

**REIMAGINING THE PLACE AND CURRICULAR SPACE FOR THE  
FIELD OF SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION:  
A CALL FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION**

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Deanna D. Hill, Ph.D

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The field of Social Foundations of Education has been called upon time and time again to justify its place and curricular space in teacher education. Scholars have described the field as marginalized (Greene, 1976; Nash and Agne, 1982); in “crisis” (Shea, Sola and Jones, 1987); “eroding” (Sirotnik, 1990); in “disarray” (Johanningmeier, 1991); and in “transit” (Warren, 1998). In responding to these challenges, various scholars have attempted to reconnect (Shulman, 1990), reconceptualize (Soltis, 1991), reconstruct (Butts, 1993), reframe (Beadie, 1996), and reconceive of (Bredo, 2002) the field of social foundations in teacher education. In the past, critiquing social foundations was largely academic because states required coursework in the social foundations as one of the prerequisites to certification (deMarrais, 2005; Shields, 1968). Today, as states replace course requirements with standardized, outcomes-based tests as prerequisites to certification (deMarrais, 2005; Watras, 2006), school of education administrators and teacher educators hold extraordinary power over the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations in teacher education.

In this qualitative, interpretive study, I set out to understand how school of education administrators and teacher educators at a large, urban university in the Middle Atlantic Region of the United States that I call Jefferson University conceived of the field of social foundations and how and why the field appeared to be being squeezed out of teacher education. In doing so, I come to deeper understandings about where the field of social foundations has been and might be

headed, not only at Jefferson University but in teacher education writ large. I then begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field in teacher education. Consequently, I call for communication and collaboration between foundations scholars on one hand and school of education administrators and teacher educators on the other.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PROLOGUE.....</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.0 MODE OF INQUIRY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1 INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2 NARRATIVE INQUIRY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.3 RESEARCH PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.0 THE FIELD OF SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3.1 WHAT DO I MEAN BY SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION? ..</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3.2 INSTITUTIONAL BEGINNINGS OF THE FIELD .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3.3 PERENNIAL CRITICISMS OF THE FIELD .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.3.1 Relevance to Practice.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.3.2 Relationship to Disciplines .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>3.3.3 Faculty.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3.3.4 Curriculum .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>3.3.5 Pedagogy .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4.0 JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY AND THE BASIC EDUCATION STORY .....</b>	<b>48</b>

4.1	THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE BASIC EDUCATION STRUCTURE OF COURSES.....	49
4.2	THE BASIC EDUCATION “PROBLEM” .....	52
4.3	RESPONDING TO THE BASIC EDUCATION “PROBLEM”.....	56
4.4	RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE <i>HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING</i> COURSE: A REASONABLE SUCCESS STORY .....	57
4.5	DECENTRALIZATION OF THE BASIC EDUCATION STRUCTURE OF COURSES .....	64
5.0	COMPLICATING THE BASIC EDUCATION STORY .....	74
5.1	PERENNIAL CRITICISMS REVISITED.....	75
5.1.1	Relevance to Practice.....	75
5.1.2	Relationship to the Disciplines.....	82
5.1.3	Faculty.....	83
5.1.4	Curriculum .....	89
5.1.5	Pedagogy .....	92
5.2	STUCTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES .....	94
5.2.1	Department/Program Structure .....	94
5.2.2	Schoolwide Budgetary Issues.....	97
5.2.3	Time Constraints.....	99
5.2.4	Personalities.....	101
5.3	GLIMMERS OF HOPE.....	102
5.3.1	The Status Quo.....	102

5.3.2	Schoolwide Strategic Planning and the Academic Affairs Committee’s Second Recommendation .....	103
5.3.3	Side Conversations.....	105
6.0	REIMAGINING THE PLACE AND CURRICULAR SPACE FOR THE FIELD OF SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION: A CALL FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION.....	107
6.1	COMMUNICATION .....	108
6.2	COLLABORATION .....	116
6.3	THE <i>OTHER</i> ALTERNATIVE.....	119
	EPILOGUE .....	124
	APPENDIX A .....	130
	APPENDIX B .....	131
	APPENDIX C .....	132
	APPENDIX D .....	135
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	136

## PREFACE

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And, last but certainly not least, thank you to Ronald, Ryan and Brandon Hill and to Jim and Rose Clark for your unconditional love, support, and patience. You remind me every day of where I have been and where I have yet to go.

## PROLOGUE

Deanna Hill and Angela Minnici

In the word question, there is a beautiful word – quest. I love that word. We are all partners in a quest. The essential questions have no answers. You are my question, and I am yours – and then there is dialogue. The moment we have answers, there is no dialogue. Questions unite people.

Elie Wiesel, May 22, 2006, n.p.#

This is a companion dissertation or collaborative study about the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations of education in teacher education. Our companion dissertations were borne out of a shared teaching experience that filled us with questions. At times, it was troubling for us to dwell in such uncertainty, but in attempting to make meaning of the experience, we became partners in a quest to understand pedagogical challenges within the social foundations classroom and challenges within the field of social foundations of education generally. The resulting dialogue pushed us to new theoretical insights and united us as colleagues. The purpose of this prologue is to conceptually link the companion dissertations as well as to provide the backdrop to the studies.

This prologue is co-authored by us, and at times, we will refer to one another by our first names, Angela and Deanna. We begin with a depiction of our shared experience as teaching

fellows for the course *Social Foundations of Education* from 2003 to 2005 at Jefferson University<sup>1</sup>. We also present a chronology of events in our shared experience that led us to companion dissertations. We conclude this section with a procedural explanation of how our companion studies were crafted.

### What does it mean to be a teaching fellow?

The teaching fellowship at Jefferson University represents a unique opportunity for graduate students in the School of Education's Department of Leadership, Administration and Policy Studies<sup>2</sup> to gain experience in the university classroom. In exchange for a small stipend and a tuition scholarship, four teaching fellows are each charged with teaching one of four sections of the course. While enrollment varies, each section tends to have anywhere from 12 to 18 students who are assigned alphabetically by last name.

Although each teaching fellow has his or her own section, the teaching fellowship is collaborative in nature. The teaching fellows meet prior to the start of each semester to develop a joint syllabus. They also meet weekly with their Supervising Professor to discuss current events, the issues raised by the assigned materials, and the happenings in the individual classes. The teaching fellows also share an office where they meet, albeit informally, both before and after class. It is this collaboration that makes the teaching fellowship a unique learning experience.

The identity of the teaching fellows changes each year; some of the teaching fellows receive their degrees and leave the university while others decide to pursue other interests. The new teaching fellows enter the existing dialogue and bring new ideas and perspectives to what are already complicated conversations (Pinar, 2004). From the fall of 2003 through the spring of

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<sup>1</sup> Jefferson University is a pseudonym.

<sup>2</sup> The name of the department is a pseudonym.

2005, we were the only teaching fellows who remained constant. The continuity allowed us to develop a dialogic that continued beyond the scheduled meetings. In the office, on the telephone, and via email, we shared our stories about the events that were occurring in our classrooms and the challenges we faced.

“Trouble is the engine of narrative<sup>3</sup>”

During the fall semester of 2003, our teaching fellow meetings took on a common theme. We were concerned and troubled by what we characterized as students’ reluctance and often active resistance to discussing issues such as race, gender and class from multiple perspectives. We also felt some students were disengaging from the classroom discussion altogether. When students did engage, it was not what we had hoped for or envisioned; rather than furthering the dialogue, students seemed to be depositing their perspectives in sound-bite fashion and thus limiting the dialogue to a series of monologues. In addition, some students questioned the relevance and importance of a course which did not teach “best practices” or classroom management. Some students saw our class as only theoretical and thus impractical. We later came to understand and name this period of time a “pedagogical crisis.”

This period of crisis led us down many paths. It pushed us to try to understand what was occurring in our classrooms by sharing our experience with others. It also drove us to literature on pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Greene, 1988; hooks, 1994; Kumashiro, 2004) which we hoped would help us think differently about how we might be in the classroom. We read about critical pedagogy, democratic pedagogy, and anti-oppressive pedagogy and brought the ideas back into our teaching fellows’ meeting to try to unpack what was happening in our classrooms and to imagine how we might respond pedagogically.

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<sup>3</sup> Bruner, 1996, p. 99.

At the same time, Angela was an elected student representative on Jefferson University's School of Education Council (School Council). School Council is the governing body for the School of Education and is made up of faculty, staff and student representatives. While not a voting member, the Dean of the School of Education plays a major role on School Council. Angela began to bring to the teaching fellows' meeting troubling stories about an internal debate occurring within the School of Education. This debate centered around the extent to which the school could determine Basic Education or "core" courses required for all students in all programs. Within this debate, some faculty members were questioning the place and space for social foundations in teacher education. As Angela was privy to these deliberations, these concerns naturally seeped into our discussions.

It was at this time that we articulated to one another the connection between the two seemingly unconnected events. The concerns of our students as well as their reluctance to engage in discussion with one another were mirrored in the deliberations faculty were having over the place of social foundations in teacher education at Jefferson University. This distinct feeling of pressure from within by some students and from outside by some faculty, compelled us to articulate for ourselves as well as others our vision for what social foundations could be. We began by reconceptualizing the course to imagine what a classroom might look and feel like when it was guided by democratic principles.<sup>4</sup> We also felt the need to communicate to others within the School of Education through faculty, student and scholarly presentations, why social foundations and particularly our course was important to teacher education. We each wrote about and presented our ideas at the School of Education's Graduate Student Research Conference. Later, we presented a paper at the annual meeting of the American Educational

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<sup>4</sup> See Minnici & Hill, (forthcoming).

Research Association (AERA). Finally, we presented the reconceptualized course to faculty in Jefferson's Department of Curriculum and Instruction<sup>5</sup>.

As we began to write about and present to others what we were experiencing both in our classrooms and in our school, we also began to read and hear similar stories from other social foundations scholars. And we began to wonder if what we were experiencing was something unique to the course we taught and to the university we taught in or rather, if what we were experiencing was something endemic to both the course and to the field itself. As the teaching fellowship came to an end for both of us in the Spring of 2005, we were left with more questions about our experience than answers. These unanswered questions drove us to conceptualize companion studies where we would be able to explore our unanswered questions from our shared experience. One study would explore more deeply the pedagogical challenges we faced teaching in social foundations while the other would explore the situation at Jefferson University and within the field of social foundations itself.

Angela's dissertation, *Dimensions of Reflexive Thinking in Social Foundations Pedagogy: Complicating Student Responses for Theoretic Understandings*, explores the pedagogical challenges of teaching social foundations through an examination of student text and talk. She presents a framework for reflexive thinking in social foundations pedagogy as a way to respond to a pedagogical crisis.

Deanna's dissertation, *Reimagining the Place and Curricular Space for the Field of Social Foundations of Education in Teacher Education: A Call for Communication and Collaboration*, addresses perennial challenges to the field through an exploration of the controversy over Basic Education courses at Jefferson University. In her dissertation she

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<sup>5</sup> The name of the department is a pseudonym.

imagines how we might reconceptualize the place and curricular space for social foundations in teacher education.

Together, these dissertations attempt to make meaning of our experiences in a field in transition as well as the inherent and underlying challenges of teaching in the field. Ironically, the dissertations that we hope will usher us into academia are also the dissertations that expose to us the challenges that lay ahead for us as foundations scholars.

### What does it mean to write a companion dissertation?

This section procedurally addresses our companion dissertations. Our intent is to state, in a clear and transparent manner, the way in which we crafted shared texts. While many companion dissertations share data (Lynn, 1996; May, 1991; McConaghy, 1991; Nolt, 1991), ours do not. Instead, our companion dissertations begin with a shared context, that of a teaching fellowship for a social foundations course at Jefferson University. Both dissertations share a common, co-authored prologue. The purpose of the prologue is to introduce the inquiry and to explain how the dissertations are conceptually linked. Within the dissertations, there are places that share co-authored text. The co-authored text represents literature that was relevant to both studies. (See Appendix A for a chart showing where co-authored text can be found within the chapters of our dissertations.) We further weave the dissertations together by referencing one another's dissertation when appropriate.

In the end, the dissertations share a co-authored epilogue. The epilogue discusses some lessons learned in undertaking companion dissertations. Further, we speculate that our dialogic relationship was essential to the success of our shared experience. We believe this relationship has been and continues to be essential to our intellectual growth and our ability to navigate what we perceive to be a challenging field of study.

Our dissertations are meant to be read together. We hope that the studies we have undertaken will provide a more complex picture of the field of social foundations of education, what it means to teach in the field, and why we believe the field must remain integral to teacher education.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Unless foundations educators find a compelling way of articulating the utility of social foundations for helping students become more effective teachers in schools, they stand to lose what remains of the place of social foundations in teacher education.

Nancy Beadie, 1996, pp. 78-79

The social foundations field must of course be cognizant of the larger ongoing discussions concerning the viability of teacher education in the preparation of future teachers; nevertheless, it is vital that the field be able to articulate – to colleagues, department chairs, college deans, policy makers, external reviewers and examiners, and the public at large – a response to the question of “how (and why) does social foundations matter for teacher education?”

Dan W. Butin, November 23, 2004, n.p.#

I taught an undergraduate Social Foundations of Education course in the School of Education at Jefferson University<sup>6</sup> for three consecutive years. When I began teaching the course in the fall of 2002, it was one of the prerequisites for Jefferson University’s fifth-year teacher education programs. When I last taught the course in the spring of 2005, however, it was

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<sup>6</sup> As explained in the Prologue, Jefferson University is a pseudonym.

no longer a prerequisite for many of Jefferson's fifth-year programs. Further, in the fifth-year teacher education program, the Basic Education structure of courses – three required courses in human development, disciplined inquiry, and social foundations originally intended to provide students with a common core of knowledge and to allow for dialogue across disciplines -- was in the process of being decentralized (i.e., taken over by individual teacher education programs).

In just three years, I witnessed significant erosion in the place and curricular space for the *field* of social foundations in teacher education at Jefferson – both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Initially, I believed this erosion to be unique to Jefferson. However, as I reviewed the literature on the field of social foundations in coauthoring an article on democratic pedagogy (Minnici, Hill, Asongwed & Garman, 2005), I came to see that the erosion was not unique to Jefferson and that what I had witnessed was indicative of a larger phenomenon that had been occurring in schools of education across the nation.

Having come to understand the erosion as a broader phenomenon, I sought to make meaning of the particular manifestation at Jefferson. I wanted to understand how and why those most able to shape teacher education appeared to be pushing the field of social foundations out of the curriculum. And, more importantly, I wanted to know if it was grounded in traditional criticisms of the field or if some new crisis or crises were occurring. This, I believed, required an understanding of the historical role and context of the field of social foundations within teacher education as well as an understanding of the field's current status among school of education administrators and teacher educators. This is where the study begins.

## 1.1 THE STUDY

Since its institutional inception at Teachers College, Columbia University in the 1930s; through the teacher-based competency movement of the 1970s; and into the outcome-based professional standards movement of the present day, the field of social foundations has been called upon time and time again to justify its place and curricular space in teacher education. Over the years, scholars have described the field as marginalized (Greene, 1976; Nash and Agne, 1982); in “crisis” (Shea, Sola and Jones, 1987); “eroding” (Sirotnik, 1990); in “disarray” (Johanningmeier, 1991); and in “transit” (Warren, 1998). In responding to these challenges, various scholars have attempted to reconnect (Shulman, 1990), reconceptualize (Soltis, 1991), reconstruct (Butts, 1993), reframe (Beadie, 1996), and reconceive of (Bredo, 2002) the field of social foundations in teacher education.

In the past, critiquing social foundations was largely academic because states required coursework in the social foundations as one of the prerequisites for certification (deMarrais, 2005; Shields, 1968). Today, with states replacing course requirements with standardized, outcomes-based tests as prerequisites to certification (deMarrais, 2005; Watras, 2006), there is no such guarantee. Universities or, more specifically, school of education administrators and teacher educators hold extraordinary power over the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations in teacher education. Thus, I set out to understand how Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators conceived of the field of social foundations and how and why the field appeared to be being pushed out of teacher education at Jefferson. I hoped that, in doing so, I could come to some deeper understandings about where the field of social foundations had been and might be headed, not only at Jefferson but in teacher education

writ large. I also hoped that, in doing so, I could begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field in teacher education.

Drawing on discourses in the field of social foundations and teacher education; institutional documents; and interviews with Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators, this study seeks to contribute to the literature on the field of social foundations by inserting into the complicated conversations (Pinar, 2004) among foundations scholars the experiences and perspective of school of education administrators and teacher educators. Additionally, this study seeks to contribute to research by exploring the erosion of the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations as it is specifically manifested in Jefferson's teacher education program. Moreover, this study seeks to contribute to theory by beginning to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field in teacher education. The following four research questions will guide the inquiry:

1. What are the historical antecedents for social foundations of education as a field of study and how, historically, did social foundations of education become a part of the traditional teacher education curriculum in the United States?
2. What is the nature of the erosion in the place and curricular space for the field of the social foundation of education?
3. How is the erosion manifested in discussions and policy decisions regarding the Basic Education structure of courses in a school of education in a large, urban research university in the Middle Atlantic region?
4. How might we reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations of education in teacher education?

Questions 1 and 2 allow me to situate the inquiry within the field of social foundations of education and within teacher education more broadly. Question 3 allows me to critically examine the erosion in the place and curricular space for the field in teacher education generally and as it is manifested at Jefferson University specifically. Question 4 allows me to begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations of education in teacher education writ large.

## **1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION**

In Chapter Two, I address the mode of inquiry as well as the research procedures I employ in conducting the study. The study is a qualitative-interpretive, narrative study and attempts to make meaning of the erosion of the field of social foundations of education. Although it is informed by the texts and talk of school of education administrators and teacher educators at Jefferson, I do not claim to “tell the stories” of such administrators and teacher educators. Instead, narrative inquiry allows me to make meaning of (and to portray in ways that make sense to me) my own interpretation of their texts and talk. Consequently, the resulting story is mine. Further, while I do not claim the erosion of the field of social foundations in teacher education at Jefferson to be representative of the experiences of other schools of education or even of other teacher education programs, I do claim that the erosion at Jefferson provides insight into what is happening in the field of social foundations in teacher education. I also claim that this insight allows us to begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field not only at Jefferson but in teacher education writ large.

In Chapter Three, I address research questions numbers one and two together. I begin with a brief discussion of the curricular and institutional origins of the field of social foundations of education in teacher education, highlighting particular phases in the field's development and its relationship to the humanities and social sciences disciplines from which it draws. Based on the literature, I then organize into 5 categories what Gibson (2002) refers to as "perennial criticisms" of the field (p. 157). These five categories include the field's relevance to practice, relationship to the disciplines, faculty, curriculum and pedagogy. The chapter concludes with a description of the current social, political, and economic context within which the field is now situated and how that context impacts the articulation of these perennial criticisms.

In Chapter Four, I address research question number three. I provide a chronological discussion of the original intent and recent decentralization of the Basic Education structure of courses that included the foundations of education and that had been required for all teacher candidates at Jefferson since 1987. Although the resulting Basic Education story is drawn from institutional documents and interviews with Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators, I reiterate that what appears is my interpretation and portrayal of these documents, texts and talk.

In Chapter Five, I provide an analysis of how the major themes of the Basic Education story reflect or mirror the perennial criticisms (Gibson, 2002) of the field. In doing so, I highlight the impact of both external and internal pressures. While I recognize that the external/internal dichotomy is a false one in that the external impacts the internal and, to a lesser extent, vice versa, I separate these two forces in order to distinguish those pressures that push in from the outside from those that push out from the inside. I hope that, in doing so, this study may contribute not only to the discourses within the *field* of social foundations of education but

also to schoolwide policy and program-level curricular discussions occurring within Jefferson's school of education as a whole, within individual departments, and within specific academic programs.

In Chapter Six, I draw on the insights gleaned from Chapters 4 and 5 to begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations of education in teacher education at Jefferson and in teacher education writ large. I call for communication and collaboration among school of education administrators and teacher educators, on one hand, and foundations scholars, on the other hand. I suggest places where foundations scholars might enter the dialogue with school of education administrators and teacher educators about the place of foundations in teacher education and suggest ways in which foundations scholars might collaborate with such administrators and teacher educators in order to impact the curricular space for the field of foundations in teacher education. In doing so, I highlight issues of control (power) in order to situate the discussion within the university and school context. In conclusion I argue that, unless foundations scholars communicate and collaborate with school of education administrators and teacher educators, foundations scholars will continue to talk to each other while such administrators and teacher educators push out what is left of the field in teacher education.

## **2.0 MODE OF INQUIRY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

This is a qualitative-interpretive study, the purpose of which is to come to deeper understandings of a particular manifestation of the erosion of the field of foundations in teacher education at Jefferson University. The inquiry is narrative in that I approach the study as a complicated and continuing story based on my own interpretation of the texts and talk of Jefferson administrators and teacher educators at a particular time and place. Narrative inquiry is well-suited for this study because it allows me as the researcher to be part of the inquiry, to reveal my own involvement in the story, and to make meaning for myself as well as within a broader context. In this chapter of the dissertation, I set forth the mode of inquiry as well as the research procedures I employed in conducting the study.

### **2.1 INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH**

According to Schwandt (2003), “interpretivists aim to reconstruct the self understandings of actors engaged in particular action” (p. 299). Thus, “a basic tenet of interpretivism includes the notion that as reflective human beings, we construct our realities, for the most part, in discourse communities<sup>17</sup>” (Garman, 2005, p. 1).

Another feature of interpretive inquiry is the notion of data. Interpretive inquiry relies on text as data. Garman (2005) defines text as:

a written form that has inherent meaning in it for the researcher --- a chunk of related words or images that reflect an idea or ideas. Text may take the form of vignettes, profiles, stories, media excerpts, theoretic insights, images, pictures, memos, to name only a few products of inquiry. The concern here is that these crafted texts are capable of hermeneutic interpretations, and are not generally used for reductive purposes. (p. 5)

The notion of text allows for a rich portrayal of the experience or phenomenon under study.

The truth claims in interpretive inquiry can be distinguished from the truth claims of other research paradigms. According to Greene (1992), “adopting the interpretivist logic of justification for inquiry means foregoing aspirations to *get it right* (original emphasis) and embracing instead ideals of *making it meaningful*” (p. 39). Therefore, in interpretive inquiry, an experience or a phenomenon is under study. Additionally, in interpretive inquiry there is an “opportunity to give voice to one’s self, to offer a view of human experience that promotes one’s own values and ideals” (Greene, 1992, p. 39). Garman (2005) makes further distinctions about truth claims in interpretive research:

[I]nterpretivists do not claim that their research portrayals *correspond* (original emphasis) to a general reality, as do those post-positivists who strive for logico-scientific truth claim (Bruner, 1968). Rather, interpretivist portrayals strive for *coherence*, which provides the reader with a vivid picture and the meanings about the experience under study (p. 2).

