

# AFTERWORD

## After Entitlement?

At the end of this book, we find ourselves in the space of “after entitlement?” By this, I mean that we have engaged in a varied, insightful, meaningful, and significant exploration of the concept of teacher or teacher educator entitlement. The insight and provocation position the reader to be able to seek further and explore more deeply the concept of teacher entitlement and its ramifications for many of the conundrums of teacher education. Yet, now I find myself beginning again standing in a space of becoming constantly and insistently aware of the problem and promise of teacher entitlement as a venue for research.

Like Tara Ratnam and Cheryl Craig, this reader has engaged in numerous reform efforts and been wounded, mystified, and disappointed. Teaching and teacher education seem to have made great progress and none. Since at least 1983, teaching and teacher education has been dragged through one reform effort after another. The assumption surrounding the public rhetoric is often that teaching and teachers exist in a constant state of deficit. The introduction to this volume explicitly captures this contradiction between the problem and promise for teaching and teacher education offered by this volume and by this term. Each of the chapters are kaleidoscopic. Each chapter takes the pieces of the concept and shifts it so that the pieces fall into place in a new arrangement and offers new avenues for exploring the concept in relationship to the overarching conversation in research on teaching and teacher education. Each twist of the kaleidoscope reveals new considerations for revisiting the conundrums of teacher education. Conundrums are difficult, complex and confusing problems often with no immediately apparent solution. Yet within research on teaching and teacher education, across each wave of reform, these are treated as not difficult, complex, or complicated issues but simple difficulties easily solved if only the other who needs to act would (much as Tara Ratnam initially positions her exploration into teacher resistance to change as entitlement and in opposition to her later vision and Cheryl Craig’s exploration into this issue from a perspective of best-loved selves). In fact, as this volume suggests, exploration of teacher entitlement and those issues entailed in its exploration actually represent intractable problems that are neither easily nor completely resolved. This exploration of the concept of entitlement involves us in reconsidering each of a series of conundrums in research on teaching and teacher education: teacher education vs teacher training; relationship between field experience and textbook

learning; balance and reconciliation of theory and practice; teacher entitlement as resistance or wisdom; between being and becoming.

This exploration opens researchers in teaching and teacher education to consider again the constraints and affordances of approaching teacher preparation as education or training. In the current orientation toward practices argued by Ball and Forzani (2009) as the orientation teacher educators should take up, the underlying and implicit approach is training. While the approach draws on the concept of teacher education as articulated by Clandinin (2010) as the development of practical knowing, what is actually promoted is the training of teachers in particular key practices. It is implied that once trained in core practices teachers can apply them anywhere. This orientation stands in stark contrast to Goodlad's (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990) notion that what teachers are paid for is their judgement and that teacher education should educate preservice teachers and in-service teachers' judgement. This leads us to quickly consider again the notion of teacher entitlement as explored in this volume and wonder how it applies in terms of whether we educate teachers' judgement and their ability to reason about and resolve dilemmas of teaching or whether we train them in enacting core practices regardless of context. This inevitably leads us to considering what teachers are therefore entitled to do.

One of the shared secrets of teacher educators is that preservice teachers always think that teacher education only starts when they engage in field experience. When preservice teachers walk into a classroom, teachers often say, "Forget everything you learned at the university." However, on the other hand, teacher educators impugn the teaching of teachers and tell preservice teachers to resist the practices they see in public schools and enact those they have learned in coursework. I am often amused by the expectation that teacher educators hold that preservice teachers will carry the banner of reform and bring new practices to teaching. Indeed there is a lack of recognition that preservice teachers occupy the least powerful position in a school and if they take up reform practices they may have to do so subversively. Further, encouraging them to act as entitled new teachers may limit the kind of friendship and support they will need as beginners. Both of these (the assertion that preservice teachers should forget everything and that preservice teachers need to teach teachers reform practices) are positions of teacher and teacher educator entitlement. The conundrum raised is whether teacher education coursework actually has or does contribute to the learning to teach process and whether enacting practices learned in teacher education results in stronger teachers. Just as relevant is whether teachers are best taught by simply immersing themselves in school-based practice. There is an ongoing tug-of-war or turf battle wherein teachers and teacher educators act within an entitlement framework insisting on the superiority of their position of authority. Research taking up this conundrum from an entitlement perspective potentially opens space for new insight.

