

which attempts to untangle emotional and political realities; however, if any proposition is to be sustained, it must start with an intellectual foundation. This one does.

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Clandinin, D. Jean. *Classroom practices: Teacher images in action*. Philadelphia, PA: The Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis, Inc., 1986, 194 pp., \$12.00 (paper).

At last a book, *Classroom Practices*, about teaching by a researcher who has taken the time to talk and work with teachers and understand teaching from the inside out. Jean Clandinin has written a book which honors the personal practical knowledge of teachers. At the same time, she has written a solid piece of research using the dialectical view of theory and practice. As she notes on numerous occasions, the dialectical perspective sees practice as theory in action, a view central to her study.

Clandinin's study helps to correct an imbalance in research on teaching, a literature which all too often does not acknowledge teachers' experience and history. Here we have a study which demonstrates that not only is the teacher perspective valid, but indeed it should be central in research on teaching. The research which Clandinin reports in her book,

... draws on work which adopts the perspective of the teacher practitioner. Teachers are assumed to hold, use and develop personal practical knowledge. The intent is to understand the personal practical knowledge of two teachers from their perspectives and, in consequence, to elaborate a teacher-based conception of image (p. 12).

The book has three parts. In the first, Clandinin not only attempts to see the world of the classroom through the eyes of the teachers, but she also produces a "... conceptualization of teachers' personal practical knowledge in which teacher practices are experiences of the images the teachers hold" (p. 15). The second part is a series of interpretative accounts "which give a picture of the two teachers' personal practical knowledge in terms of this imagery" (p. 21). The final section of the book uses the research results to support the conception of 'image' as a component of personal practical knowledge. This concluding section also looks back, in a reflective mode, at "the research process, and ahead to the educational possibilities of the conceptualization offered" (p. 21).

The concept of image is central to Clandinin's thesis. It is the concept she uses "... for relating the specific and the general, the practical and the theoretical" (p. 130). Images are seen as the means teachers use for mediating the unconscious and the conscious, as the source of inspiration, ideas, insight and meaning. In

this regard, her study offers a “. . . conceptualization of image as a central construct for understanding teachers' personal practical knowledge and for linking such knowledge to past experience and to ongoing practical expression” (p. 19). She writes that

the expression of the image both in verbal communication and in classroom practices is always in the present. Its origin is always in the past. As the image finds new forms of expression in practice, however, it reaches into the past and reorders both professional and personal private experience (p. 135).

Clandinin thus uses the concept of image as a way of giving an account of the practices of the two teachers with whom she worked, and as a way of telling the story of those teachers so as to honor their distinctiveness and wholeness. It was only after concentrated involvement with these two teachers for an extended period of time that Clandinin came to understand “. . . their practices and their personal practical knowledge which minds these practices . . .” (p. 162) as being part of a holistic view of classroom practice.

In the final chapter of the book, where she reflects both back on her study and ahead as to possible implications of her work, Clandinin argues convincingly for the utility of the concept of image as a tool for understanding teacher practices because

Image is a personal, meta-level, organizing concept in personal practical knowledge in that it embodies a person's experience; finds expression in practice; and is the perspective from which new experience is taken.

Thus actions and practices are expressions of images. (p. 166)

Her conclusions, validly drawn from the evidence which she presents in part two of the book, justify the methodological approach she took in the study; namely, the dialectical view of theory and practice which sees practice as theory in action.

This book is well worth reading by a variety of educational groups. Educational researchers should read this book for both the valuable insights it offers to teaching practice and for the “how” of appropriately applying dialectical research methodology in classroom practice. Teachers should read this book for the insights which it may give them about their own teaching. Teacher educators should read this book and consider seriously Clandinin's proposals for how her work may impact pre-service teacher education.

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