The difference between claiming correspondence and coherence also shapes the criteria by which interpretive research can be judged. Interpretive inquiry requires a reframing of traditional, scientific notions of evaluation. Given the nature of interpretive inquiry, the “criteria must remain fluid, pluralistic and relative” (Greene, 1992, p. 42). According to Eisner (cited in Greene, 1992), “interpretivist inquiry findings are to be accepted when they are rationally

warranted, reasonable, defensible and well grounded” (p. 43). These criteria may vary depending on the inquiry itself.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.2 NARRATIVE INQUIRY

This study also draws on the tradition of narrative inquiry (Schrader, 2004; Denzin 2001; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ochs & Capps, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1988 ). Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research genre which has been used in educational research (McVee, 2004; Connelly, Phillion, & Fang He, 2003; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2001; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Conle, 1999; Eakin, 1999; Davies, 1998; Bochner, 1997; McEwan, 1997; Clandinin, 1989) as well as in dissertation research (Curran, 2002; Fowler, 1997; Kirk, 2004; Wojecki, 2004). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), “narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience” (p.20). Curran (2002) posits that “telling and listening to narratives are how we learn to translate, represent and interpret our experiences in the world” (p. 35). Further, Schrader (2004) contends that, “[t]elling tales assists participants in making sense of how social interactions flow and how humans understand the seemingly related and/or unrelated nature of events” (p. 208). Narrative inquiry assists not only in making meaning of one’s own experiences but also situates one’s experiences within a larger social framework.

Furthermore, “when using interpretive methods, [narrative inquiry] can become a form of self-understanding or self-interpretation as it seeks to relate the stories scholars tell to the stories current in society at large” (Hones, 1998, p. 2). Thus, narrative inquiry is a way to become familiar with “lived lives” (Henry, Spring 1998, p. 17). It is reflexive as well as committed to incompleteness (Henry, Spring 1998, p. 17).

### 2.3 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Research procedures included semi-structured, open-ended interviews with those Jefferson administrators and teacher educators most involved in the Basic Education Story (i.e. key players) and analysis of texts (most of which were internal, fugitive documents). In identifying key players, I began with an initial list of 5 people. Through referral and document review, I then identified 8 others. Two of the 13 key players were either unavailable or did not respond to my request to participate in the study.

In total, I interviewed 11 key players. Three of the participants were administrators only (i.e., they did not teach courses in the teacher education program). Of the three administrators, two served on the School of Education Council and one served on the Academic Affairs Committee. Two of the participants were both administrators and teacher educators (i.e., they administered programs and taught courses in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction). Of the two administrators/teacher educators, one served on the School of Education Council. Six of the participants were teacher educators only (i.e., they taught courses in the teacher education program but did not administer any of its programs). Of the six teacher educators, two served on the Academic Affairs Committee.

Because I sought to understand the Basic Education “problem” (Dean, October 31, 2004) through the perspectives of Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators and because I sought to understand how the controversy directly impacted the teacher education curriculum, I did not interview foundations faculty. I bring their diverse perspectives to the study through the plethora of books and articles written *by* foundations scholars *for* foundations

scholars. As Wagoner told us in 1976<sup>7</sup> and as Butin reminded us in 2005<sup>8</sup>, foundations scholars tend to talk to and among themselves. Consequently, what is missing from the current literature in the field is the perspectives of those school of education administrators and teacher educators most able to shape the place and curricular space for the field in teacher education. This study attempts to fill that gap.

The interviews lasted anywhere from 45 minutes to one hour and thirty minutes. The majority of the interviews took place in the participant's office, although one took place at an outside café on campus, one took place over the telephone, and one took place in the participant's home. The participants were first provided with an explanation of my perspective on the current state of the field in teacher education (i.e., as eroding), the purpose of the study (i.e., to insert the perspectives of school of education administrators and teacher educators into the discourse), and the Council of Learned Societies in Education's definition of the purposes of field of Social Foundations of Education (i.e., to assist students in developing normative, interpretive, and critical perspectives on education). Some participants requested more information about my study prior to the interview, which I provided either in the form of a document titled "Research Study Information" (see Appendix B) or in the form of the document titled "The Study" (see Appendix C).

The participants were then asked to provide their understandings and perspectives on the Basic Education discussion, with particular focus on the social foundations of education requirement. This allowed me to begin to assemble a chronological story of the inception and

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<sup>7</sup> Wagoner (1976) said of foundations scholars, "[o]ur own panels and papers and publications are all vitally important, but we tend to talk only to ourselves. We typically stand alone against pressures most difficult to counter" (n.p.#).

<sup>8</sup> Butin (December 2005a) said of foundations scholars, "[w]hile SFE scholars have long sustained productive dialogues within their own disciplinary boundaries, discussions across such boundaries have been few and far between" (p. 214).

decentralization of the Basic Education structure of courses through discussion with those most central to the story. The interviews focused on each participant's role in the story. Thus, the scope and sequence of the interviews was largely determined by the participant and varied from interview to interview.

A variety of documents were available for data collection. The most relevant source of information proved to be internal documents generated by Jefferson administrators and school of education faculty regarding the Basic Education course structure from its inception in 1987 to its decentralization in 2006. When prompted for a list of relevant documents, participants listed some or all of the documents listed in Appendix D. In addition to these key documents, I also reviewed historic School of Education Strategic Plans, School of Education Council minutes, plan of studies requirements, course descriptions, course syllabi and information contained on the School of Education's website. I was unable to obtain all School of Education Council minutes from the relevant time period because the school was attempting to transition from paper to electronic record-keeping and had restricted access to documents in process. Thus, the interviews of school of education administrators and teacher educators who were also School of Education Council members proved to be critical to my understanding of that body's role in the story.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed for recurrent themes. The university, departments, programs and courses were assigned pseudonyms<sup>9</sup> in order to protect the anonymity of the institution. Similarly, participants were assigned pseudonyms<sup>10</sup> to protect

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<sup>9</sup> The pseudonym for the university was not intended to imply any particular characteristics. However, the pseudonyms assigned to the departments, programs, and courses were intended to capture the role of such units without revealing the identity of the university in which they are located.

<sup>10</sup> The pseudonyms for the participants were taken from a computer-generated list of past Wimbledon winners. I do not know enough about tennis to imply anything by the way in which I assigned such pseudonyms. Thus, any

the anonymity of individuals. In the text, participants are referred to by their general roles (e.g., administrator, administrator/teacher educator, and teacher educator). In the few instances where the hierarchy among participants is particularly relevant, I identify participants by their titles (e.g., Dean, Program Chair).

In proposing the dissertation, I had a hunch that the perspectives of school of education administrators and teacher educators might mirror some of the perennial criticisms. I based this hunch on my previous interaction with faculty during School Council meetings, faculty comments and questions raised during the teaching fellows' various in-house presentations (e.g., the Student Research Conference, the Curriculum and Instruction faculty presentation), and comments made to me by faculty in casual conversation. Thus, I first coded the texts as they related to the five categories of perennial criticisms. These categories were the field's relevance to practice, relationship to the disciplines, faculty, curriculum and pedagogy.

In proposing the dissertation, I also had a hunch that the perspectives of school of education administrators and teacher educators might include internal structural and organizational issues. I based this hunch on my experience as a Council for Graduate Students in Education representative on the School of Education Council, faculty comments and questions raised during the discussion of the school's Strategic Plan during the spring faculty assembly, and comments made to me by faculty in casual conversation. Thus, I also coded the texts as they related to internal structural issues. These issues included department/program structure; schoolwide budgetary issues; time constraints; and personalities.

In reminaging the field of social foundations of education in teacher education, I drew on foundations scholars' attempts to respond to past critiques and challenges as well as on more

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likeness among the participants and their assigned pseudonyms is coincidental and completely unintentional on my part.

recent recommendations for actions foundations scholars might take in resisting erosion of the field in teacher education. I attempted to identify those places where foundations scholars might enter the dialogue and collaborate with school of education administrators and teacher educators. In doing so, I highlighted issues of power (control).

### **3.0 THE FIELD OF SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

We have found that the best way to understand the distinctive contribution that social foundations can make to professional preparation [of teachers] is to examine the historical origins of social foundations instruction.

Steven E. Tozer & Debra Miretzsky, 2005, p.5.

The history of social foundations seems to be one of eclecticism. No singular text, no definitive methodology, no ‘best practice’ formations are to be found. The lack of a foundation within foundations in fact seems to be a foundational theme.

Dan W. Butin, 2005a, pp. xiii-xiv.

### **3.1 WHAT DO I MEAN BY SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION?**

Since its institutional origin at Teachers College, Columbia University, in the 1930’s, the field of social foundations of education has suffered from a lack of clarity as to its scope and purpose. In 1951, the Division of Historical, Comparative, Philosophical and Social Foundations of Education at the University of Illinois claimed that the very name of the field “social

foundations of education” was ambiguous. In a textbook titled *The Theoretical Foundations of Education: Historical, Comparative, Philosophical and Social*, the Division stated:

There are two reasons for the ambiguity of the term “Social Foundations.” One reason is that the term is commonly used in two different senses. It is frequently used in a broad, collective sense to designate the ‘non-psychological’ foundation fields. In this sense, it includes such fields as the history of education, comparative education, philosophy of education, educational sociology, educational anthropology, and educational economics. The term is also used in a much more restricted sense to mean a specific foundation field which is coordinate with, but distinct from, other fields ... A second reason for confusion over the term is that, even when used in the restricted sense, it does not convey a single, generally understood meaning because the field of ‘social foundations’ is relatively new and unstabilized, and is not taught as a separate discipline in many teacher training institutions (p. iv).

The field, which draws on the humanities and social sciences, has also struggled to distinguish itself from the behavioral sciences. In 1977-78, in response to a growing emphasis on a narrowly behaviorist, competency-based evaluation movement in education, the American Educational Studies Association developed and the Council in Learned Societies in Education distributed *Standards for Academic and Professional Instruction in Foundations of Education, Educational Studies, and Educational Policy Studies*. The Standards expressly defined the scope and purpose of the field:

Foundations of Education refers to a broadly-conceived field of educational study that derives its character and methods from a number of academic disciplines, combinations of disciplines, and area studies, including: history, sociology, anthropology, religion,

political science, economics, psychology, cultural studies, gender studies, comparative and international education, educational studies, and educational policy studies. As distinct from Psychological Foundations of Education, which rely on the behavioral sciences, these Standards address the Social Foundations of Education, which rely heavily on the disciplines and methodologies of humanities, particularly history and philosophy, and the social sciences, such as sociology and political science. The purpose of foundations study is to bring these disciplinary resources to bear in developing interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education, both inside and outside of schools (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

According to the Council of Learned Societies in Education, the interpretive perspective seeks to “assist students in examining, understanding, and explaining education within different contexts” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). It addresses how interpretation can vary with different historical, philosophical, and cultural perspectives. The normative perspective seeks to “assist students in examining and explaining education in light of value orientations” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). It probes the nature of assumptions, examines how and the extent to which policy analysis and policy making reflect values, and encourages students to develop their own value positions on education and schooling. The critical perspective seeks to “assist students to develop inquiry skills, to question educational assumptions and arrangements, and to identify contradictions and inconsistencies among social and educational values, policies, and practices” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). It asks students to use democratic values and to consider the origin, influences and consequences of educational beliefs, policies, and practices.

In essence, the study of social foundations of education is the study of how education and schooling relate to the complex environing culture (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996). Regardless of the disciplines/area studies that define its character and methods, and despite the various perspectives on its purposes, the field of social foundations of education represents an attempt to describe what is currently happening in education as well as what ought to be occurring (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996).

In this study, I adopt the Council of Learned Societies in Education's definition of the field of social foundations of education. Further, unless otherwise noted, references to "foundations," "educational foundations," and "educational studies" are all references to the field of social foundations of education.

### **3.2 INSTITUTIONAL BEGINNINGS OF THE FIELD**

"Pre-emergent" versions of the field of social foundations of education date back to the very first teacher preparation programs (Warren, 1998, p. 119 (citing the National Survey of the Education of Teachers, 1933)). According to Wagoner (1976), they "began out of necessity, as a way to provide substance to an emerging [teaching] profession" (p. 2). The curriculum at the institutions that pioneered the field of education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was dominated by discipline-based foundations courses (e.g., history of education, philosophy of education) because there was nothing else (Wagoner, 1976). Without a developed body of knowledge, the field's creators had to borrow liberally from existing bodies of knowledge (Wagoner, 1976).

Tozer and Miretzsky (2005) expand on Wagoner's description of the pre-emergent versions of the field. According to Tozer and Miretzsky, prior to the 1930s, students took one of two types of foundations courses. The first type of foundations course was a single-discipline course from the social sciences or the humanities. In this type of course, discipline-based faculty (e.g., Elwood Cubberly in history, William Heard Kilpatrick in philosophy) taught about education in cultural context through the lenses of the social sciences or the humanities (Tozer & Miretzsky, 2005). The second type of foundations course, however, was more of an introduction to the practice of teaching (Tozer & Miretzsky, 2005). In this type of course, faculty focused on the "fundamentals" or "basics" of teaching without examining the relationship of education and society through any particular disciplinary lens (Tozer & Miretzsky, 2005, p. 5).

The *institutional* origins of the field of social foundations of education in teacher education emerged, at least in part, out of an institutional reorganization (Gibson, 2002). In 1934, Teachers College Dean William F. Russell, reorganized Teachers College, Columbia University (Gibson, 2002). First, he merged the School of Practical Arts with the School of Education (Gibson, 2002). Second, he grouped into four separate divisions those areas of study that could be defined by students' future vocations: guidance, tests and measurements, curriculum and instruction, and administration (Gibson, 2002). Finally, he grouped into one division all of those areas of study that remained: history of education, philosophy of education, educational sociology, educational economics, comparative education, and part of educational psychology (Gibson, 2002).

Despite its "all that was left" (Gibson, 2002, p. 157) or "residue" (Katz, 1966, p. 334) status, Dean Russell articulated the significance of the grouping. Referring to it in a 1935 report as "fundamental" to the four other divisions, he saw the grouping as "providing the general

knowledge of the raw material of education, the product desired, and the recognized means of changing the former into the latter” (Russell, 1935, pp. 236-238).

At the time of the reorganization, the William Heard Kilpatrick Discussion Group (the Discussion Group) had been meeting twice monthly for roughly six years<sup>11</sup> to discuss problems and trends in modern society (Gibson, 2002, p. 25). The Discussion Group included faculty from both Teachers College and Columbia University: Kilpatrick, Harold Rugg, John L. Childs, R. Bruce Raup, George S. Counts, Jesse H. Newton, Goodwin Watson, Kenneth D. Benne, R. Freeman Butts and others (McCarthy, 2006). Together, the diverse members of the Discussion Group had created an experimental student-faculty course described as a roundtable designed to provide an integrated educational outlook for students in all areas of specialization” (McCarthy, 2006, p. 135).

Thereafter, the Discussion Group created Education 200F (ED200F), a two-semester course considered to be “the first offering in what we now recognize as the foundations of education” (McCarthy, 2006). The Discussion Group intended for the course to provide “a critical, cross-disciplinary study of education, including schooling, as a cultural process grounded in social institutions, processes, and ideals that characterize particular cultures” (Tozer & Miretzky, 2000, p. 111). The first semester was designed to provide students with the opportunity to analyze educational problems and to discuss “what kind of future was most promising for the country and what role education could have in creating that future” (McCarthy, 2006, p. 137). The second semester was designed to provide students with a “focus on psychology, curriculum making, teaching and the role of arts in education” (McCarthy, 2006, p. 137).

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<sup>11</sup> Kenneth D. Benne claims the Discussion Group began meeting in 1928 while Harold Rugg claims it originated in 1929 (Tozer & Miretsky, 2005).

The year-long course became a schoolwide requirement. By the 1935-36 academic year, all students at Teachers College were required to take the course (McCarthy, 2006). The *Teachers College Bulletin* presented the course as one that would provide students across the college with a way in which “to deal with the area common to the various fields of educational endeavor as to provide for them all a basic understanding and a common outlook and language of discourse” (McCarthy, 2006, p. 138 (citing *Teachers College Bulletin*, 1934-1935, p. 91)).

In terms of instruction, the course was collaborative in nature. Four Teachers College instructors were assigned to each section of ED200F (McCarthy, 2006). Those four instructors were then joined each week by three more Columbia University faculty with expertise in the topic(s) under discussion (McCarthy, 2006). Each class session began with an introductory lecture and roundtable discussion, broke off into smaller groups for discussion of key issues, and then ended with a large group discussion (McCarthy, 2006). Instructors did not expect students to come to consensus, only to recognize education as situated within a broader social context. In an early syllabus, the instructors assured students that “no attempt will be made to settle any issues. It is sufficient to realize the inevitable social reference of education and to have seen the need to consider the problems of education in its broad social setting” (McCarthy, 2006, p. 138 (citing Kandel and Riser, 1935)).

Thereafter, Discussion Group member Counts published the text *Social Foundations of Education*. Roughly ten years earlier, Counts and Yale Educational Psychologist J. Crosby Chapman had introduced the notion of Social Foundations of Education when, in a heading in their 1924 book *Principles of Education*, they asked “What Are the Sociological Foundations of Education?” (Gibson, 2002; Johanningmeier, 1991). Unlike prior texts devoted to education,

Count's *Social Foundations of Education* text focused not on teaching or on schools per se but rather on the cultural context in which U.S. education took place.

The ED200F instructors developed reading lists for the classes with most readings available on reserve in the library (McCarthy, 2006). In 1941, the Discussion Group gathered together a selection of these readings and published them as a two-volume foundations text titled *Readings in the Social Foundations of Education* (Wagoner, 1976). The text, which was edited by Rugg, reflected the position that education “is a program, deliberately conceived by some society or group, to achieve certain purposes” (Rugg, 1941, p.xi).

After Teachers College pioneered the institutional inclusion of the field of social foundations in teacher education (Gibson, 2002; Tozer & Miretzy, 2000), many well-respected teacher education programs (e.g., Stanford University, the University of Illinois, the University of Iowa, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Missouri) adopted its approach (Gibson, 2002; Beadie, 1996). Years later, the foundations' learned societies -- the American Educational Studies Association and the Council of Learned Societies in Education -- were organized around its basic tenets (Tozer & Miretzky, 2000).

In a historical study, Gibson (2002) describes three phases of the field. In each phase, Gibson recognizes that there were dissenters (i.e., those who would have liked for the field to have moved in other directions) but attempts to provide the major thrusts and themes of the field over a period of years.

The first phase, from 1934 through 1954, was characterized by a move away from the disciplines toward a more integrated, multidisciplinary approach to education (Gibson, 2002). This new integrated, multidisciplinary approach was counter to John Dewey's treatise *The Sources of a Science of Education* (1929), in which he asserted that it was the disciplines that

furnished the content of educational science when focused on educational problems (Gibson, 2002). Further, it was not well-received by faculty at Columbia University, many of whom already viewed Teachers College faculty as “neither academic nor as professional” and Teachers College’s curriculum as “devoid of scholarship and generally worthless” (Gibson, 2002 (citing Katz, 1966)).

It is important to note that the first phase took place during the Progressive Education Movement (Gibson 2002; Cremin 1969). Pedagogically, the foundations were dominated by social reconstructionist<sup>12</sup> and functionalist<sup>13</sup> pedagogy (Gibson 2002). In 1950, the National Society of College Teachers of Education published the Rugg-edited *The Emerging Task of the Foundations of Education: The Study of Man, Culture and Education. A Statement to the Profession by the Committee on Social Foundations*, explaining the social reconstructionist pedagogy (Gibson 2002). In 1951, University of Illinois faculty Archibald W. Anderson, Kenneth D. Benne, Foster McMurray, B. Othanel Smith, and William O. Stanley explained the pedagogy of the new Foundation’s program in the text *The Theoretical Foundations of Education*.

In 1953, however, the publication of several books critical of progressive education<sup>14</sup> “tipped the scales in favor of the disciplinary critics in Foundations” (Gibson, 2002, p. 162). The

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<sup>12</sup> Social reconstructionists seek to build a new kind of society and believe schools must serve as “important catalysts in the effort to improve the human condition through reform. For reconstructionists, education should lead people to view all elements of society critically. Graduates should be people who are in control of their own destinies and capable of promoting social reform.” (Armstrong, Henson and Savage, 2005, p. 305).

<sup>13</sup> Functionalists believe institutions function to keep society going and to promote social cohesion. “Functionalists want the schools to preserve this harmonious social order and pass it on to future generations.” (Amstrong, Henson and Savage, 2005, p. 287).

<sup>14</sup> These books include *Quackery in the Public Schools* by Albert Lynd; *Educational Wastelands* by Arthur Bestor; *The Conflict in Education in a Democratic Society* by Robert Maynard Hutchins; and *Let’s Talk Sense About Our Schools* by Paul Woodring.

demise of the Progressive Educational Association in 1955 heralded the end of a pedagogical era in teacher education and in foundations of education (Gibson, 2002).

Thus, the second phase, from 1955 through 1968, was characterized by the field's shift back toward the academic disciplines (Gibson, 2002; Cohen, 1976). With the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and the with the National Defense and Education Act of 1958, "there was widespread belief that the study and practice of education could only be improved if it were firmly rooted in some discipline, the legitimacy of which was rarely recognizable and generally not questioned by scholars in the traditional disciplines" (Johanningmeier, 2001, p. 18). For example, Arthur Bestor (1958) argued that educational progressives had created a curriculum that was not academically rigorous (McCarthy, 2006). To prepare teachers to provide a more-rigorous curriculum, Bestor (1958) called for liberal arts colleges to take over the role of schools of education in preparing future teachers in history, sociology and philosophy (McCarthy, 2006; Cohen, 1976).

In the 1960s, the field's disciplinary focus sharpened as education became an appropriate subject for respected historians (Gibson, 2002); in 1960, Bernard Bailyn published *Education in the Forming of America Society* and, in 1962, Lawrence Cremin became the first historian in a school of education to win the Bancroft Prize in American History. In the 1960s, however, foundations found itself within the tension between the social protest movements and the technological school reform movement that Tozer and Miretzsky (2005) claim can be seen in James B. Conant's work. In 1963, Conant criticized foundations faculty for patching together pieces from the disciplines and claimed foundations faculty were not adequately prepared to teach in the disciplines (Gibson 2002). He called for the elimination of social foundations courses, saying "not only are they usually worthless, but they give education departments a bad name" (Conant,

1963 (quoted in Gibson 2002, p. 164)). At the same time, the social movements of the 1960s inspired in foundations a growing interest in contemporary issues (Shields, 1968). However, while schools of education introduced issues-based social foundations courses, very few education textbooks focused on contemporary issues (Shields, 1968). Thus, foundations scholars turned away from texts and toward contemporary (largely paperback) books for material (Shields, 1968). The use of these popular books, as opposed to the more-traditional textbooks, was criticized as non-educative and as failing to address the issues beyond the details of the conflicts the books merely described without analysis (Shields, 1968).