An ongoing banner of reform in teacher education is reconciling the theory–practice divide. Every teacher education program I have read argues that they are based in resolving the theory–practice divide and yet it is also a truism that there is nothing more practical than a good theory and nothing more theoretical than a good practice. Like the tug-of-war between field and coursework, this positions teachers and teacher educators in camps of entitlement each asserting the superiority of their own position, rather than orienting toward visions of the teacher they want to be that teachers bring to teaching and teacher education or drawing on (as Craig suggests in this volume) the knowledge of teaching and beliefs about themselves as teachers that teachers bring with them. From my perspective theory and practice show up in experience as a teacher and as teachers explore and examine their ideas about how these two diverse perspectives can inform each other and be resolved in teaching entitlement opens space for fruitful research into the theory–practice divide and how it might be addressed in teacher education. Considering these orientations from the perspective of teacher entitlement as outlined here provides new concepts and tools for considering this conundrum to move preparation of teachers, knowledge of teaching and teacher educators’ knowledge forward.

What this volume educates us so clearly about is the conundrum of whether a position of teacher entitlement is a position of resistance or wisdom. In the introduction, Tara Ratnam reveals how her exploration into teacher entitlement from a position of resistance led her to understand better how teacher entitlement was potentially an aspect of teacher wisdom. Craig seems to have begun from a perspective of teacher wisdom, but her exploration led her to more completely understand teacher entitlement as a powerful tool for resistance that enabled teachers to be true to their best-loved selves. What both of these narratives reminded me of was an argument from Eleanor Duckworth (2006).

Duckworth argued that if teachers gave students reason and recognized and uncovered their thinking involved in the problem-solving practices students employed, their teaching would shift and student learning would be enhanced. This is also the position of the editors and authors of the chapters in this book. How might research on teaching and teacher education shift if researchers and teacher educators and policy makers gave teachers reason? What if, as Duckworth suggested, we assume that teachers have reasons for teaching as they do and engaging in the practices they do. Fenstermacher (1986) argued how engaging teachers in exploring their practical reasoning opened potential for teachers to better understand their practice, resolve dilemmas, and enact stronger practice. In the current reform milieu, there is an ongoing sense that we just need to identify the universally failsafe practices, train teachers in them and hold them accountable for them. Such a view ignores the fact that teaching is fundamentally relational and human. Each teacher uses what they learn

and the experiences they have to teach themselves to teach. As Russell (in this volume) argues, teachers act on the authority of experience and it is from their authority they learn, they resist and they become wise as teachers. Because this is a human endeavor each student, each lesson, each content, and each practice has affordances and constraints in terms of the teachers, students and contexts involved and it is the wise resolution of these that results in strong teaching. In order, to becoming a great teacher, teachers must resolve the dilemmas of practice through leaning and in the moment-to-moment construction and interaction in teaching. Exploring the role of entitlement as teachers take up the lifelong learning to teach process opens new fields of inquiry.

Another conundrum in research on teaching and teacher education is captured in the tension between being and becoming. As we act as a teacher we are constantly propelled from a space of being (who we are in that moment as a teacher) and who our experience is helping us in becoming (our ongoing growth and development as a teacher). If we stand in the space of being and resist moving from that position, we stand in a space of entitlement as resistance, but by willing to learn from our experiences in teaching we exist in a constant state of becoming (Deleuze, Guattari, & Plateaus, 1977). Each experience opens new possibility for who we are as a teacher. In this case, our entitlement to become that teacher we would most like to be enables us to embrace, reflect on, and learn from the moment-to-moment teaching experiences we engage in. When we bring the concept of teacher entitlement and the kaleidoscopic ways it has been examined in this text, new avenues of research, new ideas and concepts about the learning to teach process, teacher identity formation, policy and practices as teacher and teacher educator are open to us.

I have titled this piece “after entitlement?” because my assumption is that having explored the myriad of perspectives on teacher entitlement opened in this volume as a teacher or teacher educator scholar, like Craig and Ratnam, you are ready to dive in again. You are ready to consider what are the implications from this concept for your research. Given this conceptual tool how might you think differently about your research, development, and thinking as a teacher? Like any good book, after reading you are ready to consider again to return to the book and learn more.

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