow us to see what is bubbling up as participants dance along in the parade. Careful narrative observing might allow noting the moments when possibilities for new stories bubble up. These moments, similar to teachable moments, might be reform moments, moments when it might be possible to shift the course of a story.

This more relational sense of coming into a school and joining an already ongoing set of interwoven stories on an always-shifting, always-changing, storied landscape gives a sense of not being parachuted in to solve whatever problems had been identified externally but as being part of the landscape. As we dance along in the parade, we begin to understand how to be part of the parade and to be more awake to it. Such wide-awakeness, such a sense of the map, would attune those with reform intentions to stories to live by such as those being lived by Janice and Shaun. Rather than following the narrative terms of control, initiative, and urgent problem-solving, we may learn to dance more wisely in the parade, to consider more thoughtfully possible reforms and how to imagine fitting them into the ongoing parade.

The storied professional knowledge landscape on which we all live our lives is, understood from a narrative knowledge standpoint perhaps better seen as not the war zone for reform with front lines, trenches, action plans, buy-ins and buy-outs, strategists and so on, but as a space for negotiation, a middle ground for understanding how to shift the parade in more imaginative

ways. In such a view, school reform becomes a question of the possibility of school participants re-imagining their professional lives. This imagined middle ground shifts the terms for reform from initiative, control and urgent problem-solving for either outside reformers or individuals working alone or together, to new terms such as stories to live by, negotiation, improvisation, imagination and possibility. Such a standpoint allows us to imagine reform as softer, as less impositional on the lives of children, parents, teachers and others, as needing to be undertaken with less urgency and with more willingness to listen, to negotiate and to change as we move forward in this changing parade.

So what do we make of the new story of standards that has been sent down the conduit? How will that new story shape our landscapes in Alberta and your landscapes here in New Zealand? We are only at the beginning of watching subtle shifts in the landscape as standards and competencies for teachers and administrators are imposed. I hear murmurs as those of us in teacher education ask each other if our courses meet government requirements for knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is far from certain how each school landscape will be changed. It is, for me, important that as I continue to dance along in this latest metaphoric parade of school reform, to dance along *with* teachers and administrators trying to shift the direction of the parade from standards and competencies *to* more understanding of the complex questions of teacher knowledge, questions which allow us to begin to understand that teacher knowledge is context dependent uncertain, always changing, and lived, told, retold and relived in stories.

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