Parallel to the issues trend was the growth of comparative and international education and the emergence of urban education as “an important satellite” in foundations (Shields, 1968, n.p.#). Foundations programs found themselves preparing not only teacher-professors but practitioners who would develop and implement policy (Shields, 1968). Consistent with the issues trend, these areas were “contemporary in focus and oriented to critical questions that [were] immediate and practical in character” (Shields, 1968, n.p.#).

The “coming of age” for foundations departments was the attempt to bring the humanities into closer harmony with the social sciences (Shields, 1968, n.p.#). The trend was advanced by the attention that those in the social sciences were paying to education (Shields, 1968, n.p.#). Graduate students in the social sciences disciplines were studying education; thus, many ended up joining faculties at schools of education and “transforming educational foundations departments into departments of philosophy and the social sciences” (Shields, 1968, n.p.#).

Ironically, while the field of foundations was coming of age, the ED200F course at Teachers College was dying. The erosion of the course’s place and space in the teacher education curriculum began in the late 1940s when the college first allowed students to substitute

other courses for the foundations requirement and then replaced two of the foundations eight credits with a course in administration, guidance and curriculum (McCarthy, 2006). As Butts (1993) stated of the changes:

So the foundation requirement designed to achieve a common language of discourse for all Teachers College students was on the way to becoming simply a *non-major* requirement, apparently on the assumption that whatever a student might take in general courses would be good for him, just so it was outside his own department (p. 23 (emphasis in original)).

In addition to these changes, faculty in other departments began to challenge the foundational nature of foundations, arguing that instruction in the technical aspects of students' fields was more important (McCarthy, 2006). Consequently, the number of substitute courses grew and departments were allowed to offer the Masters of Science degree, which did not require study in the foundations at Teachers College (McCarthy, 2006). In order to maintain some of its space in the curriculum, the foundations department began to offer its own substitute courses (McCarthy, 2006).

In 1960, the two-semester ED200F course was replaced with a one-semester course titled *Education and Society* (McCarthy, 2006). In 1964, the Foundations Department was given a less-metaphorically suggestive name (it became the Department of Philosophy and the Social Sciences) and the integrated ED200F course was replaced by unidisciplinary courses in history, sociology, and philosophy of education (McCarthy, 2006). Despite the "death" of the first integrated foundations course, the field of foundations lived on.

In fact, the third phase from 1968 to 2000<sup>15</sup> was characterized by a revived interest in the integrated, multidisciplinary approach. In 1968, the many diverse educational organizations joined together to establish the American Educational Studies Association. The umbrella organization gave shape and form to the emerging field of social foundations of education (Gibson, 2002). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, foundations scholars published a number of social foundations texts and the professional educational societies created a Standing Conference on the Humanistic and Behavioral Studies in Teacher Education (Gibson, 2002). Based on this activity, Butts (1973) declared “a dramatic reversal of the two decade trend toward specialized and discrete interest in the particular foundational fields” (p. 27).

The 1970s, however, brought to education “a narrowly behaviorist, competency-based evaluation movement in education” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). In response, the American Educational Studies Association charged a special nine-member Task Force on Academic Standards with the task of drafting standards for instruction in the field (Gibson, 2002). The resulting *Standards for Academic and Professional Instruction in Foundations of Education, Educational Studies, and Educational Policy Studies* (Standards) were adopted by the American Educational Studies Association’s executive council in 1997 and published in the American Educational Studies Association’s journal, *Educational Studies*, in the Winter 1977-78 edition. Thereafter, the American Educational Studies Association partnered with leaders of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to distribute the Standards to all teacher education institutions (Gibson, 2002).

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<sup>15</sup> The timeline for Gibson’s phases ended in 2000 presumably because her research ended.

The Standards were “designed to inform evaluation criteria published by national, regional, and state accreditation agencies (sic), state departments of education, local education agencies, teacher centers, and teacher organizations” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#) They addressed seven professional education components: (1) initial teacher certification; (2) professional development (in-service education); (3) non-foundations graduate degrees and programs; (4) graduate degrees and programs offered jointly by foundations and other faculty; (5) masters and educational specialist degrees and programs in foundations; (6) preparation of faculty; and (7) professional development of faculty (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996).

The Standards affirmed the important role of the humanities and social sciences in preparing educational professionals. They also addressed the failure of accreditation criteria to distinguish between the social and behavioral sciences in foundational studies and emphasized that instruction in the behavioral sciences (which usually took the form of educational psychology) “was not an acceptable substitute for foundational studies in the humanities and social sciences” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

While the Standards were being developed, an informal group representing seven foundations organizations<sup>16</sup> came together and was first known as the Coordinating Council of Learned Societies in Education (Dottin, Jones, Simpson, & Watras, 2005). In 1980, these organizations formally established themselves as the umbrella organization thereafter known as the Council of Learned Societies in Education (Dottin et al., 2005). The purpose of the Council of Learned Societies in Education was to collectively advocate for the role of foundations in

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<sup>16</sup> The seven organizations represented were the American Educational Studies Association, the Comparative and International Education Society, the History of Education Society, the John Dewey Society, the Philosophy of Education Society, the Society for Educational Reconstruction, and the Society of Professors of Education (Dottin et al., 2005).

teacher education (Gibson, 2002). Its primary focus was on representing the organizations' interests in national and state accreditation, evaluation, and testing policies (Gibson, 2002).

In the early 1980s, after all of the Council of Learned Societies in Education's membership societies adopted the American Educational Studies Association's Standards, the Council of Learned Societies in Education assumed ownership and responsibility for disseminating and advocating for the Standards (Dottin et al., 2005). In 1986, the Council of Learned Societies in Education republished the Standards with a new introduction and circulated them widely at colleges of education, state departments of education, and national accreditation agencies (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996).

In the early 1980s, the Council of Learned Societies in Education participated in the revision of NCATE's<sup>17</sup> standards for accreditation (Dottin et al, 2005). The group successfully ensured that preparation in educational foundations was required within NCATE's framework and helped put in place an NCATE accreditation standard requiring that all coursework be taught by professors qualified in the subject being taught (Dottin et al, 2005). In the late 1980s, the Council of Learned Societies in Education became a membership organization in NCATE (Dotting et al, 2005). As a membership organization, the Council of Learned Societies in Education "exercised its voice vigorously and effectively in NCATE deliberations and decision-making" (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#) and ensured that its values and ideas were included in NCATE's framework and accreditation standards (Dottin et al., 2005).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> NCATE is "a coalition of more than 30 national associations representing the education profession at large. The associations that comprise NCATE [teacher educators, teachers, state and local policy makers, and professional specialists] appoint representatives to NCATE's policy boards, which develop NCATE standards, policies and procedures" (NCATE, 2002, p. 1). NCATE's role is to evaluate teacher education programs based on its set of standards and to accredit those that meet its standards (Spring, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> For more information about the Council of Learned Societies in Education's impact through NCATE, see Dottin et al, 2005.

In the 1990s, the behaviorist emphasis of the 1970s was replaced with “a diversity of approaches to evaluation in education and, more specifically, in teacher education” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). But with this diversity of approaches came a growing consensus that “more systematic and theoretically sound assessment of teachers and teacher preparation programs [was] a necessary component of educational improvement in this country” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). In 1992, given the changing assessment climate in teacher education, the Council of Learned Societies in Education formed a task force to re-examine the Standards (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

The Task Force was charged with considering “the extent to which the Standards adequately reflected the issues being debated in national credentialing and accreditation forums and among member societies of the Council of Learned Societies in Education with regard to the role of the foundations in teacher education and to recommend changes where necessary” (Standards 2d, n.p.#). Assisting the Task Force’s deliberations were special issues of *Teachers College Record* and *Educational Foundations*<sup>19</sup> devoted to re-examining the role of the foundations in teacher preparation (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

In 1996, the Standards were significantly revised in a Second Edition. The Second Edition was intended to “assist qualified professionals in making sound and helpful judgments about program quality” and to “promote quality instruction and learning in foundational studies to guarantee to the extent possible that students have opportunities to acquire interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education through rigorous study and field experiences” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). Of the Second Edition, the authors said:

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<sup>19</sup> The special issue of *Teachers College Record*, Volume 91, number 3, was published in Spring 1990; the special issue of *Educational Foundations*, Volume 7, number 4, was published in Fall 1993.

The revisions presented here preserve the strengths of the original edition of the Standards, while further clarifying the role and nature of foundational studies in professional preparation programs. CLSE anticipates that this Second Edition will be of valuable assistance not only to those seeking to evaluate teachers and teacher preparation and development programs, but also to anyone engaged in preparing educators to understand and respond to the social contexts that give meaning to education itself – both in and out of schools (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

The Second Edition reaffirmed that instruction in the behavioral sciences was not an acceptable substitute for foundational studies (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996). Educators, the Second Edition stated, need foundational studies in the humanities and social sciences because they will be “called upon to exercise sensitive judgments amidst competing cultural and educational values and beliefs” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

The Second Edition acknowledged that “important correlations exist among educators’ professional and scholarly qualifications, professional judgments and professional performance, even though the last [cannot] appropriately be reduced to a prescribed set of behaviors or standardized performance levels” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). Given this acknowledgement, the Second Edition recognized the potential power of the growing emphasis on a more systematic and theoretically sound assessment of teachers and teacher preparation programs and predicted that “the standards [the professional organizations] established for professional preparation programs and for what teachers should know and be able to do [would] have consequences for what [would be] include in, and omitted from, teacher preparation programs and curricula” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

As was predicted in the Second Edition, the standards the professional organizations established did have a significant impact on what was included, and omitted, from teacher education programs. By the late 1990s, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards had been established (Gibson, 2002); the great majority of states had entered into partnership agreements with NCATE (Gibson, 2002); and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium “established formal relations” with both organizations (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

In 2000, the Council of Learned Societies in Education (then representing 20 member societies<sup>20</sup>) changed its name to the Council for the Social Foundations of Education (Gibson, 2002). While some scholars favored maintaining the original name because of its decades-long history and because it emphasized the field’s roots in the disciplines, others suggested that it was vague and contributed to the marginalization of the field in teacher education (Dottin et al, 2005; Greene, April 18, 2000). Thus, the name change was significant because “it occurred in large measure so that the identity of the group would be more immediately apparent to individuals and organizations outside of the field of social foundations” (Dottin et al., 2005, p. 243) and because it emphasized the collective strength of the field (Greene, April 18, 2000).

The passage of The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) – the centerpiece of President George W. Bush’s education agenda – may be seen as the beginning of a new phase that will take the field in new directions (Butin, December 2005a). In this new phase, NCLB is the “meta-text” of the current national teacher education context (Butin, 2005, p.215). NCLB requires that all public school teachers of core academic subjects be “highly-qualified” by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (NCLB, Titles I and II). The U.S. Department of Education

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<sup>20</sup> The twenty member societies include international, national, regional and state-level organizations (Dottin et al, 2005).

has defined highly-qualified as having a bachelor's degree, full state certification, and demonstrated subject matter mastery (USDOE, 2004a).

Given that being “highly qualified” requires full state certification, the subtext of the current teacher education context is the debate over the “relevance and viability” of traditional teacher education programs as the sole route to full state certification (Butin, December 2005a, p. 216). This debate has serious implications for traditional teacher education programs in the face of federal initiatives supporting alternative routes to state certification (alternatives routes that have already allowed ten percent of the teaching force to gain full state certification)(Butin, December 2005a).

Teacher education programs and organizations like NCATE and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education stand on one side of the debate and argue that “strengthening teacher preparation is the key to enhancing teacher quality” (Butin December 2005a, p. 216). The “Deregulation Movement,” led by conservative organizations like the American Enterprise Institute and the Thomas Fordham Foundation, stand on the other side of the debate and argue that teacher preparation programs “are ineffective and cumbersome, thereby providing ineffectual education to individuals within them and creating steep hurdles to otherwise qualified individuals attempting to enter the teaching field” (Butin 2005, p. 216).

Ambiguous research findings on teacher quality complicate the debate (Butin, December 2005a). Researchers have found that “teacher quality is the primary educational variable affecting student outcomes” (Butin, December 2005a, p. 216 (citing Darling-Hammond, 2002; Goldhaber and Brewer, 1999; and Hunushek, Kain, and Rivkin, 1999)). Yet, the only variables that appear to affect teacher quality are subject matter competence and verbal ability (Butin, December 2005a, p. 216). Other variables (e.g., teacher experience, certification, advanced

degrees) appear to matter little while educational variables overall “pale in comparison to [students’] individual and family background characteristics” (Butin, December 2005a, p. 216 (citing Goldhaber and Brewer, 1999)).

What these research findings mean for the field of social foundations is not clear (Butin, December 2005a). This is especially so when teachers themselves do not see foundations as relevant to their practice. As Butin (December 2005a) tells us, while research shows that teachers overwhelmingly believe it is “absolutely essential” that they be able to work with students whose backgrounds differ from their own, research also shows that teachers identify historical and philosophical foundations of education as “the least significant coursework requirements vis-à-vis their present job tasks” (Butin, December 2005a (citing Levine, 2005 and Public Agenda, 2000)).

Demonstrating foundation’s relevance to teacher education is inherently difficult in this NCLB era. NCLB positions what it calls “scientifically-based research”<sup>21</sup> as the only legitimate form of educational research (NCLB, Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101(37)). This has caused some foundations scholars to question whether it is even possible to demonstrate, through scientifically-based research, how social foundations matters in teacher education. However, as Butin (December 2005a) tells us, the question of whether, through scientifically-based research, we can demonstrate that social foundations of education matters in producing a highly qualified teacher is the wrong question. Butin (December 2005a) suggests that foundations scholars use the rhetoric of the current educational context while at the same time making visible “the

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<sup>21</sup> NCLB defines scientifically based research as “[r]esearch that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.” (NCLB, Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101(37)).

constructed and thus contestable nature of our definitions, deliberations, and enactments” (p. 218).

Interestingly, Butin’s argument comes after the Council for the Social Foundations of Education was dropped from NCATE membership in 2004 for not paying its dues<sup>22</sup> (Dottin et al, 2005). Dottin et al (2005) suspect that the organization’s funds problem was more likely “a superficial reason to deeper philosophical concerns about the role, structure, and practices of NCATE within teacher accreditation” (Butin, December 2005a, p. 224).

Dottin et al (2005) acknowledge that foundations scholars’ concerns about NCATE are legitimate, but they question “whether it is more effective to raise [such concerns] within or from outside of the national accreditation dialogue” (p. 253). They note that, without membership in NCATE, the Council for the Social Foundations of Education’s concerns will likely go unheard. Further, they warn that the current statement in NCATE’s Professional Standards that refers readers to the Council for the Social Foundations of Education for “information about what candidates should understand and be able to apply related to the social, historical, and philosophical foundations of education” (NCATE, 2002, p. 19) may well be deleted (p. 253).

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<sup>22</sup> Throughout its NCATE membership, the Council of Learned Societies in Education (now the Council for Social Foundations in Education) was granted fee waiver privileges “based on the perceived importance of foundations of education in teacher education by NCATE officers” (Dottin et al, 2005, p. 245). It was the only organization ever granted such privileges (Dottin et al, 2005). In 2003-2004, NCATE asked all membership organizations, including the Council for Social Foundations in Education, to pay their full dues or risk being dropped from membership (Dottin et al, 2005).

### **3.3 PERENNIAL CRITICISMS OF THE FIELD**

As mentioned above, from its institutional inception at Teachers College in the 1930s, the field of social foundations of education has been called upon time and time again to respond to what Gibson (2002) refers to as “perennial criticisms” (p. 157). Based on a review of the literature of foundations and teacher education, I have categorized these perennial criticisms into five broad categories: (1) relevance to practice; (2) relationship to academic disciplines; (3) faculty; (4) curriculum; and (5) pedagogy. The categories are not discrete; they have interacted on multiple levels and with varying degrees of complexity. Further, the order in which they are discussed below is not intended to represent any sort of hierarchy. One perennial criticism may have been more or less prominent than another at any given time, depending on the context in which it was raised. Further, one perennial criticism may have encompassed another, again depending on the context in which it was raised.

#### **3.3.1 Relevance to Practice**

The most basic perennial criticism of the field of social foundations of education has centered on the field’s relevance to practice. Beadie (1996) tells us that the criticism that foundations is not relevant to practice is both pedagogical and political (Beadie, 1996).

Pedagogically, Beadie (1996) claims that social foundations has failed to achieve its mission (Beadie, 1996). She explains that the breadth of its content and the multidisciplinary perspectives of its scholars make it difficult for foundations scholars to explain to students how the field is relevant to their future practice (Beadie, 1996). As such, students have difficulty comprehending the relevance of social foundations and regard it as the “least worthwhile

component of their professional preparation” (Beadie, 1996, p. 78). As Shields (1968) noted nearly forty years ago, “critics [of social foundations] can rest their case on a solid base of research studies of teacher-training programs in which foundations courses have received poorer ratings than methods courses or student teaching” (n.p.#).

Further complicating the pedagogical aspect of the relevance criticism is the perspectives of teachers, administrators and teacher educators. As mentioned above, both teachers and principals identify the historical and philosophical foundations of education as “one of the least significant coursework requirements vis-à-vis their present job tasks” (Levine, 2005; Public Agenda, 2000). This is not surprising given that teacher educators themselves have difficulty identifying places in the curriculum where “the moral, civic, and social dimensions of teaching are addressed” (Beadie, 1996, p. 78).

Politically, the purpose of social foundations is difficult for foundations scholars to articulate. The same breadth of its content and multidisciplinary perspectives of its scholars that make the purpose of social foundations difficult to communicate to students also make it difficult to communicate to educators and policymakers as well (Beadie, 1996, p. 78). As Beadie (1996) explains:

While other elements of teacher education such as methods course have always, in some sense, taken teacher effectiveness to be their standard of value, for social foundations the connections to classroom practice are at once more elemental and more diffuse. The ability to improve student learning and achievement in literacy and numeracy is readily accepted as a goal of teacher education, but the capacity to critique the culture and structure of schools and the disposition to act on such critiques with moral seriousness and acumen are not objectives as easily stated or as readily grasped (p. 78).

In the current context, the criticism that foundations is not relevant to practice is particularly problematic to foundations faculty attempting to defend and to maintain their programs in teacher education. For example, in the Editor's Corner of the special issue of *Educational Studies*, Rebecca Martusewicz (2005) relates the difficulties she and her foundations colleagues have had at Eastern Michigan University in convincing non-foundations faculty of the relevance and necessity of their courses. The non-foundations faculty, she says, have relied on anecdotal (and even coerced) evidence from students to make arguments against their teaching.

While relevance to practice has been a perennial criticism, it has never been more dangerous to foundations programs than it is now in this NCLB, "scientifically-based research" era. As Renner et al. (2004) tell us, social foundations is "often the first course/program to be eliminated in schools/colleges of education because of its critical (and often amorphous) nature and/or its difficulty to be measured (in a more standardized way)..." (p. 144).

In recent years, foundations scholars have published a substantial number of books, special journal issues, and journal articles devoted to the field of social foundations of education. And, as Gibson (2002) predicted, many of these books and special journal issues have been devoted to demonstrating the "scholarship or 'value added'" by the foundations of education (p. 113). For example, in 2005 and 2006 alone, foundations scholar Dan W. Butin edited a book titled *Teaching Social Foundations of Education: Context, Theories, and Issues*; the American Educational Studies Association (AESA) published a special journal issue (guest edited by Dan W. Butin) titled *How Social Foundations of Education Matters to Teacher Education: A Policy Brief*; the University of Illinois at Chicago issued a Call for Chapters for the first-ever *Handbook of Research on the Social Foundations of Education*; and *Teachers College Record* included a

heated, ongoing conversation between Butin and David Steiner regarding the ideological basis for the curriculum and pedagogy of teacher education, including social foundations of education.

Through these publications, foundations scholars appear to be attempting to respond to current questions about the relevance of the field in teacher education by filling in gaps in the literature, theory, and research. One such gap has been the lack of a clear articulation regarding the field's place in teacher education. As Butin (November 23, 2004) tells us, “[i]n a teacher education climate of increased accountability to outcome-based professional standards, there is no single policy-focused articulation of why and how social foundations matters to teacher education” (p.1). Consequently, Butin (November 23, 2004) argues that “[i]t is vital that the field be able to articulate – to colleagues, department chairs, college deans, policymakers, external reviewers and examiners, and the public at large – a response to the question of “how (and why) does social foundations matter for teacher education” (p. 1).

deMarrais (2005) suggests that foundations scholars use NCATE's diversity standard to assert the field's relevance to teacher education. The diversity standard requires teacher education programs to design, implement and evaluate “curriculum and experiences<sup>23</sup> for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn” (NCATE, 2006, pp. 10, 29). However, Quinn (2005) questions the effectiveness of such a strategy through her story of a Christian college that passed a mock NCATE review even though it required students and employees to sign a “Lifestyle Statement” condemning homosexual behavior as sexually promiscuous and immoral. Quinn (2005) suggests that

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<sup>23</sup> The “experiences” include “working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools” (NCATE, pp. 10, 29). Interestingly, the word “diversity” appears 42 times throughout the NCATE Standards document (excluding the definitions).

accrediting organizations, while affirming diversity, do not necessarily assist foundations scholars in their attempts to demonstrate the field's relevance in teacher education.

### **3.3.2 Relationship to Disciplines**

As demonstrated in the discussion of the history of the field above, there has always been a tension between a uni-disciplinary versus a more integrated, multidisciplinary approach to the field. Scholars who have argued for a uni-disciplinary approach to the field worried that a multidisciplinary, integrated approach might negatively impact the status of the field. Most notably and especially for this reason, James Conant (1963) argued that courses in foundations ought to be taught by professors from the disciplines.

In contrast, most scholars who advocated for an integrated, multidisciplinary approach did so out of concern that the uni-disciplinary approach might have a negative impact on the field of education (Johanningmeier, 1991; Laska, 1969; Shields, 1968). For example, in 1991, Johanningmeier (1991) worried that disciplinary scholars would make contributions to their disciplines that would not translate into contributions to the field of education: “We may indeed make some significant contribution to the disciplines, but this is not – certainly it should not be – our primary purpose. A contribution to one of the disciplines is not necessarily a contribution to the field of education” (p. 9). Johanningmeier (1991) also worried that uni-disciplinary scholars might distance themselves from their colleagues in education: “If our standards of inquiry and objects of inquiry are taken from some other discipline, we further remove ourselves from our colleagues in education. The distance between us and our other colleagues in education does not need to be increased” (p. 9).

Similarly, Laska (1969) and Shields (1968) worried that uni-disciplinary foundations scholars might prioritize the scientific and scholarly work of their disciplines over the scholarly needs of education. In response, Shields (1968) argued for courses and programs to produce foundations scholars “adept enough in the entire range of disciplines represented in the humanities and the social sciences that they can integrate the research findings related to education into a coherent and systematic body of knowledge” (n.p.#). Only then, he claimed, would they approach the disciplines in terms of the scholarly needs of education and not vice versa as is customary among those in the traditional academic areas.

Somewhat “middle-of-the-road,” Shulman (1990) argued that foundations must be firmly grounded in the disciplines while being integrated enough to bind content to instruction and to “forge connections between what students learned in the arts and sciences and the pedagogy that they are going to be learning with us” (p. 309). Using the construction of a skyscraper as a metaphor, Shulman (1990) argued that we should think of foundations not as the solid and firm foundation that goes down before the building (and does not give) but as the more powerful, forgiving, and integrated scaffolding that “weaves itself through it; it becomes part of the very structure it is trying to support” (p. 309).

Predictably, whether this perennial criticism has been aimed at the uni-disciplinary or more integrated, multidisciplinary approach depended on where the field was on the continuum. When the field favored the disciplines, the criticism was that it relied too heavily upon them. When the field favored the more integrated, multidisciplinary approach, the criticism was that it had gone too far a field from its roots.

### 3.3.3 Faculty

The criticism of foundations faculty and the quality of their instruction is clearly linked to the criticism that foundations is either too integrated or not integrated enough. Thus, predictably, the biggest critic of foundations faculty was Conant. In advocating for a uni-disciplinary approach, Conant (1963) argued that faculty should be trained in one specific discipline. In essence, Conant argued that the history of education ought to be taught by a historian, the philosophy of education by a philosopher, and so on (Urban, 1969).

Similarly, in 1971, H. Ozmon noted that the significant rise in the number of social foundations classes had resulted in a “flourishing business in turning out teachers of foundations” (p. 95). Of this, Ozmon (1971) said, “[t]his might have sounded blatant only a few years ago; that one could specialize in all the areas at once, but I assure you that today it is an accepted fact” (p. 95). Ozmon (1971) went on to characterize the foundations scholar as someone who claims she does not need to know (or that it is detrimental to know) all of the areas in depth to deal with them and that it is “fun” to play with ideas (p. 96). And, in the issues-based era of foundations, Ozmon (1971) further characterized the foundations scholar as someone who expounded upon some book of readings, a magazine, or a paperback and then, instead of making meaning of the material, asked undergraduate students with no grounding in the disciplines what they thought about the issues presented (p. 96).

Shields (1968) articulated a milder form of the Conant and Ozmon critiques. Shields (1968) argued that, “[b]ecause of the poor training graduate students receive in most departments of educational foundations, these departments, if they are to establish a strong scholarly base, must recruit more of their staff from graduate departments devoted to the humanities and the social sciences” (Shields 1968, n.p.#). This, Shields (1968) said, is problematic because such

scholars “define their responsibility to the field in terms of their separate disciplines” (n.p.#). What *is* needed, Shields (1968) said, is programs/courses that will “produce individuals adept enough in the range of disciplines that they can integrate the research findings related to education into a coherent and systematic body of knowledge” (n.p.#).

In recent years, critics have pointed to research showing that two-thirds of all faculty teaching social foundations courses do not have doctoral degrees in the field (Shea & Henry, 1986; Shea, Sola & Jones, 1987). While the Council of Learned Societies in Education’s Standards call for faculty specifically trained in Foundations of Education ( Council of Learned Societies in Education, Standard I), what is meant by this is broad enough to encompass many such scholars. In fact, the Council of Learned Societies in Education’s Standards defines faculty specifically trained in Foundations of Education as faculty who are “specialists in their fields by virtue of their doctoral degree concentrations *and/or* by having established active participation in the field of Foundations of Education through their instruction, research and service” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, Standard VII)(emphasis added).

In addition to being criticized for not being academically prepared, foundations faculty have been criticized for not teaching/enjoying what is truly foundational. As Butin (2005) tells us, “the supposed ‘bread and butter’ of foundations – the philosophy and history of education – is actually the least enjoyable for most instructors to teach (Butin, 2005 (citing Towers, 1991)).

### **3.3.4 Curriculum**

Another perennial criticism of foundations is a perceived lack of a common core of knowledge. For example, Ozmon (1971) characterized the field as lacking core content. Ozmon

(1971) opined that, to engender teacher training that “stresses expertise” and “prizes scholarship” means:

[t]o begin to see education as an organized body of knowledge – a body of knowledge that can be learned and applied by those who have taken the trouble to learn it; and as a field of knowledge that is open-ended. It may be that what we know is not at all correct, or all there is to know, but to ignore what man has patiently and with great patience and difficulty already learned, seems to me to be rather nonsensical. We need to make our foundations courses legitimate bodies of knowledge where the concept of intelligent and excellence can find a true place in man’s effort to make himself a little better than he was before (p. 98).

Perhaps the criticism is warranted. After all, foundations scholars themselves have difficulty identifying a common core of foundations knowledge. This ambiguity was most recently demonstrated when, in his edited book on teaching foundations, Butin (2005) asked a panel of foundations scholars “is there a social foundations cannon?” (p. 29).

Panelist Eric Bredo rejected the notion of a canon and, instead, suggested the field has a common pool from which foundations scholars pull their curricular materials. Barbara Thayer-Bacon suggested that foundations chooses the problems and then looks for sources from which to draw. Joe Newman suggested that the canon, if there is one, is what people miss when it is omitted. Wendy Kohli suggested the canon is linked to context – who is in the audience and the purpose of the course in the curriculum. In the end, discussant Dan Butin concluded that the answer was ambiguously “no. Yes? No?!” (p. 55).

Thus, while the criticism is perennial, it is one on which foundations scholars are ambiguously certain. However, it is also one that may be based on a lack of knowledge or a

misunderstanding by those outside of the field. The Standards clearly state that foundations is about developing critical, interpretive, and normative *perspectives* on education. Thus, foundations is not about content per se but about developing the skills and engaging in the tasks necessary to analyze educational issues in context (Bredo, 2005). As the panelists' responses suggest, the materials one uses in achieving this goal is far less important than striving to achieve it in any context

### **3.3.5 Pedagogy**

As mentioned in relation to the faculty preparation criticism, foundations scholars are often perceived to be lacking knowledge or as having to rely on their students for the answers (Ozmon, 1971). Further, because of the contested nature of the issues foundations scholars are called upon to address, foundations scholars are often criticized for a pedagogy that is insensitive or that makes students uncomfortable (Martusewicz, 2005; Boler, 2005; Minnici, 2006).

Further, in recent years, the social foundations have received a lot of attention from scholars claiming that its purpose is biased and potentially subversive (Kramer, 1997; Steiner and Rosen, 2004). For example, in 2004, David Steiner and Susan Rozen published the findings of their analysis of education syllabi in which they declared schools of education ideological and intellectually barren. Steiner and Rozen (2004) were particularly critical of foundations readings, which they considered unbalanced (i.e., too liberal) and indoctrinating.

In 2005, *Teachers College Record* published a heated discussion between David Steiner and Butin. In one instance, Butin (2005) tells us that Steiner's call for "ideologically balanced" content is a "political and theoretical minefield" (n.p.#). Steiner highlighted scholars of the intellectual left like Freire, Giroux, hooks, and Ladson-Billings to argue that what is needed is

balance – readings by Diane Ravitch and E.D. Hirsch, for example. However, as Butin (2005) tells us, Steiner’s criteria of “balance” focuses on the wrong agenda: as mentioned in relationship to the curriculum criticism, Steiner (2005) focuses on particular content (i.e., authors and materials included in syllabi), whereas the social foundations Standards emphasize tasks and skills. Thus, as Butin (2005) argues, Steiner’s rubric for assessing foundations courses was inherently flawed.

#### **4.0 JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY AND THE BASIC EDUCATION STORY**

During the time period under study, Jefferson faculty were discussing – both informally and formally – what to do about what the Dean characterized in 2004 as the Basic Education “problem” (Dean, October 27, 2004). The problem, as the Dean described it, was characterized by the irrelevance of the content to students’ professional programs; the inconsistency of the content, especially when taught by different instructors; and the inconsistency of the quality of instruction (Dean, October 31, 2004).

In this chapter of the dissertation, I attempt to tell the Basic Education Story based on Jefferson internal documents and based on my interpretation of the text and talk of Jefferson administrators and teacher educators. I have chosen to do this chronologically, so as to allow the reader to follow the events as they unfolded in space and time. In some places, I have included in the Basic Education Story my own involvement in, and perspectives on, the events as I experienced them in my role as a teaching fellow responsible for teaching one section of the undergraduate-level Social Foundations of Education course from the fall of 2002 through the spring of 2005. I have done this so as to forefront my own personal interest in the continued place and curricular space for the field of foundations in teacher education as well as to reveal those biases that undoubtedly influence my interpretation of the internal documents and of the text and talk of Jefferson administrators and teacher educators.

#### 4.1 THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE BASIC EDUCATION STRUCTURE OF COURSES

Jefferson University is a large, urban university in the Middle Atlantic region<sup>24</sup> of the United States. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has designated it a Carnegie Doctoral/Research Institution Extensive. Jefferson's School of Education is regionally accredited and is a member of the Association of Colleges and Schools of Education in State Universities and Land Grant Colleges/Affiliated Private Universities and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

In the early 1990s, the School of Education entertained the notion of NCATE accreditation<sup>25</sup> and even went so far as to complete the Pre-Conditions for NCATE evaluation (Dean, March 14, 1991). However, the school decided to "defer indefinitely" the process, citing ambiguity and/or vagueness in NCATE's standards that NCATE either could not or would not clarify as well as strictures that did not seem appropriate for the school's fifth-year, post-baccalaureate teacher education program (Dean, March 14, 1991).

Although NCATE simplified its process and revised its Standards in 2000, Jefferson never looked back. Currently, it is seeking accreditation from the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)<sup>26</sup>. Unlike NCATE, which has prescribed standards and associated metrics, TEAC is more flexible. TEAC requires all programs seeking accreditation to

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<sup>24</sup> The Middle Atlantic region of the U.S. includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania. Library of Congress (2006). Regions of the United States: Regions Defined. Available online at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/rrhtml/regdef.html>.

<sup>25</sup> NCATE was formed in 1954 by the National Education Association and the states. In 2000, NCATE revised its accreditation standards by incorporating outcome-based measures.

<sup>26</sup> TEAC was formed in 1997 and recently became the second teacher education accreditation body to be approved by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (Governor's Commission on Training America's Teachers, 2006). For more information on TEAC and its rivalry with NCATE, see Burton Bollag (Sept. 22, 2006), "New Accreditor Gains Ground in Teacher Education," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(5), p. 27.

affirm one straightforward goal -- “to prepare competent, caring, and qualified educators” – and to meet four “general” standards<sup>27</sup>. TEAC then allows schools to craft their own metrics so long as they are applied uniformly across programs (TEAC, 2006).

Jefferson’s School of Education has four degree-granting departments: Curriculum and Instruction (CI), Administration, Leadership and Policy Studies (ALPS); (3) Educational Psychology and Learning (EPL); and Health and Physical Education (HPE)<sup>28</sup>. Each Department hosts individual programs intended to provide students with specialization in a particular area of study. Each department is headed by a department chair; each program is headed by a program coordinator.

Teacher education is housed entirely within Curriculum and Instruction, but the department also includes programs that do not lead to certification (e.g., early intervention) as well as programs that require certification as a prerequisite (e.g., Educational Specialist, M.Ed, and Ph.D programs). In line with the Holmes Group framework,<sup>29</sup> it is a fifth-year, graduate-level program as opposed to a more-traditional undergraduate-level program. Thus, prior to entry, applicants must have completed a four-year college degree in an academic discipline. This requirement alone makes the teacher education program at Jefferson unique; almost all of the 95 other teacher preparation programs in the state are undergraduate-level programs (Dean, November 18, 2005).

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<sup>27</sup> TEAC’s general standards include three on program quality and one on capacity for program improvement (TEAC, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> The names of the departments have been changed to protect the anonymity of Jefferson and of study participants.

<sup>29</sup> In a 1986 report titled “Tomorrow’s Teachers,” the Holmes Group (which was named after 1920s Harvard Graduate School of Education Dean Henry W. Holmes and which was originally made up of 96 major universities) recommended that teachers have a bachelor’s degree in an academic field and a master’s degree in education (Parkay, F.W., 2004).

Applicants who seek admission may choose to apply to the Teacher Certification (Certification) program or to the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) program<sup>30</sup>. Both programs require full-time study and result in initial state certification. However, the MTL program also results in an earned Masters of Arts in Teaching Degree.

The 30-credit hour Certification program typically begins in late August and ends in April. During the first semester, Certification students spend 80-100 hours observing the classroom and attend classes in the afternoon and evenings. In January, Certification students complete one month of intensive topical study (e.g., inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom). During the remaining 14 weeks, Certification students are placed as student teachers in the classroom in which they observed and attend a practicum to reflect on the experience. The entire program results in an initial state teaching certificate and 18 hours of masters-level coursework that can be applied toward a Masters of Arts in Teaching degree at a later date.

The 45- to 48-credit hour MTL program begins in June and ends in June. During the first summer session, MTL students learn basic teaching techniques in introductory courses and in a teaching lab. In the fall semester, MTL students take the PRAXIS examinations required by the state. Then, in addition to teaching 20-40 hours per week as an intern, MTL students take classes in the afternoons and evenings. In the Spring semester, MTL students continue to teach and attend practicum sessions and topical courses (e.g., technology in schools, special education). At the end of the program, MTL students complete a master's project (also referred to by faculty as the teaching project). The entire program results in initial state certification and an earned Masters of Arts in Teaching degree.

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<sup>30</sup> The names of these programs have been changed to protect the anonymity of Jefferson and of study participants.

Jefferson's School of Education is well-respected in the field; the school is ranked in the top 35 schools of education in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* (U.S. News & World Report, 2005), and the school's students are considered "top recruits" by those in the business of hiring teachers (Jefferson Website). Jefferson's teacher education program is considered competitive. Although roughly 78% of applicants gained admission in 2005 (U.S. News & World Report, 2005), Jefferson's largest program admits only 30 or so of the 80-100 applicants to its MTL program each year (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

#### **4.2 THE BASIC EDUCATION "PROBLEM"**

Jefferson's teacher education program has included study in the social foundations of education since at least 1966 (Dean, October 31, 2004). In the early years, these courses took the form of single-discipline courses such as history of education, sociology of education, philosophy of education and the like. In later years, more-integrated courses such as *Schools and Society* and *The Politics of Education* were added to the offerings.

In 1987, the school developed the Basic Education structure of courses. The stated purposes of the Basic Education structure of courses were to (1) "provide a base for educational practice and research – one which cuts across the range of professional specializations associated with [Jefferson's] academic departments and programs – and should help in demonstrating a shared, common community of scholarship;" and (2) "enhance the community of scholarship by facilitating a dialogue among those of different perspectives" (Basic Education Committee, 1987). An additional purpose for many faculty members was to allow students the opportunity to study with scholars in the foundations areas (Dean, October 31, 2004).

Two strategies were proposed to “provide a means for identifying courses that [would] satisfy the foundation area requirement” (Basic Education Committee, January 26, 1987, p. 1). The first strategy was to develop three courses – one from Human Development, one from [Schools and Society]<sup>31</sup>, and one from Disciplined Inquiry – to “expose students to a common professional core of study in each foundation area.” (Basic Education Committee, January 26, 1987, p. 1). The second strategy was to allow each department to develop and/or to designate additional courses that would “address knowledge and method usually associated with one departmental unit yet considered fundamental for professionals and researchers in other areas of education” (Basic Education Committee, January 26, 1987, p. 2). As part of the second strategy, the Committee encouraged “team-taught, cross department, and interdisciplinary courses.” (Basic Education Committee, January 26, 1987, p.2).

Initially, all students were required to take three “core” courses: *Human Development and Learning*, *Schools and Society*, and *Disciplined Inquiry*. However, as the Departments developed and/or designated additional Basic Education courses, students were allowed to substitute other courses for the three “core” courses in each area. By 1989, students could substitute two other courses for the “core” *Schools and Society* course (Course Menu, 1989). By 1991, the number had grown to 6 other courses (Course Menu, 1991). At its height in 2005, the number had grown to 11 other courses (Jefferson website, 2005). It should be noted, however, that the 11 other courses listed are not offered each semester or even each academic year. This is because, once approved, many of the Basic Education courses remain on the menu of selections regardless of whether they are actually being offered.

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<sup>31</sup> The name of this area of studies has been changed to protect the anonymity of Jefferson University and the study participants.

Over the years, students and teacher educators alike spread rumors about the Basic Education courses as irrelevant, inconsistent, and poorly taught. The rumors were based, in large part, on student complaints that the courses were irrelevant to their programs and inconsistent in both content and quality. Many students and teacher educators began to talk about the courses as though they were a hurdle to clear before the students could complete their programs.

On top of student complaints, one foundations faculty member was reprimanded for requiring students to conduct the majority of the research for the Schools and Society course in the law library. In this case, the faculty member's foundations colleagues agreed that his content was "not foundations" (Interview with Jane Geddes, 2006).

In response to increasing concern among school of education administrators and teacher educators, in the late 1990s, the School of Education Council charged the Academic Affairs Committee (a subcommittee of the School of Education Council) with assessment of the goals, purposes, and content of the Basic Education courses (School of Education Council, September 11, 1998). Although the Academic Affairs Committee met with the Dean to discuss their review (School of Education Council, January 22, 1999), no formal recommendations were rendered. According to a member of the committee, the group never reached the level of formal recommendations because the discussions got bogged down in an ongoing debate between two of its members about whether the Basic Education courses adequately served the MTL students.

Thereafter, the Curriculum and Instruction department chair began rethinking the teacher education curriculum and consequently began looking at course syllabi and student responses to the curriculum. One semester during this process, Curriculum and Instruction students began to act out in classes and to challenge Basic Education course instructors. The school even sought

legal counsel regarding how to handle official complaints lodged by Curriculum and Instruction students against Basic Education course instructors.

Several of the Curriculum and Instruction faculty attempted to discuss their concerns with the faculty in those departments responsible for the Basic Education courses, including the foundations faculty responsible for the Schools and Society component. In their meeting with the foundations faculty, the Curriculum and Instruction faculty proposed that the Basic Education foundations courses be discipline-specific and case-based. However, the Curriculum and Instruction faculty came away from the discussions with the distinct impression that the foundations faculty were unwilling to make any substantial changes to the courses or the ways in which they were taught. The Curriculum and Instruction faculty were disappointed because they believed their arguments for case-based, discipline-specific work – arguments based on the work of well-respected foundations programs (e.g., Stanford, Princeton) -- were strong.

In trying to figure out what to do about the Basic Education courses, the Curriculum and Instruction faculty experimented with various courses of their own. Foundations faculty took issue with the experimental courses because they were not formally evaluated as required. In one experimental course, the Dean co-taught (with Curriculum and Instruction faculty) an elective course broke out by subject area. After a short time, the Dean's experimental course was discontinued.

In January of 2004, frustrated with what they perceived to be an inability to impact the content, consistency, and quality of the Basic Education courses, the Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators drafted and submitted to the Dean a document titled “[Basic Education] Proposal.” The first line of the 2-page document boldly stated: “We propose the elimination of the current [Basic Education] course requirements for all students in the Department of

[Curriculum and Instruction] beginning with the fall 2005 semester” (Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators, 2004, p.1). The Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators contended that the Basic Education courses were “a mixed-bag of offerings, depending on who [taught] them” (Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators, 2004, p.1). They also contended that the Basic Education courses “no longer [represented] a core of basic knowledge” and questioned whether there was even a core of basic knowledge for all students in all of their programs (Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators, 2004, p.1).

Instead of the Basic Education course requirements, the Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators (2004) proposed to introduce their students to “cognition and learning, social foundations of education, and educational research by embedding these studies in subject matter course work.” (p. 1). Specific to social foundations, the Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators (2004) proposed that it be “handled in subject matter course work so that students [could] understand the development of their subject matter as a social phenomenon that both constructs and is constructed by larger social forces and the national contexts of schooling” (p. 1). To design and successfully teach such courses, they stated, would be “extraordinarily difficult for instructors without backgrounds in the particular subject matters” (Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators, 2004, p.1).

#### **4.3 RESPONDING TO THE BASIC EDUCATION “PROBLEM”**

The Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators’ proposal “started all of the conversation” about the Basic Education courses (Correspondence from Craig Wood, 2006). For nearly one year, faculty discussed and, oftentimes, debated the merits of the Basic Education

structure of courses. Frustrated with the faculty's inability to come up with a solution, the Dean allowed the English Education Program to develop and to teach an Introduction to English Education course that would embed social foundations content.

The teaching fellows became aware of the development of this course when one of the two graduate students involved in developing the syllabus for the course requested the syllabus from the undergraduate *Social Foundations of Education* course. At the time, the teaching fellows believed the graduate students were attempting to embed the content of the *Social Foundation of Education* course into the *Introduction to English Education* course. However, teachers educators involved in the efforts say the purpose of requesting the syllabus was not to incorporate the content so much as it was to prevent duplication of the undergraduate course which, by all accounts, was considered a success. Shortly thereafter, one of the teaching fellows reported to the group that one of his students had dropped the course saying that he found out he no longer needed it as a prerequisite for Jefferson's teacher education program. As described in the Prologue, this was one of the events that prompted the teaching fellows and their supervising professor to present the undergraduate course in *Social Foundations of Education* to the Curriculum and Instruction faculty during one of their faculty meetings.

#### **4.4 RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING* COURSE: A REASONABLE SUCCESS STORY**

While the Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators were finding it difficult if not impossible to persuade faculty in the Department of Administration, Leadership and Policy Studies to alter their courses, collaboration with faculty in the Department of Educational

Psychology and Learning was proving fruitful. In this section of the dissertation, I attempt to tell the story of the communication and collaboration that resulted in what one administrator called “a reasonable success story” (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

In the summer of 2004, Dr. Julie Inkster – a research associate from one of Jefferson’s premier educational research centers -- was asked by the Chair of Educational Psychology and Learning to spearhead coordination with Curriculum and Instruction in reconceptualizing the *Human Development and Learning*<sup>32</sup> course. Dr. Inkster was a graduate of Educational Psychology and Learning who also had a lot of experience in schools. She had spent a large part of her career as an elementary school teacher and had found success in applying theory in her own practice. According to one administrator, Dr. Inkster was perfect for the role because she bridged the gap between research and practice very well (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

Dr. Inkster’s involvement followed an earlier short-lived attempt to reconceptualize the *Human Development and Learning* course. In that previous attempt, an Educational Psychology and Learning faculty member organized a group of instructors to develop and subsequently teach the course from a joint syllabus. This arrangement worked well until that Educational Psychology and Learning faculty member left Jefferson. Thereafter, the instructors went back to teaching the course the way they wanted to teach it which, according to one administrator/teacher educator, “made everyone angry again” (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

When a new faculty member took over as the chair of Educational Psychology and Learning, he was perceived by many Curriculum and Instruction faculty as being receptive to

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<sup>32</sup> The name of this course has been changed to protect anonymity of Jefferson University and of study participants.

change. Thus, many of the Curriculum and Instruction faculty perceived the introduction of Dr. Inkster into the collaborative process to be a direct result of the new chair's leadership.

The stated purposes of Dr. Inkster's coordination effort were "to make the course a powerful and relevant learning experience for [MTL] students and to develop mechanism that provide consistency in quality across sections and over time" (Strategy, 2005, p. 1). The four key goals of the coordination were to: "(1) develop a consensus vision for the [*Human Development and Learning*] courses; (2) develop a collaborative culture among course instructors such that curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are openly discussed and shared; (3) effectively situate the [*Human Development and Learning*] courses within the respective [MTL] programs; and (4) develop a plan for sustainability of the course quality." (Strategy, 2005).

As part of the collaboration, four "action steps" were proposed. The first step was for Curriculum and Instruction's proposed *Human Development and Learning* instructors to meet to begin to discuss visions for the course. The second step was for Dr. Inkster to spearhead the coordination to meet with Curriculum and Instruction stakeholders (including program chairs and MTL instructors) to "gather data on expectations, needs, and opportunities for synergy" (Strategy, 2005). The third step was to compile data from the meetings and to allow the MTL instructors to review the compilation. The fourth and final step was to hold a series of meetings with MTL instructors to "conceptualize the vision for the [*Human Development and Learning*] courses, incorporate the needs and expectations of the stakeholders, and share experiences, expertise, and materials (and to agree upon a plan going forward to work collaboratively)(Strategy, 2005).

Following the data collection phase, Dr. Inkster compiled the data and came up with a table that laid out the key needs and opportunities for synergy by program area. Two of the programs identified relevance as a key issue. The Social Studies program sought a course with “immediate relevancy to the issues students are facing in [their] internships” (Stakeholder Interview Summary, 2005, p. 1). Similarly, the Foreign Language program wanted to “keep the course content *applied* so that it is relevant to students’ experiences” (Stakeholder Interview Summary, 2005, p. 2 (emphasis in original)).

Almost all programs wanted to see some focus on their content. For example, Social Studies wanted its content addressed in the course through examples and applications relevant to Social Studies (Stakeholder Interview Summary, 2005, pp. 1-2). Similarly, Foreign Language wanted more of a focus on language in the classroom that went beyond African American issues (Stakeholder Interview Summary, 2005, pp. 1- 2).

Thereafter, Dr. Inkster met with Curriculum and Instruction faculty to update them on the coordination effort. In a brief PowerPoint Presentation, she identified six common needs across program areas. These included: (1) immediate relevance to issues students are facing in [their] internships; (2) scaffolding – [a] deeper and more nuanced understanding; (3) connections between classroom management and Curriculum and Instruction; (4) connections between motivation and Curriculum and Instruction; (5) assessment (particularly assessing student thinking); and (6) [the] role of discourse and social interaction in learning” (PowerPoint Presentation, 2005, p.2). Dr. Inkster also identified common opportunities for “synergy,” including the opportunities to: “(1) connect course content with Teaching Portfolio, especially theory into practice entry; (2) connect course content with Teacher Study requirement; and (3)

connect course content explicitly with students' internship experiences" (Power Point Presentation, 2005, p. 2)

In addition to Dr. Inkster, the instructors assigned to teach the course included one Curriculum and Instruction English/Foreign Language graduate student, one part-time Educational Psychology and Learning instructor, and one full professor with a joint appointment in Educational Psychology and Learning and Curriculum and Instruction. The instructors committed to a process of collaboration that included: "(1) regular meetings to discuss course content, instructional strategies, and practical issues; (2) learning from one another and sharing resources; (3) support[ing] efforts to use cases as [one] vehicle for course content; and (4) plan[ing] to meet again in [the] coming month to reflect and revise" (Power Point Presentation, 2005, p. 2).

The *Human Development and Learning* course instructors did all of these things. In fact, in the spirit of collaboration, they put together for each other a four-page list of resources for the course that included books, DVDs, VHS tapes, CD-ROMs, and websites (List of Resources, 2005). Each instructor designed his or her own syllabus. However, since the MTL students were already organized into cohorts based upon their level (i.e., elementary and secondary) and program (e.g., English Education and Foreign Language, Secondary Mathematics), the instructors were assigned to a particular cohort and their syllabi reflected the perceived need for relevance to that cohort. For example, one instructor's course description stated "This course will introduce students to the psychological theories and research that have been applied to teaching secondary mathematics and science" (Course Syllabus A, 2005) while another's course description stated "This course will introduce students to theories about human learning and

development and how these theories can affect teaching in an English and Foreign Language classroom” (Course Syllabus B, 2005).

All instructors incorporated the case-based approach that the Curriculum and Instruction faculty sought. However, the extent to which cases were incorporated and the ways in which they were taught varied by instructor.

Administrators and teacher educators alike pointed to the collaboration between Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Psychology and Learning as satisfactory to both departments. Couched largely in terms of their ability to collaborate for a mutually-acceptable solution to the Basic Education “problem,” administrators and teacher educators suggested that the *Human Development and Learning* course was an example of what could happen between Administration, Leadership and Policy Studies and Curriculum and Instruction.

Two administrators/teacher educators specifically claimed that students who take the courses are able to apply theory to their practice and bring what they learned in the *Human Development and Learning* course into their other courses. For example, Dr. Archer said that he could tell his students had taken the *Human Development and Learning* course because they all came to his research course with a common core of knowledge. He further stated that, for the first time in his career, he saw students make connections between theory and practice. Dr. Wood expanded on this theme:

I taught our [MTL] Disciplined Inquiry course last spring and it was the first time in my long career here that I heard students using the language of [the *Human Development and Learning*] course in their own analysis of their teaching -- using what they learned in that course, citing papers that they had written, citing work that they had read. And it's

heartening. It's like, wow, this is the greatest course ever (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

Yet, while administrators and teacher educators cited the course as an example of a successful collaboration, they expressed some concern for its sustainability.

One reason for the concern was the amount of time required of its instructors; The level of collaboration required translates into a lot of work for its instructors, among whom there has already been some turnover (two of the four original instructors were teaching the course in the fall of 2006). Another reason for the concern had to do with the identities of its instructors; Dr. Inkster is situated outside of the school of education's power structure while many of the other instructors are part-time faculty and graduate students who traditionally do not have a lot of power within the university. Without senior faculty to push the course and to maintain continuity in the course, sustainability becomes an issue.

Given the concern over sustainability, Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Psychology and Learning are now considering assigning graduate students to teach the course as a formal part of their doctoral programs. The course would be similar to the undergraduate *Social Foundations of Education* course. As discussed above, the undergraduate *Social Foundations of Education* course is taught by four teaching fellows. The teaching fellows collaborate on a joint syllabus and are directly supervised by a senior faculty member who meets with them weekly to discuss the happenings in the course and to plan for the next class sessions.

However, even if graduate students are eventually assigned to teach the course, sustainability remains a concern. As one administrator explained, such an arrangement relies on its own structure to keep it going. By its very nature, it requires someone to take responsibility for supervising and meeting with the graduate student instructors on a continuous basis. And,

given the power structures of the university, it takes someone who is willing to, and who has the power to, fight for the course in order to keep it going.

Despite concerns regarding the sustainability of the *Human Development and Learning* course, the Dean suggested that assigning graduate students to teach the course might be desirable not only for the *Human Development and Learning* course but for other courses as well. He viewed the arrangement not only as a way to cover courses without having to rely on part-timers but also as a way to support graduate students. As the Dean opined, “If we’re going to improve the quality of our research doctoral training, we’re going to have to get out of that part timer business and get much more into the use of advanced graduate students to teach classes as a way of supporting them” (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

#### **4.5 DECENTRALIZATION OF THE BASIC EDUCATION STRUCTURE OF COURSES**

With successful collaboration between Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Psychology and Learning setting the stage, the Academic Affairs Committee was again charged with assessing the Basic Education courses in October of 2004. In a document presented to the Academic Affairs Committee, the Dean stated that the school had “struggled with the [Basic Education] problem for many years.” (Dean, October 27, 2004, n.p.#). He lamented that committee reviews often dissolved to focus not on the courses themselves but on “which program gets ‘credit’ for the coursework that is required of students” (Dean, October 27, 2004, n.p.#). He further lamented that the Basic Education courses were often poorly matched to

student needs and were sometimes used to dispose of faculty less central to program areas (Dean, October 27, 2004, n.p.#).

The Dean rearticulated the two primary proposals that had emerged in the “debate” on the Basic Education courses. The first proposal was to maintain the status quo by keeping what was already in place. The second proposal was to eliminate the requirements for MTL students or to embed the content of the Basic Education courses within existing courses in the department responsible for such students. As an example, the Dean listed Curriculum and Instruction as a department that could embed Basic Education content for its prospective teachers (Dean, October 27, 2004, n.p.#).

The Dean then offered his own third proposal, which was to develop one core course. The course would be team-taught by faculty in the students’ programs as well as by faculty “with core scholarly credentials” from each of the departments responsible for the Basic Education courses (Dean, October 27, 2004, n.p.#). The Dean further asked that the Committee consider revising the Education and Society requirement “so that a primary focus is on contextual factors outside the teacher-student relationship that mediate learning.” (Dean, October 27, 2004, n.p.#).

On October 31, 2004, the Dean issued an Occasional Essay titled “School-wide graduate requirements.” In the 8-page document, the Dean laid out in sections (1) the original purposes of the Basic Education requirement; (2) the present status of school-wide requirements; (3) needed strategic planning and review; (4) ideas about Basic Education content; and (5) ways to deliver the content and mechanisms to ensure quality.

In the section on the original purposes of the Basic Education courses, the Dean quoted extensively from the Basic Education Committee’s 1987 plan but opined that the original scheme seemed to have “blurred a distinction between professional educator preparation and the

preparation of researchers and scholars to populate university departments” (Dean, October 31, 2004, p. 2). He further noted that “the belief that the two groups need identical preparation may be too idealistic.” (p. 2).

In the section on the present status of the Basic Education requirement, the Dean stated that the three required courses (and their approved alternatives) had been “operating in their present form largely for artificial reasons and because of organizational inertia.” (Dean, October 31, 2004, p. 3). He further stated that the courses were often assigned arbitrarily to faculty needing a course to fulfill their teaching load requirements or to part-time adjunct faculty. Specific to the *Education and Society* course, the Dean stated that, although it was “sensible in the abstract,” it did not always “work out” in practice (Dean, October 31, 2004, p. 3). He defined the issue as “specificity of the content for a school that aims to assure that all children learn, and other important major policy issues faced by our schools” (Dean, October 31, 2004, p. 3). He described the politics of education as “fascinating” and declared it important that historical knowledge be brought to bear on what is known about major reform efforts and their underlying beliefs and theories. Yet, the Dean stated that there was a need to examine “the match between what we are or aspire to be and these required courses” (Dean, October 31, 2004, pp. 3-4).

In the section on strategic planning and review, the Dean portrayed the Basic Education courses as having been approved and then ignored by all but those who taught them. Further, the Dean said that the Basic Education course syllabi were not agreed upon or evaluated by a body of faculty (Dean, October 31, 2004). The Dean then characterized the instructors for the Basic Education courses either as (1) new and/or adjunct faculty who lacked understanding of the purpose of the courses or how they connect to students’ programs; or (2) faculty assigned to teach the courses because, for whatever reason, there was nothing else for them to teach (Dean,

October 31, 2004). In contrast, the Dean noted that in the top professional schools, core courses – if offered at all – were taught by faculty recognized for “their ability to teach complex ideas clearly and for their own breadth of scholarship” (Dean, October 31, 2004, p. 5). The Dean cited student exit surveys wherein students evaluated the Basic Education courses as either irrelevant or as the worst part of their program. The Dean then argued that team teaching seemed in order, if not essential, in order to ensure that the content deemed essential to all students is connected well with the competences of the different programs offered (Dean, October 31, 2004).

In the section on content, the Dean suggested that the school focus on ensuring that content align with public expectations of the school’s strengths (Dean, October 31, 2004). In all respects, the Dean suggested that content be tailored to students’ future vocation; teachers should have different content than principals, for example (Dean, October 31, 2004). Specific to the Schools and Society requirement, the Dean stated that “ideal variations of this requirement would combine a review of relevant cultural/social factors with an examination of what is known about responding to or ameliorating the effects of these factors” (e.g., parent interactions, different cultural beliefs, peer bullying) (Dean, October 31, 2004). Regarding educational policy, however, the Dean stated that attention should be paid to how data can inform policies (Dean, October 31, 2004). Here he referred not to the beliefs, goals, and values underlying such policies but to issues of research and assessment (Dean, October 31, 2004). Although the Dean stated that he was not attempting to specify the content, he stated that he expected collective action from all faculty as well as those faculty within individual programs would be necessary to make the Basic Education courses “something of which we can be proud” (Dean, October 31, 2004, p. 6.).

In the section on ways to deliver content and mechanisms to ensure quality, the Dean proposed a process for approval of courses, evaluation of courses, and approval of content through the approval of course syllabi (Dean, October 31, 2004). In approval of courses, the Dean suggested the school continue to have a central body – perhaps the Academic Affairs Committee – approve courses (Dean, October 31, 2004). In evaluation of courses, the Dean suggested the school examine and respond to data collected from every section of every course and that the evaluation instrument include additional questions on the relationship between the Basic Education courses and the students’ program. The Dean juxtaposed this from current Basic Education faculty, “too many” of whom did not use standard evaluation procedures and could not provide any information to colleagues who might “monitor the effectiveness of [Basic Education] offerings” (Dean, October 31, 2004, p.6). On approval of syllabi, the Dean suggested that any required content be taught from syllabi approved and monitored “to ensure continual quality improvement and close connection to the needs associated with students’ degree programs” (Dean, October 31, 2004, pp. 7-8).

The Dean then cited some faculty’s proposals that the content be developed in modules or components of larger courses – closely related to a student’s practicum (Dean, October 31, 2004). The Dean rejected this notion due to the non-universality of the practicum requirement but went on to opine that “whether we have freestanding courses of required modules in larger courses, I believe that we must think more creatively and more responsibly about how to educate our students, focusing not just on broad exposure or minimal proficiency but rather on a true liberalization (broadening) of their ability to think about educational issues they confront” (Dean, October 31, 2004, p. 8).

In the final paragraph of his essay, the Dean called for collaboration among faculty that collectively has great competence and expertise but that individually is focused on a small number of areas (Dean, October 31, 2004). He posited that release time could be available for this work and noted that the teaching of the Basic Education courses might also be shared if the school could enroll at least 25-30 students in each course (Dean, October 31, 2004).

On October 3, 2005, the Academic Affairs Committee submitted to School Council its “Review and Recommendations for [Basic Education].” The document was drafted primarily by two faculty – one from Educational Psychology and Learning and one from Administration, Leadership, and Policy Studies.

The Academic Affairs Committee restated the original goals for the Basic Education courses. Then the Academic Affairs Committee described two modifications to the original Basic Education course structure: (1) the single set of core courses was transformed into a menu system whereby students could select from among multiple offerings<sup>33</sup>; and (2) Curriculum and Instruction had experimented with linking Basic Education content more tightly with disciplinary practice (Academic Affairs Committee, October 3, 2005). The Academic Affairs Committee stated that these modifications “effectively detached [the Basic Education structure of courses] from its original purposes” (Academic Affairs Committee, October 3, 2005, p. 1).

While the Academic Affairs Committee did note some strengths of the Basic Education structure (namely the “fostering, sustaining and revising” of school-wide courses such as *Social Foundations; History, Philosophy and Sociology of Education*, and the new *Human Development and Learning* course), the Academic Affairs Committee found the Basic Education

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<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that the Basic Education Committee’s 1987 plan recommended that the single set of core courses be expanded to a menu system and set forth a process for approving additional Basic Education courses. See Basic Education Committee (January 26, 1987).

structure of courses to be “no longer viable” because basic multidisciplinary content could no longer be delivered in a common set of introductory courses and because cross-disciplinary content and dialogue did not require a link to “basic” coursework but could be “appropriately defined, designed, and delivered in a myriad of other ways” (Academic Affairs Committee, October 3, 2005, p. 2).

Prior to articulating its actual recommendations, the Academic Affairs Committee made a statement about the need for collaboration and respect among colleagues. The statement seemed to speak directly to the collaborative efforts between Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Psychology and Learning as well as between Curriculum and Instruction and Administration, Leadership and Policy Studies. The Academic Affairs Committee stated:

Our community of practice is best supported by engaging and rewarding faculty for collaborative efforts to build courses from the ground up with respect to the diverse needs of students programs. [The Basic Education structure of courses] has succeeded when faculty have come together to seriously consider how to match student and program needs with school-wide expertise. [The Basic Education structure of courses] has failed when requirements have been viewed as inapt, inflexible impositions that disregard program needs. To succeed, basic area coursework must have the respect of faculty (Academic Affairs Committee, October 3, 2005, p. 2).

Following this statement the committee made two distinct recommendations that mirrored the Dean’s second and third proposals. First, the Academic Affairs Committee recommended a formalized process of “decentralization” that would keep to the original goals of the Basic Education plan but that would allow each program to develop its own approach to

satisfying those goals. Each program's approach would require approval by the Academic Affairs Committee.

Second, the Academic Affairs Committee recommended the development of school-wide courses designed to "promote transdisciplinary dialogue, engaging students with leading ideas and faculty in the school" (Academic Affairs Committee, October 3, 2005, p. 3). As the Dean had suggested, these courses would preferably be co-taught by leading faculty and would model the community of practice to which the school aspires. All students would be required to take one of these school-wide courses in lieu of the three courses required under the Basic Education structure of courses.

The Academic Affairs Committee went on to list seven essential elements for program proposals. First, programs must explain how their proposals substantially integrate the three Basic Education content areas (which the committee listed as human development, socio-cultural foundations, and disciplined inquiry). Second, programs must explain how the opportunity for multi-disciplinary dialogue and perspectives will be integrated. Third, programs must consider how the revisions impact each degree and program with differentiation for different programs and different degree/certification routes. Fourth, programs must demonstrate cross-department consultations. Fifth, programs must include a method of assessing short-term and long-term success of the program revisions. Sixth, programs must consider practical implications of changes in courses, staffing and enrollment as they relate to the school. The Academic Affairs Committee specifically stated that this may include designating graduate students to teach the course, holding summer sessions, and the like. Finally, programs must consider how doctoral students would benefit.

Thereafter, the School of Education Council adopted the document as its own. On February 5, 2006, the Dean sent to all faculty an email titled “[Basic Education] Requirements–Interim Process.” In the email, the Dean summarized the recommendations of the Academic Affairs Committee; authorized programs that had developed interim solutions to the “[Basic Education] Problem” in 2005-2006 (e.g., English Education) to continue offering such interim solutions in 2006-2007; and required all programs to submit a formal proposal to the Academic Affairs Committee by December 20, 2006 (Dean, February 5, 2006). The Dean further stated that all programs would be “expected to have in place an approved [Basic Education] arrangement as part of the required curriculum for their graduate degrees by September 2007” (Dean, February 5, 2006). The Dean attached to the email the complete Academic Affairs document.

Following the Dean’s email, some faculty questioned how these things would be done (i.e., whether Academic Affairs was now responsible for developing the 3 credit school wide proposal). In an attempt to clarify any outstanding issues, the Associate Dean emailed the Dean and then forwarded the Dean’s responses on to faculty. In the forwarded email, the Dean reiterated that each department would create a course with “common core of content;” that the Academic Affairs Committee would be responsible for approving such courses; and that school-wide courses would be created through “multidepartmental discussions” and not by the Academic Affairs Committee alone (Associate Dean, February 6, 2006). In response to the question of whether the Academic Affairs Committee should develop a “phase out” plan for students with Basic Education courses in their plan of study, the Dean referred the Associate Dean back to the Dean’s original email to faculty (Associate Dean, February 6, 2006). Ostensibly, the Dean’s original email to faculty indicated that there would be no phase out per se,

but an expectation that each program have an approved Basic Education arrangement in place by September 2007.

According to the Dean, he intends to ask faculty to reserve two whole days and three or four half days over the course of the school year for extended discussions about what they want out of distributional requirements or broad schoolwide requirements. He is also open to providing some release time and other incentives to faculty for collaboration and cross-departmental dialogue.

The School of Education Strategic Plan should be in final form sometime in February 2007. Thus, the Strategic Plan will likely be a major topic for discussion at the Spring Faculty Assembly tentatively scheduled for March 2007.

In essence, the Basic Education story continues. What will happen, especially with the decentralization of the Schools and Society component of the Basic Education structure of courses, remains uncertain.

## 5.0 COMPLICATING THE BASIC EDUCATION STORY

In this chapter of the dissertation, I complicate the Basic Education Story by relating it to the perennial criticisms of the field and by situating it within the structural and organizational context at Jefferson. As discussed above, in proposing the dissertation, I had a hunch that the perspectives of administrators and teacher educators might mirror some of the perennial challenges to the field. I based this hunch on my previous interactions with faculty during school of Education Council meetings, faculty comments and questions raised during the teaching fellows' in-school presentations (e.g., the Student Research Conference, the Curriculum and Instruction faculty presentation), and comments made to me by faculty in casual conversation.

In proposing the dissertation, I also had a hunch that internal structural and organizational issues might have some impact on the discourse surrounding the continued viability of the Basic Education structure of courses. I based this hunch on my previous experience as a Council of Graduate Students in Education representative on the School of Education Council, faculty comments and questions raised during the Spring 2005 faculty assembly at which the School's Strategic Plan was discussed, and comments made to me by faculty in casual conversation.

In this chapter, I discuss the ways in which Jefferson administrators' and teacher educators' perspectives mirror the perennial criticisms of the field and where they diverge or go beyond such perennial criticisms. I include only those perspectives that are common to all or nearly all Jefferson administrators and teacher educators and note those places where there were

discrepancies and/or differing rationales underlying the same or similar perspectives. While the perspectives are specific to administrators and teacher educators at Jefferson, one might imagine that they are indicative of the perspectives of school of education administrators and teacher educators in other institutions. I also discuss the internal structural and organizational issues that impacted the discourse surrounding the continued viability of the Basic Education courses. While these internal structural and organizational issues are specific to Jefferson, one could imagine that they are common to similarly-structured teacher education programs and, perhaps in some cases, to all programs that prepare teachers.

## **5.1 PERENNIAL CRITICISMS REVISITED**

### **5.1.1 Relevance to Practice**

As explained in greater detail above, the Basic Education Committee (1987, January 26) recognized the relevance of Basic Education courses, including the foundations courses, for all students and did not distinguish students' needs based on their future professional roles or the academic programs designed to prepare them for such roles. Yet, eight years later, the Academic Affairs Committee (October 3, 2005) recommended decentralization of the Basic Education courses in order to account for students' needs, which they said differed depending upon students' programs and the roles for which they were being prepared. The Academic Affairs Committee (2005, October 3) rejected schoolwide requirements for Basic Education and recommended that individual *programs* be given the opportunity to design and integrate Basic Education content in ways that "best meet the needs of their students" (p.2).

In interviews, Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators echoed the perspectives expressed by the Academic Affairs Committee. Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators distinguished students' needs based upon their future roles. As one administrator explained:

People who are getting doctorates or are going to become superintendents may not need the same kinds of foundations in those three areas as people who are going to be teachers and neither of them are going to need the same things as people who are going to be researchers (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

Further, like the Academic Affairs Committee, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators spoke to students' needs in very program- and discipline-specific ways. While Jefferson administrators and teacher educators questioned the relevance of the field of foundations, they did so largely on the basis that the courses were not specifically tailored to the subjects students were preparing to teach. For example, one administrator/teacher educator characterized the Basic Education courses as survey courses, which he said were not particularly useful unless they were discipline-specific (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006). The same administrator/teacher educator said that, in terms of the foundations component, what students needed to know was the foundations of their discipline (as opposed to the foundations of education more broadly conceived)(Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

Within the discourse about what future teachers needed, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators focused primarily on the needs of MTL students. This appeared to stem from the fact that MTL students are most affected by the schoolwide requirements since Certification students bring much of the Basic Education content with them into the program. One administrator/teacher educator summed this focus up very well:

The situation is not as broad as it was made to seem. It seems that it concerns largely our [MTL] students and not our [Certification] students who take [Basic Education] classes as a prerequisite before entering the program (Interview with George Archer, 2006).

Interestingly, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators agreed with the Council of Learned Societies in Education that teacher candidates need to know how to analyze education and schooling through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives. However, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators again saw this in very discipline-specific ways. When asked to identify where in the teacher education curriculum students were exposed to these three perspectives, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators consistently referred to introductory teaching courses and methods courses focused on their specific subject area. Only one teacher educator said that teacher candidates needed a broader understanding of, for example, the history of education in order to situate their practice within a broader context.

Jefferson administrators and teacher educators viewed Curriculum and Instruction's practice of assigning students by cohort (e.g., math students in one cohort and English Education and Foreign Language students in another) as a way in which to ensure course relevance (because courses could be tailored to focus on specific subject matter relevant to all students in the course) and as a way to ensure efficient and less complicated course scheduling (because student cohorts could be block scheduled and course offerings could be planned to accommodate the cohort's collective schedule). However, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators suggested that there were drawbacks or at least tradeoffs associated with cohort assignments.

Some articulated these drawbacks or tradeoffs in terms of a concern for differing levels of content knowledge among, for example, elementary education students and secondary math students. As one teacher educator explained, an elementary education student might be in

teaching because he is a nurturer while a secondary math student might be there because she really loves math. The elementary education student might benefit from interacting with the secondary math student who is far more likely to have in-depth content knowledge in math. With cohort assignment, the elementary education student never interacts with the secondary math student because they are never assigned to the same course at the same time.

Others articulated the drawbacks or tradeoffs as a concern for the diversity of perspectives. For example, when recalling an argument made by a foundations scholar who was a member of the Academic Affairs Committee, one administrator explained:

Well, you're in a field that's cross disciplinary. You're in that. To be someone that's educated in this thing, you can't just be in your own little field with everything applied to you. You've got to be able to talk to people and see other points of view (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

Two teacher educators articulated the concern in terms of equity for non-Masters students who may need some of the same courses as the Masters students. For example, prior to the cohort assignment of MTL students, all sections of the *Human Development and Learning* course were open to all students. Now, with cohort assignments, only one section of the course is open to non-MTL students with the remaining sections being assigned and strictly limited to individual MTL cohorts.

Within the discipline-specific courses, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators said the Basic Education courses needed to make the link between theory/knowledge and practice explicit for students. As one administrator explained:

[Teacher candidates] need more than bodies of knowledge, they need to be able to think about teaching through those bodies of knowledge. They can't do it generically. They

need a lot of help and scaffolding. They're really not accustomed to being theoretical. (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

Administrators and teacher educators did not consider the applied focus as an absence of rigor or as a limitation to students learning. As one teacher educator explained:

By making it applied, it's not the absence of the research. It's not an absence of bringing in what we know from rigorous research and evaluation around education and theories of learning. That's all still there, but it is shared with students in a way ... and what is shared with students directly addresses issues they confront and will confront as teachers. (Interview with Julie Inkster, 2006).

To provide such a link for students, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators recommended that the courses be case-based. For example, one administrator stated, "I think we have at least some good guesses from other professions that a lot of this core knowledge is better acquired and more likely to be applied when it's relevant if it's presented in a case-based context." (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006). Expanding on this perspective, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators felt they had strong arguments for the case-based approach and were disappointed when foundations faculty were unwilling to consider the approach. As one administrator/teacher educator related:

[The social foundations faculty] were unwilling to think about a case-based approach to teaching their course that would allow discipline specific people to work in their discipline on cases and on redesigning the syllabus and on thinking differently about what they do. We thought the arguments in the field for case-based, discipline specific work were so strong. In the few places where we knew they were doing that had such success stories. (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

One administrator said the foundations course was offered too early in students' programs. He felt it would be more relevant once students had experience in the schools:

If you're going to have [the *Schools and Society* course], you ought to have it as a more culminating kind of course. Now that you've got a lot of experience, you've actually got to live in the school working part time, now is the time to sit back and reflect on what's going on here. I'm not sure you can stage that course without people actually having had experience in the school setting. And I think you can do a better job once you've had some experience in schools. (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

Jefferson administrators' and teacher educators' perceptions regarding the relevance of the Basic Education courses were informed in large part by student complaints. According to Jefferson administrators and teacher educators, student complaints were couched primarily in terms of the irrelevance of the Basic Education courses to the day-to-day demands placed on them in their internships/student teaching experiences; the courses were a waste of students' time and, perhaps more importantly, students' money because they did not supply them with specific strategies that could be applied directly to their work in the classroom.

One administrator/teacher educator said that a major impetus for revisiting the Basic Education course structure was the number and severity of students "acting out" in the Basic Education courses (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006). Regarding the number of students involved in such activity, the same administrator/teacher educator said "it was more than one. I would say there were probably half a dozen students who were seriously acting out in class. And the trouble was they were expressing sentiments that almost everyone had in the classes." (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

In contrast to administrators' and teacher educators' perceptions of the Basic Education courses, administrators and teacher educators expressed positive views of the undergraduate *Social Foundations of Education* course. One administrator/teacher educator described the undergraduate course as more responsive to students' needs and said that Curriculum and Instruction had hoped there could be some version of it at the graduate level, but that never happened. As one administrator/teacher educator related regarding the undergraduate *Social Foundations of Education* course:

I think that it was the way the course was organized. I think that it was much more receptive to students' perceptions of what the issues were in education. And it wasn't a presentation of information in a lecture course. Even the best people who teach the [*Schools and Society*] course tend to teach it as a body of knowledge (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

One administrator talked at length about the difficulty of getting faculty and student buy-in on schoolwide required courses. As the administrator stated:

As soon as you say you have to take this course because that's what they say you have to take in some other department, you neither have the buy-in of the faculty of that department nor the buy-in of the students ... and to me that is so critical that you might as well give up the [Administration, Leadership and Policy Studies course] unless you have that. Unless the faculty say we're committed to these courses for our students, forget it...you might as well forget it. That undermined the course more than anything else through the years. Just the fact that there was ... in the way of structure, this distrust was there. You've lost it right in the beginning if you don't have that. When students just say

I have to be here, this is irrelevant, this is a hurdle, this is a hoop I have to jump through, you've lost it. (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

In summary, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators distinguish students' needs based on their future roles. And, while all agree that the purpose of foundations should be to help students develop normative, interpretive and critical perspectives on education, what is meant by this is limited to students' specific disciplines. Further, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators deem relevant those courses that make explicit (preferably through case-based methods) the link between theory and practice. Jefferson administrators and teacher educators expressed the perspective that students could not make these links very well, if at all, on their own. In essence, Jefferson administrators' and teacher educators' perspectives mirror the perennial criticisms about the relevance (or lack thereof) of foundations courses to practice. However, they expand upon the perennial criticisms by defining practice in ways that are specific to students' future roles and the subjects they will eventually teach.

### **5.1.2 Relationship to the Disciplines**

Jefferson administrators and teacher educators seemed to respect the disciplinary knowledge of foundations scholars. Not one administrator or teacher educator questioned whether foundations faculty were knowledgeable in their fields. However, despite their own very discipline-specific perspectives on the relevance of foundations to students' programs, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators viewed the disciplinary foci of the foundations scholars as contributing to the inconsistency of course content. For example, one administrator described the *Schools and Society* course as a different course when taught by different instructors with different disciplinary training; specifically he described it as a history course

when taught by a historian, a sociology course when taught by a sociologist, and a law course when taught by a lawyer.

Again, this portrayal of the Basic Education *Schools and Society* course stood in stark contrast to Jefferson administrators' and teacher educators' perceptions of its undergraduate counterpart, *Social Foundations of Education*. The undergraduate course, which is most aptly described as a survey course with a field component, was well-received by faculty and specifically cited by many administrators and teacher educators as one way in which the Basic Education *Schools and Society* course might be restructured. This positive perception was articulated in spite of the perception that such courses were not particularly useful unless they were also discipline-specific. How this relates to administrators' and teacher educators' views on curriculum is discussed in section 5.1.4 below.

On the other hand, one administrator said it was easier to evaluate the quality of foundations faculty who had a disciplinary focus than it was to evaluate the quality of foundations faculty who claimed a more general or integrated foundations expertise. How this relates to the quality of faculty is discussed in section 5.1.3 below.

### **5.1.3 Faculty**

Administrators' and teacher educators' primary concern about the quality of the foundations faculty seemed to stem from Administration, Leadership and Policy Studies' use of part-time, adjunct, and what one administrator referred to as the less interested and less active full-time faculty to teach the Basic Education courses in foundations. According to one administrator, the overall purpose of the course gets lost when such faculty are brought in to teach a course without fully understanding its curricular goals: "the first time that you take the

one-sentence course name and hand it to a part-timer and say ‘go teach this,’ you’ve begun diluting the whole purpose and we do that a lot” (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

The concern seems to be well-founded. Jefferson’s website lists recent instructors and teaching assistants for each of the Basic Education courses. Of the eight recent instructors listed for the foundations courses, only two were full-time faculty (Jefferson website). The other six included four teaching fellows and two adjuncts (Jefferson website).

One administrator explained this in terms of faculty priorities and stature. As the administrator explained, in contrast to disciplines like chemistry and physics, professional schools and education schools in particular tend to prioritize research over teaching. Thus, unlike disciplines like chemistry and physics – which tend to assign their best faculty to teach their schoolwide introductory courses -- professional schools and education schools in particular tend not to do so. The administrator further suggested that education professors tend to gauge their success or stature in their field, at least in part, by the level of students and the level of courses they are assigned to teach. This does not bode well for Basic Education courses.

Largely missing from the discussion was the impact of offering the courses in the summer. As one administrator related, there is little incentive for full-time faculty to teach summer courses because they are offered when faculty expect to be off and because faculty are paid less for teaching summer courses than they are paid for teaching semester-long courses during the regular school year.

Another major concern appeared to stem from foundations faculty’s lack of experience or lack of recent experience in the classroom. In their 2004 Proposal, the Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators questioned whether faculty without experience in the schools

could teach discipline-specific, case-based courses. Echoing this perspective, one administrator/teacher educator related:

One of the problems with [foundations] faculty everywhere in this country is that they don't know schooling in any way first hand. Very few [foundations scholars] are in the classroom, they don't go to meetings with teachers or administrators, so they are really far removed from what's happening in the schools and thinking about that through particular research studies is very different from thinking about it from being on the ground (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

The same administrator/teacher educator further opined that there should not be a foundations Ph.D. Instead, he suggested that foundations should be one thread of inquiry employed to study teaching. He cited Tom Popkewitz for the proposition that one must study the disciplines in order to know what it is to do disciplinary work and suggested that, if foundations scholars want to impact instruction in the schools, they should study discipline-specific classrooms through disciplinary lenses. Change, he said, happens at the discipline-level and when it does not, it has the potential to wreak havoc on the disciplines.

Another major concern revolved around foundations faculty's unwillingness to consider changes in the curriculum. This issue was largely perceived as an issue of academic freedom or of faculty rigidity. Not surprisingly, the two foundations faculty members about whom administrators and teacher educators were most skeptical were also the two most-senior faculty members. As one administrator stated:

[Administration, Leadership and Policy Studies has] a very aging faculty and I can't imagine that some of those people want to suddenly make a right turn in how they think about the field and how they think about teaching. (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

Additionally, one administrator claimed it was difficult to assess the quality of foundations faculty when their area of expertise is listed as foundations (as opposed to, for example, history of education or philosophy of education). He favored a closer relationship between the foundations and its disciplines if for no other reason than such relationship ensures an easier assessment of the quality of foundations faculty:

You have to ask yourself the question of how would you know a good professor in this field if you saw one. And I guess I'm pretty confident that if you say to me this guy's an educational historian, then I can at least adapt the ways in which the whole discipline of history decides who is doing good work to evaluating that person. You say to me that you need some generic criteria that range around and cross all of these different disciplines, I think you end up with some quality problems in that field (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

The same administrator went on to suggest that the difficulty in assessing the quality of foundations faculty is also a product of the lack of a core set of problems in the field:

I know what it means to say that somebody is a good economist who happens to study educational economics or a good political scientist who happens to focus on education issues. I'm not sure what it is to say somebody is a good general social and comparative person or a good general social foundations person because it's not clear that really shapes or has the basis for shaping what that discipline might be like. You can shape disciplines around practical problems so it's not that hard to figure out whether somebody's a broadly-trained computer engineer or something like that. Yes, it involves physics and chemistry, computer science and math and all sorts of other things. But because there's a core set of problems, you can validate the quality of the work against

progress on those problems. If you don't have an agreed-upon core set of problems, then I think you have to rely on the standards of the individuals disciplines because they've been around longer and have more anchoring and experience (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

Interestingly, despite all of the discussion surrounding the quality of foundations faculty and their ability to teach discipline-specific courses to MTL students, most administrators and teacher educators believed that faculty in their own department had the expertise to embed the foundations into their courses. This is interesting considering that, with few exceptions, such administrators and teacher educators are neither trained nor experienced in the field of foundations.

Student complaints again formed the basis for many of the administrators' and teacher educators' perceptions of faculty quality. One administrator questioned the reliance on student complaints as the basis for evaluating faculty quality. As the administrator related:

I would say there's the illusion of problems and then the real problems. Of course this is my point of view. I think the illusion of problems comes from just the lack of data. So what happens in these situations is that students complain, the faculty member has -- because it's not a course in their area -- the faculty member has really no good basis for evaluating what's going on in that classroom, doesn't really follow it up, but it feeds into stereotypes about what must be going on, how this may be a problem (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

Nevertheless, all Jefferson administrators and teacher educators related student complaints as one of the causes for their concern.

In summary, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators expressed concern about the quality of faculty assigned to teach the Basic Education foundations courses. Their concerns focused largely on issues of faculty status (e.g., part-time, adjunct), unwillingness to change (due to faculty rigidity and/or issues of academic freedom), lack of (recent) classroom experience, and student complaints. One administrator spoke to the difficulty inherent in evaluating foundations faculty because foundations draws on many different disciplinary traditions, especially in its more-integrated form. Yet, the question that remains is why the solution is to either do away with the courses or to embed them within other courses taught by non-foundations scholars.

Expanding on this question, if all of the faculty in math education were unqualified or provided inadequate instruction it is difficult to believe the school would do away with the math program altogether or ask the faculty teaching English education to embed math content into their courses. Why then, was the faculty willing to throw out or subsume the field of foundations?

deMarrais (2005) suggests that non-foundations faculty's use of student complaints and other anecdotal evidence to suggest the foundations ought to be removed from the teacher education curriculum -- at least when it occurred at Eastern Michigan University -- was "really a ruse" designed to enable non-foundations scholars to gain control of the credit hours taken up by foundations coursework and to teach content related to multiculturalism and diversity "as [such non-foundations scholars] think best" (pp. 211-212). The potential of deMarrais' suggestion, insofar as it relates to the decentralization of the Basic Education courses at Jefferson, is discussed further in sections 5.1.5 and 5.2 below.

#### 5.1.4 Curriculum

In their proposal to eliminate the Basic Education course requirements, the Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators (2004, January) argued that the Basic Education courses did not represent core content. They further stated that they were not convinced that core content even exists anymore in teacher education. Similarly, in its Review and Recommendations, the Academic Affairs Committee (2005, October 3) stated that the Basic Education courses, while they served their original purposes, were no longer viable as schoolwide courses. This, they said, was due to “significant changes in the state of knowledge, disciplines and pedagogy” (p. 1). As the Academic Affairs Committee explained: (1) knowledge in the field had expanded to the extent that “it is no longer possible to establish the ‘basics’ in a small set of common courses”; (2) increased transdisciplinarity in the field meant that “the definition of ‘basic areas’ is no longer clean-cut”; (3) a “deeper appreciation [for] the contextual and domain-specific nature of knowledge and expertise” (resulting from cognitive and educational research) emphasized the importance of linking knowledge to practice; and (4) program needs and requirements have become more diverse (e.g., included programs for professionals in other fields) (p. 1).

Jefferson administrators and teacher educators echoed these perspectives. They questioned whether a single course could serve the needs of all students. As one administrator said, “we realize that a course that fits all in some ways fits nobody” (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006). While the Academic Affairs Committee based its recommendations on changes in the state of knowledge, disciplines, and pedagogy, one Jefferson administrator suggested that the questioning of the notion of core content may reflect a move from modernist or “foundationalist” thought and postmodernist or “anti-foundationalist” thought (Interview with Jane Geddes, 2006). As the administrator explained, modernists believe that there is a community of scholars who can

identify a core content for their field whereas postmodernists are highly skeptical of this proposition and question whether there can ever be consensus, even within a community of scholars (Interview with Jane Geddes, 2006).

That being said, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators held some specific expectations for the foundations courses. First, they expected the foundations course to align with school priorities. As one administrator explained, “If enabling factors for school success is one of the goals for the school, then the *Education and Society* course ought to somehow deal with some of those questions.” (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

Second, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators expected the foundations course to fill particular gaps in student learning. For example, in email correspondence, one teacher educator related a conversation she had with an international student who had been disappointed by the *Schools and Society* course because he had expected to learn about the U.S. education system but, instead, spent the entire course learning about functionalism and Marxist theory (Email from Kathy Cornelius, August 23, 2006). The teacher educator followed the story about the student’s disappointment in the content of the course with this question: “What is the core knowledge that underpins the social foundations curriculum at [Jefferson] and is that what is actually being taught in the [*Schools and Society*] courses?” (Email from Kathy Cornelius, August 23, 2006).

Third (and as the question above suggests), Jefferson administrators and teacher educators expected some standardization across the Basic Education foundations courses. As described above, they viewed the use of part-time and adjunct faculty as well as the disciplinary foci of the full-time foundations faculty as contributing to inconsistency across courses. This was problematic for administrators and teacher educators because they believed students enrolled

in the same course received very different content depending upon the professor or instructor teaching the course. Administrators and teacher educators alike wanted to know what knowledge students were bringing into their classrooms. As one administrator explained, teacher educators wanted to know if all students had read Dewey or Friere (or the like) so that they could draw on such knowledge in their own teaching.

The lack of standardization in the Basic Education foundation courses was especially problematic, they said, when administrators and teacher educators were expected to prepare students to take the PRAXIS and to communicate students' knowledge to intern sites. Without some standardization in the curriculum, administrators and teacher educators could not be certain what students knew or had been exposed to in their programs.

In summary, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators questioned whether Basic Education courses could serve the needs of all students across the school. Their questioning was based on their beliefs about changes in the field of education. It was also based on their belief that students needs differed depending upon their future professional roles and the subjects they were preparing to teach. In contrast, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators held certain expectations for the content of the Basic Education foundations courses and expressed a desire for some level of standardization. This was based, at least in part, on their inability to determine what, if anything, the Basic Education foundations courses were contributing to their students' knowledge.

### 5.1.5 Pedagogy

As mentioned above, school of education administrators and teacher educators wanted foundations faculty to consider taking a case-based approach to their courses. They believed that such an approach would assist students in making the link between theory and practice.

Several Jefferson administrators and teacher educators were well-versed in the literature on case-based approaches and felt they had strong arguments for such approaches in teacher education. They cited major works and one administrator cited success stories from prestigious teacher education programs. A few teacher educators even directed me to a peer-reviewed article on case-based approaches that had been co-written by a faculty member in Jefferson's Department of Educational Psychology and Learning. Further, several administrators and teacher educators cited the *Human Development and Learning* course as an example for the potential of the case-based approach. And, one teacher educator who had taught one of the *Human Development and Learning* courses claimed that the case-based approaches had enriched her teaching.

While instruction in the foundations may take many forms, one administrator noted that foundations professors already use a lot of cases in their teaching. This, she said, is especially so when foundations faculty analyze historic and current events in education through disciplinary lenses.<sup>34</sup> However, administrators and teacher educators did not generally view foundations faculty as doing so or as even open to considering a case-based approach.

On a different note, while the majority of school of education and teacher educators expressly claimed an orientation to issues of social justice, one administrator warned against use

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of case-based methods in teaching the history of education, see Sonia E. Murrow (April 2005), Learning from recurring debates in education: Teacher education students explore historical case studies. *Educational Studies*, 37(2), 135-156.

of the term to describe the purposes of the foundations curriculum because of its varying political and social connotations. He further stated that employing the term took focus away from the valuable goals and purposes of the courses.

Again, student complaints formed the basis for many Jefferson administrators' and teacher educators' views on foundations pedagogy. In one case, students complained that one senior foundations professor talked about his personal life during the class. According to one administrator, however, the senior professor who talked about his personal life did so during the first class only; the student who complained did not know this because he dropped the class after the first meeting (Interview with Jane Geddes, 2006).

In another case, students complained that one senior foundations professor required students to purchase his book, which they said portrayed teachers in a negative light. Whether or not these complaints are problematic depends upon one's beliefs.

To expand on this proposition, the argument that educators can and should be apolitical rests on three assumptions: (1) that "*professional, intellectual, and technical* activity, on one hand, and *political* activity, on the other, are mutually exclusive phenomena;" (2) that "*personal* and *political* matters or *private* and *public sphere* activity can be clearly separated"; and (3) that "domination ... is the only relationship involved in politics" (Ginsburg et al, 1995, pp. 5-6)(emphasis in original). However, if one believes, as Ginsburg et al (1995) believe, then it is clear that: (1) "all actions (and inaction) by educators reflect and have implications for politics ... though the work of educators is not only a question of politics"; (2) that "[a]ll aspects of human experience have a political dimension" (so that what educators do in their classrooms is a form of political action); and (3) that, beyond domination or *power over*, power includes *power*

*with*, which is “an expanding renewable resource available through shared endeavors, dialogue, and cooperation” (Ginsburg, et al, 1995, pp. 5-7).

Thus, according to Ginsburg et al (1995), the professor’s requirement that students read his book – regardless of the perspectives expressed in the book – is a political action<sup>35</sup> just as everything the professor does in the classroom and any other book the professor might require students to read is a political action. Further, so long as the senior foundations professor encouraged students to examine the portrayal through interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives, then the instructor was engaged in the teaching of foundations regardless of the content he selected to do so.

In summary, administrators and teacher educators wanted the foundations faculty to consider a case-based approach to their teaching. They viewed the pedagogy of foundations professors, as currently enacted, as distanced from practice and as unresponsive to students’ needs. They also described the pedagogy of foundations professors as potentially biased and political. Again, these perspectives were based largely on student complaints.

## **5.2 STRUCTURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES**

### **5.2.1 Department/Program Structure**

As discussed above, Jefferson’s School of Education is divided into four departments (i.e., Curriculum and Instruction; Educational Psychology and Learning; and Administration,

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<sup>35</sup> The requirement might also be viewed as an economic action, since the instructor presumably benefited from the students’ purchase of his book. However, I do not discuss the economic implications of the requirement since students’ complaints were portrayed as being based on a perceived negative portrayal of teachers and not on the purchase of the book per se.

Leadership, and Policy Studies; and Health and Physical Activity). Each department is further divided into programs (e.g., Elementary Education, English Education, Foreign Language, Social Studies). Each department is led by a department chair and each program is led by a program coordinator.

There are clear benefits to this structure. It encourages a sense of community among scholars by grouping faculty with common interests under a common umbrella. It is also more efficient in that scholars with similar roles and responsibilities are provided with a venue in which to interact on a regular basis.

However, there are also drawbacks. The structure implies a false sense of separation and independence. According to one Jefferson administrator, the structure allows departments to operate as silos. And, as the analogy suggests, these silos focus on what they are and what they hold without much concern for where the others are located or what the others hold.

Second (and related to the first), the structure limits dialogue across departments and even across programs. Since departments do not typically meet with other departments (with the exception of the two faculty assemblies in the fall and spring of each year) and since programs within departments often meet as programs, faculty rely on other venues through which to interact with faculty from other departments and/or from other programs.

Third, it creates between departments a sense of competition for resources and credits. The Basic Education courses are essentially service courses for which one department pays another to teach its students. As one administrator related:

It happens ... teaching is extremely painful because people suffer forever over who gets credit. We're consumed with the issue of am I going to get a whole credit or a half credit for teaching this course? (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

While the majority of administrators and teacher educators see the big picture, they still find that it has an impact on the way in which they think about the Basic Education courses. As another administrator explained:

It's a crazy thing and, in some sense, if I was really narrow about the way I thought about things I'd say, why should [Educational Psychology and Learning] do this? [Curriculum and Instruction] should do this. Or, why should we be paying [Educational Psychology and Learning], in [Curriculum and Instruction], for the instruction of these kinds of things. It's coming out of our budget to teach their students. But, on the other hand, who cares. It's all one school. It's a crazy thing. Who cares where it comes from. It's all the school's budget (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

Although the Dean suggests collaboration is needed to move the school forward and to provide a higher level of quality, school of education policy does not necessarily encourage ongoing or sustained collaboration. One administrator described the school's current policy as a compromise; faculty who co-design a course may initially teach it together but are expected to teach it separately thereafter.

One administrator/teacher educator has recommended to the Dean that he dissolve the Department structure and allow the school to operate on the program level. This, the administrator/teacher educator says, would make it easier for faculty to work across departments and across programs because all faculty would "be at the same table" (Interview with Doug Wood, 2006). However, the same administrator/teacher educator says the school has shied away from such school wide changes and, as a result, is structured in much the same way as it was structured 15-20 years ago.

In summary, administrators and teacher educators related that the department structure limits (and may even discourage) communication and collaboration across departments and programs and stifles cross-disciplinary dialogue. It also creates a sense of competition between departments for resources and credits. Although alternatives have been suggested, the current structure has persisted for nearly two decades.

### **5.2.2 Schoolwide Budgetary Issues**

As a fifth-year teacher education program, Jefferson's budgetary issues are somewhat different from other undergraduate teacher education programs. This is because undergraduate courses typically provide more revenue for schools of education. As one administrator explained:

When this school made the decision that it was going to have a fifth-year teacher preparation program and not be in the undergraduate business in any way, they assured that they were going to have people on their back counting courses forever after because it reduced the revenue of the school so dramatically that it became really necessary to micro-manage the whole thing (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006).

Further, one Jefferson administrator reported that the impracticality of prior decisions had resulted in practicality being imposed upon the school from the outside. While the administrator did not elaborate on the specifics of past impracticalities, he did note that practicality imposed from the outside does not tend to consider content in its decision-making process.

One teacher educator suggested that sustaining the faculty to teach the Basic Education courses was a challenge. This, she suspected, was due to too little resources in the budget. Lack of resources was also cited as one reason why assigning graduate students to teach the courses

was an attractive alternative to full-time faculty. In this scenario, doctoral students would pay for graduate credits, which would offset some of the expenses of supervising such students. (Of course, an additional benefit to this arrangement would be that graduate students would gain university-level teaching experience in a supportive and educative environment).

Again, largely missing from the discussion was the impact of offering Basic Education courses in the summer; As discussed above, the teaching of Basic Education courses in the summer is a faculty quality issue in large part because it is a resources issue. As the Dean suggested in the November 18, 2005 draft of the Strategic Plan, “An important goal for the School of Education is to gain enough control over our revenues and costs to be able to compensate faculty appropriately for summer teaching ...” (Dean, November 18, 2005, p.24).

Further, in what the Dean calls a “consumer-driven” teacher education market (Dean, November 18, 2005), student demand and satisfaction is part of the budgetary considerations. As the Dean stated in the November 18, 2005 draft of the Strategic Plan:

We believe in doing things the right way, but we must always remember that our approach adds about 40-45% to the tuition cost of an education and also has higher lost opportunity costs. This means that we must position our instructional “product” as the high quality alternative. In the consumer-oriented society of which we are a part, it is essential that every course offering be – and be perceived as – of the highest quality (Dean, November 18, 2005, p. 8).

In summary, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators recognize that budgetary constraints have an impact on what they can and cannot do in the school. This impacts the Basic Education courses because resources are considered in the assignment of instructors. That being said, the notion that student “demand” ought to control the distribution and quality of the

“product” seems to be at odds with the school’s other stated objectives. Should we get rid of those courses that students do not like or the content of which students cannot immediately link to practice? And, perhaps more importantly, are students the best judges of what ought to be in the teacher education curriculum?

Foundations scholars have warned against the use of student evaluations of foundations courses in making curricular decisions (Murrow, April 2005; Goldman, 1993; Goldman, 1990). By its very nature, foundations courses asks students to questions their own values and beliefs, to grapple with their identities, and to construct new meanings (Mueller, April 2006; Tozer, 1993). As Magolda (1996) tells us, some students may not be emotionally ready or academically prepared to engage in such activity. Further, foundations requires students to grapple with complex and often controversial notions of race, class, gender and the like (Minnici & Hill, forthcoming). These issues are often very personal to students and evoke strong emotional responses (Minnici, 2006; Boler, 2005). Thus, the foundations classroom may be an uncomfortable space for students and their evaluations are likely to reflect these considerations.

### **5.2.3 Time Constraints**

While Jefferson administrators and teacher educators said the Basic Education discussion was a priority for the school, figuring out how to incorporate it into their programs was not at the top of their list of priorities. Nearly all administrators and teacher educators spoke of more-pressing work, such as revising programs to align with new state mandates and improving and preparing for existing courses. For teacher educators, prioritizing work was a necessity because the demands on their time were so high. Not only are teacher educators expected to teach a full course load but they are also expected to conduct and publish research in their field (Chicoine,

2004). Add to that the expectation that teacher educators will advise students and serve on university and school committees, and you have a schedule that does not allow for much else (Chicoine, 2004).

Jefferson administrators and teacher educators described how difficult it is for professors to make time for other activities. When asked where the Basic Education discussion fell in terms of priority, one administrator described it as “lost” due to a lack of continuity in terms of those responsible for keeping it going as well as a lack of time in the schedule for collaboration and curriculum development. As one administrator/teacher educator stated regarding the recommendation that faculty develop a school-wide course to address current issues in the field that affect all students across programs:

But again you’ve got to invest time in that curriculum development, you’ve got to invest time in saying, well in order to build an interdisciplinary community, we’ve got to spend the time to put our best foot forward in this area (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

Jefferson administrators are aware of the time constraints that contribute to the need for teacher educators to prioritize their work. As one administrator stated: “We have this habit of organizing ourselves in such a way that we discover that we don’t have time to do things” (Interview with Henry Picard, 2006). Further, while Jefferson administrators and teacher educators agree that an interdisciplinary course is a worthwhile endeavor, they do not necessarily see themselves as involved in the process. As one administrator opined, few if any teacher educators want to take on the task of curriculum development without additional pay and release time to do the work involved. This, the administrator said, requires support and commitment from administration that is ongoing and that provides for some continuity from start to finish.

Beyond faculty work load, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators spoke to time constraints imposed on them by the length of students' programs and by requirements imposed on programs from the outside (e.g., by federal legislation, by state legislation). Further, as discussed above, students' time is tightly scheduled between work in the schools and coursework in the school of education. As one administrator related:

In [my program], we have more and more work for our students to do. And, I think it would be fair to say this ... if we had our druthers, we would have people have a longer program, more coursework and more fieldwork thrown in together (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

When asked if such time constraints impacted the space in the curriculum, one administrator said that space in the curriculum was one of the reasons his department had squeezed out courses deemed irrelevant, such as the foundations course (Interview with Craig Wood, 2006).

In summary, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators said time constraints required them to prioritize their work and limited the ways in which they could respond to the Basic Education decentralization mandate. Time constraints also caused some to squeeze courses deemed irrelevant out of their programs altogether.

#### **5.2.4 Personalities**

Jefferson administrators and teacher educators acknowledged that the Basic Education story did not occur in a vacuum. It involved real people with diverse and divergent perspectives. They suggested that personalities had, in some cases, limited the potential for successful collaboration. One administrator suggested that a culture of distrust had caused a breakdown in communication between departments and among key faculty. Another administrator/teacher

educator suggested that finding people to work with who were not angry, who would not shut the door, or who would not work to maintain the status quo was a challenge.

Jefferson administrators and teacher educators spoke of particular people they felt had either held the school back in the past or were uniquely positioned to move the school forward in the future. All suggested that finding the right people was essential for future collaboration.

In summary, Jefferson administrators and teacher educators recognized that the people and personalities involved in the Basic Education story have determined how the story has played out thus far and will certainly determine how the story will play out in the future. As one administrator/teacher educator stated, “personalities matter and individuals matter” (Interview with Doug Ford, 2006).

### **5.3 GLIMMERS OF HOPE**

#### **5.3.1 The Status Quo**

The Dean has located the decision-making authority on how to include the Basic Education requirements in student programs at the program level. In other words, individual programs have been given the authority to develop and to draft their own plans for the future. The rationale behind this appears to be that programs know best how to serve their own students.

Administrators and teacher educators articulated their options as a choice between maintaining the status quo and developing something new. At the time of the interviews, programs still had three to six months in which to submit their proposals. While some programs expected to or had already embedded the foundations content into their own courses (e.g.,

English Education), other programs did not foresee any changes (e.g., Special Education, Foreign Language) and still others had not yet made a decision (e.g., Science Education).

In summary, it is acceptable for programs to maintain the status quo and to continue to require their students to take the *Schools and Society* or substitute course. Further, it is quite possible – given other demands – that the majority of programs will do so. If this is the case, then the decentralization of the Basic Education courses will not have any effect on the bulk of teacher education at Jefferson.

### **5.3.2 Schoolwide Strategic Planning and the Academic Affairs Committee’s**

#### **Second Recommendation**

In the larger education policy context, Butin (December 2005a) suggests foundations scholars appropriate the language already in play in order to “make visible the constructed and thus contestable nature of our definitions, deliberations and enactments” (p. 217). In the context of Jefferson, the School of Education’s Strategic Plan (at least in its November 18, 2005 draft form) is all about urban education and teaching all students. This clearly fits within the purposes of foundations. However, while it may be clear to foundations scholars that teachers need foundations in order to understand the complex relationship between urban schooling and society and, further, to ensure that all students learn, it is entirely plausible that others see these as issues of learning theory and/or data-driven decision-making.

That being said, Jefferson foundations scholars might capitalize on the rhetoric of the Strategic Plan in order to demonstrate how and why foundations matters to teacher education. If the Strategic Plan is the document that will guide the future of the school, then foundations scholars might articulate how and why foundations is an explicit part of that document.

At Jefferson, foundations scholars might also be able to capitalize on the Academic Affairs Committee's second recommendation. As stated in the Committee's Review and Recommendations (October 3, 2005):

We propose that a plan be made to foster and sustain school-wide courses that promote transdisciplinary dialogue, engaging students with leading ideas and faculty in the school. These courses, preferably taught by leading faculty, would model the community of practice we aspire to, reflecting strategic strengths in the school in areas such as learning policy, enabling factors, urban educations (sic) or culture and identity. The success of this plan would depend upon support for course development, recognition of effort, and assurance of student enrollment. In place of the current 3-course [Basic Education] requirement, we recommend that all students be required to take at least one school-wide course that is designed specifically to promote transdisciplinary dialogue (p. 3).

One administrator suggested that such school-wide courses could be derived either by a single faculty member who is doing crossdisciplinary work or by several faculty who are doing things that build on each other. Another administrator/teacher educator offered the No Child Left Behind Act as an example of a topic that crosses disciplinary boundaries in such a way as to make for a good school-wide course.

At the time of the interviews, the Academic Affairs Committee's second recommendation was just that – a recommendation. While the Dean gave programs a deadline by which to implement the first recommendation (essentially converting it into a mandate), he did not set a deadline for the second recommendation. Nevertheless, the second recommendation provides space for Jefferson foundations scholars to take the lead. If Jefferson foundations faculty believe that all students in all programs need foundations, then they might consider taking the lead in

developing a school-wide course to ensure that foundations remains part of the teacher education curriculum.

### **5.3.3 Side Conversations**

The majority of Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators related stories of formal presentations and meetings with faculty from other departments that helped them to understand another perspective or to consider another approach. For example, several administrators and teacher educators said that the presentation of the undergraduate *Social Foundations of Education* course during a Curriculum and Instruction department meeting helped them to feel more positive about what was happening in the course and how the course was contributing to their students' learning. Additionally, several of the teacher educators involved in the development and continuation of the *Human Development and Learning* course said that they had learned a lot from collaborating with their colleagues. While such formal presentations and collaborations are good for foundations in that they help to reveal the faculty's shared goals, they are also too few and far between.

Jefferson school of education administrators and teacher educators also related stories of informal interactions that impacted their thinking and actions. Several administrators and teacher educators talked about side conversations they had with foundations faculty that had helped them to understand the purposes of foundations as well as what foundations contributed to their students' programs. Further, one administrator talked at some length about the power of the schools' rumor mill, which had successfully spread discontent regarding the Basic Education courses, especially the foundations course. While the rumor mill may seem to be a negative feature, foundations scholars might use this rumor mill to their advantage. If the rumor mill can

spread negative information then it can also spread positive information that might help to rehabilitate the field at Jefferson.

Thus, Jefferson foundations scholars might consider the potential of their side conversations with faculty from other departments. These side conversations, while informal and largely individual, have the potential to significantly impact the space and curricular space for foundations within teacher education.

## **6.0 REIMAGINING THE PLACE AND CURRICULAR SPACE FOR THE FIELD OF SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION: A CALL FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION**

The Basic Education story can be seen as a microcosm of the larger issues confronting the field of social foundations of education in teacher education and, as such, reveals important insights for foundations scholars attempting to respond to the erosion of the field in their own schools of education. First, the underlying text and talk of those administrators and teacher educators most able to shape the curriculum in teacher education mirror and expand upon perennial criticisms of the field. Foundations scholars have been attempting to respond to these criticisms since the institutional inception of the field at Teachers College in the 1930s. However, changes in the field of teacher education as well as an educational reform era of accountability and scientifically-based research have made the field more vulnerable to such criticisms and more susceptible to erosion and marginalization (Tozer & Miretzsky, 2005).

Further, structural and organizational issues within schools of education impact the ways and means through which foundations scholars are able to respond. While administrators and teacher educators may agree that the purposes of foundations of education are important, they are constrained by a system that fractionalizes faculty, demands an extraordinary amount of their (and their students') time, and pushes them to focus on resources in a consumer-oriented teacher education market.

In this section of the dissertation, I draw on the Basic Education story in order to begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field within teacher education. I also draw on foundations scholars' historic responses to challenges faced by the field, especially as they relate to the perennial criticisms. I end with a call for communication and collaboration between foundations and non-foundations faculty. I agree with Eric Bredo (2005), that “[o]ne of the central problems in education today ... seems to be our unwillingness and inability to act together in open, consultative, mutually regarding ways” (p. 115). And, like Bredo (2005), I suggest that “[w]hat we need are new norms and new ways of developing aims that are legitimate because they are practically possible and have been fairly, openly, and honestly arrived at” (p. 115).

## **6.1 COMMUNICATION**

There is clearly a need for foundations scholars to articulate to school of education administrators and teacher educators the purposes of the foundations in teacher education. If the Basic Education story tells us anything about school of education administrators and teacher educators, it is that many have a limited (and I would suggest a limiting) understanding of how and, most importantly, why the field contributes to teacher education.

One way in which to do this is to share the Council of Learned Societies in Education's 1996 Standards with administrators and teacher educators. The Standards make clear that foundations is not just some unorganized collection of diverse theorists who think it is fun to play with ideas (Ozmon, 1971). Instead, it is “a broadly-conceived field of educational study that derives its character and methods from a numbers of academic disciplines, combinations of

disciplines, and area studies...” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#). The Standards also make clear that the field is not lacking a disciplinary base. The purpose of the field is “to bring these [humanities and social science] disciplinary resources to bear in developing interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education, both inside and outside of schools” (Council of Learned Societies in Education, 1996, n.p.#).

Another way to do this is to share with administrators and teacher educators some of the literature written by foundations scholars. Two recent publications would serve this purpose. The first is Dan W. Butin’s book on the field titled Teaching Social Foundations of Education: Context, Theories, and Issues and the second is the special issue of *Educational Studies* titled *How Social Foundations of Education Matters to Teacher Preparation: A Policy Brief*. Both publications are short, easy-to-read and provide readers with evidence of foundation’s relevance to teachers’ practice.

Yet another way to articulate to administrators and teacher educators the purposes of the field of social foundations of education is to actually talk *to* and write *for* them as an audience. If foundations scholars want administrators and teacher educators to come to know how and why foundations matters to teacher education then foundations scholars must include administrators and teacher educators in the discourse. While foundations scholars might talk to each other on these issues, there is little evidence that they are talking to administrators and teacher educators in the same fashion. Foundations scholars might consider talking with administrators and teacher educators, in both formal and informal venues, about the purposes of the field. And, while there is now a plethora of literature on the foundations and how and why the field matters to teacher education (see, e.g., Butin, 2005; Bredo, 2005; Tozer & Miretzsky, 2005), the vast majority of such literature appears in foundations journals and is generally addressed to

foundations scholars. Foundations scholars might consider writing for journals that administrators and teacher educators read.

In addition to the need for foundations scholars to articulate to administrators and teacher educators the purposes of the field in teacher education, there is also clearly a need for foundations scholars to actively attempt to counter misconceptions about the field as held by school of education administrators and teacher educators. While some of these misconceptions may be countered through articulation of the purposes of the field in teacher education, foundations scholars may need to address certain common misconceptions directly. For example, at Jefferson, some school of education administrators and teacher educators believe foundations as a field does not base its inquiry on perennial questions. This misconception is especially detrimental to the field because it positions the field outside the realm of scholarly inquiry and discourse. Without perennial questions, the field may appear to be disjointed, disconnected, and largely disingenuous. In order for administrators and teacher educators to understand the importance of the field, they must come to know some of its perennial questions. I suggest that they begin with what I believe to be the most important perennial question for anyone in the field of education, which is “what are the purposes of education?” (Tozer et al, 2005; Philip, 1969).

Another misconception that is especially detrimental to the field is that foundations lacks a core content. As discussed in Chapter 3 above, foundations scholars have been particularly ambivalent about defining core content for the field. While some might interpret this ambivalence as an inability to identify what is common across the field, it says more about the field’s purposes and its pedagogy than its disciplinary grounding. Again, as the Council of Learned Societies in Education states in its 1996 Standards, the purpose of foundations is to

develop normative, interpretive and critical perspectives on education. What some administrators and teacher educators do not understand is that such perspectives can be developed in a course that focuses on the history of education in the same way as they can be developed in a course that focuses on the sociology of education or education and culture or any other foundations course. A reading of the Council of Learned Societies in Education's (1996) Standards makes this explicit:

No particular organization or format is specified. Learning may be structured around aspects of the school-society relationship, issues of educational policy, or particular disciplines, e.g., the history, philosophy, and sociology of education (n.p.#).

Further, foundations scholars might make explicit for school of education administrators and teacher educators why it is that they resist standardization. As Renner et al (2004) argue, "teacher educators must remain suspicious of the growing standardization of the social foundations, lest it lose its critical edge or give in to mere standardized testing of its content" (p. 144).

That being said, foundations scholars might consider how their unwillingness to specify core content perpetuates administrators' and teacher educators' perceptions of the irrelevance of the field to practice. Foundations scholars would do well to distinguish for administrators and teacher educators the difference between what we want teachers to know and be able to do inside the classroom versus who we want teachers to *be* both inside and outside of the classroom. As Butin (December 2005a) states:

We want prospective teachers to 'think otherwise,' to 'teach against the grain,' to 'develop a critical consciousness,' to be 'public intellectuals'; we want them to engage in self-examination and self-critique about who they are and want to be as teachers and

learners and the role of schools in society; we want them to question and decide: are teachers leaders, collaborators, technicians, or guides? Or some or all at different times? (p. 219).

If administrators and teacher educators believe as foundations scholars do that teaching is “a complex process, part science and part art, that requires critical thinking, astute judgments, and deep caring” (Butin, December 2005a, p. 219), then the question becomes “where, how, and from whom will future teachers actually gain such knowledge and skills.” (Butin, December 2005a, p. 219). As Butin (December 2005a) tells us, the answer to this question positions the field of social foundations of education as “a potentially necessary part of the discussion” (p. 219).

Similarly, foundations scholars might also consider how their inability to articulate core content relates to the lack of faculty and student buy-in for their courses. Administrators and teacher educators concerned about their students passing the PRAXIS and concerned about being able to articulate students’ knowledge to their intern sites might be more willing to accept a variety of foundations courses – even courses presented through a variety of disciplinary lenses - - if they were assured that students were engaging in activities specifically designed to assist them in developing interpretive, normative and critical perspectives. Likewise, students might be more willing to buy-in to foundations courses if instructors made explicit for them how foundations related to their practice. In fact, at Jefferson I suspect that the undergraduate *Social Foundations of Education* course was well-received by students at least in part because instructors for the course spent considerable time discussing the purposes of the field in teacher education and because the field component helped students understand how different perspectives might be used to analyze the happenings in actual K-12 public school classrooms.

While foundations scholars attempt to find ways to empirically demonstrate the importance of foundations in teacher education, many school of education administrators and teacher educators remain receptive to philosophical and cultural arguments about teaching. At Jefferson, administrators and teacher educators appear to be sincere in their belief in the importance of helping students develop interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education.<sup>36</sup> While their versions of these perspectives may be largely discipline-specific, they remain receptive to and articulate philosophical and cultural arguments as part and parcel of their mission. Thus, despite the emphasis on finding ways to demonstrate empirically that foundations matters to teacher education (a daunting task for researchers because the impact of foundations on teachers' practice is difficult to measure)(Butin, 2005), foundations scholars might do well to share with administrators and teacher educators the wealth of qualitative research that demonstrates the importance of foundations in teacher education (see, e.g., Renner et al, 2004; Garmon, 2005; Cross, 2005).

One goal for teacher education that one would expect that all faculty share is developing a program that is well-respected. Interestingly, Eric Bredo (2004) recently found a strong correlation between an education school's prestige and the strength of its social foundation program. On a personal level, this was not a surprise to me. In applying to law schools, I noticed that the more prestigious law schools tended to focus on the academic study of law whereas the less prestigious law schools tended to focus on the practical preparation of lawyers. The difference, as once explained to me by a law professor at the University of Iowa, is that the

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<sup>36</sup> For example, one administrator/teacher educator and one teacher educator celebrated the fact that a former MTL student had been featured on the front page of her local newspaper for critiquing standardized testing in her school district.

more prestigious law schools prepare lawyers to think about how the law might be while less prestigious law schools prepare lawyers only to practice law as it currently exists.

Further, while in my first year of law school, I discovered what are commonly referred to as study guides or horn books (i.e., books that provide for students the current state of the law on specific legal issues). At that time, I wondered why my law professors taught through a series of individual (and often contradictory) cases rather than through the more easily-digested study guides and horn books. Later, I came to understand that my law professors were helping me think through the rationales underpinning a complex progression of legal decisions. They were assisting me in developing interpretive, normative and critical perspectives on the law and modeling for me a way in which to see beyond the immediate state of the law to its infinite possibilities.

I believe there is a lesson for schools of education in my law professor's anecdotal wisdom and in my own law school experience, and I see a clear connection to foundations. The Council of Learned Societies in Education's (1996) Standards speak to this:

Foundations also refers to a tradition of academic inquiry that seeks to expose and make explicit the relationship between educational methods and values. Foundational inquiry compares words to deeds and intentions to consequences. In so doing it helps judge whether an action is warranted, that is, whether it is supported by reason and evidence. A foundational approach to the study of education assesses the logical connections between the educational goals we select and the means we employ to achieve them. Foundational study, therefore, contains a prescriptive as well as a descriptive dimension: to consider in tandem what schools **are** doing and what they **ought to be** doing (n.p.#)(emphasis in original).

In essence, a strong foundations department is one that makes explicit for students its prescriptive and descriptive dimensions and that helps students develop interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education and schooling. And, in this consumer-driven era of teacher education (Dean, November 18, 2005), a strong reputation will serve all teacher education programs well.

Of course, communication may take more subtle though equally powerful forms. In the early 1990s, Jonas Soltis (1990) noted that many institutions had changed the names of their departments from names that explicitly referenced foundations (e.g., foundations of education, social foundations of education, educational foundations) to “less metaphorically suggestive” names (e.g., policy studies, administration). This is clearly the case at Jefferson, where the word “foundations” does not appear in the name of the department responsible for teaching courses in the field or in the names of any of the graduate-level Basic Education courses. Perhaps foundations scholars should look to the Council of Learned Societies in Education’s recent name change (to the Council for the Social Foundations of Education) as instructive. If foundations scholars value foundations as a field, then the name of the field ought to appear in the name of the department responsible for teaching courses in the field and perhaps even in the names of those courses.

In essence, we might reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of foundations of education in teacher education by communicating the purposes of the field, responding to common misconceptions, continuing to make philosophical and cultural arguments for the field’s inclusion in teacher education (while working to demonstrate empirically how and why foundations matters to teacher education), and emphasizing the value of foundations through use of its metaphoric power. Without communication, we will continue to talk and write to and for

each other while those most able to shape the curriculum push out what is left of the field in teacher education.

## 6.2 COLLABORATION

Collaboration is at the heart of a community of practice. And, at least at Jefferson, it is clear that collaboration can result in courses that satisfy everyone involved. That being said, the Basic Education story suggests that collaboration is a difficult endeavor for school of education administrators and faculty.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the organization and structure of most schools of education ensure that faculty remain fractionalized and isolated in their departments and/or programs and results in a culture of competition among and between faculty. Further, the demands placed on faculty work as a disincentive for faculty to commit to work that is not deemed essential or directly related to their own students' most basic needs. Moreover, with professional schools and education schools in particular prioritizing research over teaching, it is not surprising that faculty spend the time they do have on these other scholarly endeavors.

These internal factors, coupled with external factors that encourage philosophical and moral positioning, work against collaboration in education. In his Presidential Address before the America Educational Studies Association, Eric Bredo (2005) talks at length about the need to bring collaboration back into education. Bredo (2005) suggests that, as educators, we tend to point fingers at each other and avoid dealing with each other except through “fixed and unmovable” standpoints (p. 114). As Bredo (2005) tells us, “The very notion that one would go

to others with opposing views, talk an issue over with them, and see what they think before reaching one's own conclusion seems strangely foreign to the contemporary mind-set" (P. 114).

To counter this loss of collaborative vision, Bredo (2005) suggests foundations scholars act as mediators of three seemingly dichotomous realms. First, Bredo (2005) suggests foundations scholars be mediators between the particular and the universal. He urges foundations scholars to be "sensitive to our pupils' individuality as well as to the wider social life beyond the school, while having some critical distance from each (and pandering to neither)" (p. 131).

Second, Bredo (2005) suggests foundations scholars be mediators between theory and practice. With the academic disciplines too removed from practical and moral considerations and the practitioners too embedded in practice to have much overall perspective, Bredo (2005) urges foundations scholars to be sensitive while recognizing that "each needs to be changed in light of the other" (p. 132).

Third, Bredo (2005) suggests foundations scholars be mediators between their own differences and commonalities. Bredo urges foundations scholars to "pull together and develop public uses for [their] private strengths" while helping to hone those strengths through honest criticism (p.132).

While Bredo (2005) acknowledges the impact of organizational issues (e.g., the increased specialization of teachers by subject matter) as well as educational issues (e.g., the training of educators in programs with different theoretical orientations and differing moral aims) on foundations scholars' collaborative vision, he calls for foundations scholars to think pragmatically about conflict in education. This, he says, requires the field of social foundations to use its imagination to bring collaboration back into education.

As discussed in Chapter 5 above, there are external as well as internal obstacles to collaboration. However, the Basic Education story suggests several ways in which foundations scholars might reimagine collaboration between school of education administrators and teacher education on one hand and foundations scholars on the other.

First, collaboration might mean identifying the right person to coordinate the collaboration. At Jefferson, this person was someone who bridged the gap between theory and practice. It was someone who was respected by her peers but who was not seen to have any fixed position on the issue or any fixed agenda for its resolution. It was someone who was perceived as being willing to consider the perspectives of others.

Second (and related to the first), collaboration might mean finding out what people believe and need. At Jefferson, the person who coordinated the collaboration between Curriculum and Learning and Educational Psychology and Learning spent a lot of time talking to faculty in both departments about their beliefs and needs. She compiled the information and then presented it back to them in order to ensure that her interpretations accurately reflected those beliefs and needs. Finally, she collaborated with them in order to develop a course that was satisfactory to faculty in both departments. In doing so, she and her team succeeded in creating a course that faculty could believe in and support. In doing so, she gained faculty buy-in because faculty felt that they had been heard and that their beliefs and needs had been considered.

Finally, collaboration might mean recognizing and working within existing structures and power arrangements (or working to change them). At Jefferson, the person who coordinated the collaboration for the *Human Development and Learning* course recognized that department structures and budgetary constraints were both challenges to successful collaboration. She

mitigated these factors by ensuring that senior faculty were included in the discussions and that all stakeholders felt actively involved in the development of the course.

In essence, foundations scholars might reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of foundations in teacher education by acting as mediators and by taking a pragmatic approach to bring collaboration back to teacher education. As Bredo (2005) tells us, “Our aims need not be defined merely in terms of accepting or rejecting what is convention or given (p. 132).

### **6.3 THE *OTHER* ALTERNATIVE**

In recent years, there has been significant erosion in the place and curricular space for the field of Social Foundations of Education in teacher education at Jefferson. The Basic Education story tells us that such erosion is due to both external and internal forces to which – in an education reform era of accountability and scientifically-based research -- foundations scholars are less able to respond (deMarrais, 2005). Gone are the days when the field could rely on state requirements for foundations coursework to maintain its presence in the field of teacher education. And, teacher education accrediting bodies – while articulating standards that seem to call for the presence of the field in the curriculum – have yet to demonstrate their ability to ensure such presence (Quinn, 2005).

We might begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of Social Foundations of Education in teacher education by affirming our commitment to communication. As Wagoner told us back in 1976, “if we feel that studies in the foundations of education are worth saving, perhaps we had better give more attention to ways of carrying that message

beyond the walls of our convention halls” (p. 6). We might also begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of Social Foundations in teacher education by affirming our commitment to collaboration. As Bredo (2005) tells us, “it is in between, working collaboratively to make cumulative progress, where the action is” (p. 132).

This is not to suggest that foundations scholars are somehow *entitled* to communication and collaboration. This study begins with the proposition that school of education administrators and teacher educators hold extraordinary power over the place and curricular space for the field of foundations in teacher education. Thus, communication requires not only foundations scholars’ desire to be heard but also school of education administrators’ and teacher educators’ willingness to listen. Likewise, collaboration requires a willingness, on the part of all those involved, to work together to maintain and, ideally, to expand the place and curricular space for foundations within teacher education. Yet, the continued erosion of the field in teacher education suggests that the onus is on foundations scholars to convince school of education administrators and teacher educators how and why foundations matters to teacher education (Butin, December 2005a; Mueller, April 2006; Tozer & Miretzsky, 2000). Butin (December 2005a) suggests three ways in which foundations scholars might begin to do so.

First, Butin (December 2005a) proposes a “Liberal Arts” answer to why foundations matters to teacher education; foundations matters because teachers need critical thinking skills when it comes to educational issues and they need to grapple with the ethics of teaching. To suggest otherwise, he says, is “politically unpalatable. No one wants to go on record saying that teachers are just automatons carrying out federal government mandates” (p. 219).

Second, Butin (December 2005a) proposes a “Cultural Competence” answer to why foundations matters to teacher education; foundations matters because the cultural mismatch

between teachers and students requires schools of education to help future teachers understand the implications of such mismatches and to question the “static and stereotypical manner” in which categories are deployed (p. 221). As Butin (December 2005a) tells us, “to suggest that teachers should [for example] stereotype children based on skin color or that teachers should [for example] have lower expectations of some children than others is again politically unpalatable” (p. 221).

Third, Butin (December 2005a) proposes a “Teacher Retention” answer to why foundations matters to teacher education; foundations matters because new teachers “are not prepared for the bureaucratic and organizational features of an institution charged with the socialization and stratification of 90% of America’s youth” (p. 222). As Butin (December 2005a) tells us, “to suggest [that teachers do not need to be prepared for these bureaucratic and organizational features] is to end up defending politically undefendable positions, such as working conditions *don’t* affect teacher work, or teachers *don’t* need decision-making authority in the classroom or in the school, or teachers *shouldn’t* be adequately compensated for the outcomes they produce” (p. 223).

Butin (December 2005a) frames the three arguments outlined above as “both inclusive to the present debates as well as wedges to foster more critical and nuanced discussions of how and why [social foundations of education] matters to teacher preparation” (p. 218). In suggesting that foundations scholars abide by the rhetorical terms of current educational policy debates while at the same time working to undermine them, Butin (December 2005a) provides the strategic guidance of Foucault: “one escape[s] from a domination of truth...by playing the same game differently, or playing another game, another hand, with other trump cards...by showing its consequences, by pointing out that there are other reasonable options, by teaching people what

they don't know about their own situation..." (Rabinow, 1997, pp. 295-296). Thus, as Butin (December 2005a) suggests, where communication and collaboration are resisted by school of education administrators and teacher educators, foundations scholars must "make visible the constructed and thus contestable nature of our definitions, deliberations, and enactments" (p. 218).

Of course, there is an *other* alternative to communication and collaboration that has been tossed around by foundations scholars of late; the field could sever its ties to teacher education altogether (Butin, December 2005; Harris, December 2005; Martusewicz, 2005). Such an alternative might seem tempting to foundations scholars when fighting to keep the place and curricular space for the field in teacher education has become part of the foundations professor's job description (Martusewicz, December 2005). As Martusewicz (December 2005) tells us in her introduction to the special issue of *Educational Studies*:

I must say that I am tempted by Ian Harris' suggestion that we should cut our service ties to these other programs. I'd like nothing better than to cut loose from this vulnerable position, take my students into Detroit where I have been working closely with grassroots organizations doing amazing work, and create our own unique community education program (p. 121).

Yet, despite her frustration with her colleagues in teacher education and despite her professional pride in the contribution she feels she is making working at the grassroots level, Martusewicz (December 2005) goes on to say:

But, I also know too well that this battle we've been in here at Eastern [Michigan University] is about an overarching politics of knowledge being played out nationally with enormous consequences for our schools, children, families, and communities across

the country. Those lives are what I'm really fighting for and, my own story aside, that is what Social Foundations really means to teacher education (p. 212).

Thus, surrendering the place and curricular place for the field of social foundations of education is not a viable alternative if the field has any integrity or any intent to remain true to its original intents and purposes (Wagoner, 1976; Bredo, 2005). Social foundations of education matters to teacher education because its absence would have serious negative consequences for schools, children, families, and communities across the country. As Martusewicz (2005) tells us, there is much more than academic freedom and professional pride at stake.

## EPILOGUE

In the Prologue, we introduced readers to our companion dissertation studies. Angela's dissertation, *Dimensions of Reflexive Thinking in Social Foundations Pedagogy: Complicating Student Responses for Theoretic Understandings*, explores the pedagogical challenges of teaching social foundations through an examination of student text and talk. She presents a framework for reflexive thinking in social foundations pedagogy as a way to respond to a pedagogical crisis and develop a stance for action. Deanna's dissertation, *Reimagining the Place and Curricular Space for the Field of Social Foundations in Teacher Education: A Call for Communication and Collaboration*, addresses perennial challenges to the field through an exploration of the controversy over Basic Education courses at Jefferson University. In her dissertation she begins to reimagine a place and curricular space for social foundations in teacher education through communication and collaboration.

In the epilogue, we begin with a discussion of two important developments that have occurred nationally which we believe will significantly impact the field of social foundations. The first event was the release of the report by the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The second event was the publication of Arthur Levine's report on schools of education. Our epilogue discusses these two events and how a change in the culture of academia may impact the field and those who teach it.

We then discuss some lessons we learned in the process of writing companion dissertations. We reflect on the process of writing companion dissertations and discuss the ways in which we pushed each other to think differently about our related but separate inquiries. We also reflect on some of the challenges we faced in the process of writing companion dissertations.

### A Tale of Two Reports

In September of 2005, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings established the Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The commission's task was to create a "comprehensive national strategy" for postsecondary education in the United States. Over the course of the next year, the commission (comprised of 19 national leaders) heard proposals and perspectives from scholars and policy makers about higher education. The report was approved by 18 out of 19 members on the commission. The lone dissenter was David Ward, President of the American Council on Education – an organization that considers itself to most-broadly represents colleges and universities. In dissenting, Ward rejected what he characterized as the commission's "one size fits all solutions" to problems in higher education but worried that his action might contribute to the perception that colleges and universities are "reluctant to acknowledge their flaws and unwilling to undertake significant changes" (Lederman, August 11, 2006, n.p.,#).

Secretary Spellings was quick to react to the report and issued a statement which included an action plan based on the findings. Spellings proposed to:

- Expand 'the effective principles' of the No Child Left Behind Act to high schools, while continuing 'efforts to align high-school standards with college work' and increasing 'access to college-prep classes such as Advanced Placement.'

- Streamline the process of applying for federal student aid, to ‘cut the application time in half’ and notify students of their eligibility ‘earlier than the spring of their senior year, to help families plan.’
- Create a federal database to track students’ academic progress.
- Provide matching funds to colleges, universities, and states that collect and publicly report student ‘learning outcomes.’
- Convene members of accrediting groups in November ‘to move toward measures that place more emphasis on learning. (Field, 2006, p. A25)

These recommendations reaffirm the Department’s commitment to accountability and research-based programs and expand that commitment into the realm of higher education.

In September of 2006, Arthur Levine, former president of Teachers College, Columbia University, released a report based on his study of schools of education. His report criticized schools of education today claiming they are “‘unruly and chaotic’ Wild West towns that lack a standard approach to preparing teachers” (Honawar, 2006, p. 1). Levine’s report advises that schools of education take heed from the alternative teacher preparation programs that are appearing all over the country and warns, “There is a real danger that if we do not clean our own house, America’s university-based teacher education programs will disappear” (Levine, 2005). Current discourses about NCLB’s Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) provisions support Levine’s claims. In recent articles and press releases, the Department of Education has emphasized the importance of teacher preparation programs in addressing the Highly Qualified Teacher provisions (Henig, 2006; USDOE, ). Levine’s report outlines several ways to improve the preparation of teachers including the following recommendations:

- Transform education schools from ivory towers into professional schools focused on classroom practice;
- Focus on student achievement as the primary measure of teacher education program success;
- Rebuild teacher education programs around the skills and knowledge that promote classroom learning; make five-year teacher education programs the norm;
- Establish effective mechanisms for teacher education quality control; [and]
- Close failing teacher education programs, strengthen promising ones, and expand excellent ones by creating incentives for outstanding students and career-changers to enter teacher education at doctoral universities. (Honawar, 2006, p. 18)

Despite the criticism that the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) garner in Levine's report, both organizations support Levine's recommendation that teacher preparation programs transform from "ivory towers into professional schools focused on classroom practice" (Honawar, 2006, p. 19).

Both of these reports share the same goals for higher education: more accountability and more focus on effective teaching practices or researched-based teaching skills. While we agree that these goals should be included in comprehensive reform for higher education and teacher preparation programs specifically, a narrow focus on these goals is detrimental to the field of social foundations. As discussed in our studies, the field of social foundations is often criticized by both teacher educators and students as irrelevant to practice. Thus, the increasing focus on "classroom-based practice" as the key to improving student achievement could further exacerbate the field of social foundations' precarious place in teacher education programs. As

we conclude our companion studies, we wonder how the current climate of higher education reform will impact the future direction of the field of social foundations and those who teach it.

### The Companion Dissertation Experience: Lessons Learned

As we reflect on our companion dissertations and the nature of our engagement, we believe that several insights might be gleaned from the experience. First, the way in which we thought about the inquiry changed as we challenged each other to “think otherwise” (Greene, 1988) and pushed each other to new intellectual insights. We both recognize that our studies would have looked different had we conducted them without the benefit of our continuing dialogic.

We pushed one another to consider more meaningful ways in to portray the complexity of our studies. For example, when Angela wondered whether she could do so through fictionalized vignettes, Deanna suggested she read the fictive narratives of legal scholars Derrick Bell and Richard Delgado. Reading these stories inspired Angela to think beyond a traditional narrative portrayal and imagine fictionalized narratives of the student texts.

We also questioned each other’s assumptions, beliefs and interpretations in the inquiry process. This critical questioning led us to different explanations and alternate ways to interpret the texts. For example, when Deanna wondered whether one of the reasons social foundations was in jeopardy in teacher education at Jefferson University was due to a perceived lack of quality in the teaching of such courses, Angela challenged her to think about the logic of the argument. She questioned, “Would another department be disbanded because students complained about a couple of faculty members in that department?” This kind of critical questioning lead both of us to reexamine and sometimes reinterpret our findings. Thus we

believe that sustaining a dialogic relationship throughout the dissertation process influenced every phase of the inquiry including the portrayal and interpretation of our studies.

While the experience of writing companion studies was thought-provoking and engaging, there were some challenges to approaching the dissertation process as a shared experience. First, time was an issue. Often during the study, we were at different stages of the inquiry. Sometimes this was beneficial as we could guide and/or encourage one another during the various phases of the dissertation. At other times, this was problematic because we felt the pressure to not let each other down with our progress (or lack thereof).

We also speculate that the process of writing companion studies would have been more difficult had we not had an extensive working relationship prior to embarking on this experience. Our working relationship has encompassed many diverse experiences, both personal and professional. Most importantly, we had co-authored articles prior to this experience and were comfortable critiquing one another's thinking and writing. We are not sure how common of a relationship ours is, but we think it has been the foundation for our success in these studies.

Throughout the process, we were guided by Elie Wiesel's (2006) proposition that we are all partners in a quest. Thinking of the inquiries in this way freed us to move forward and to feel comfortable dwelling in uncertainty. We became each other's questions, which spawned dialogue and pushed us toward new theoretical insights.

In writing this Epilogue, we recognize that the quest is not over. Our questioning has led us to more questioning and continues to unite us. And so the journey continues.

## APPENDIX A

### TABLE OF SHARED TEXT

Title of Section	Deanna Hill's Dissertation (page numbers)	Angela Minnici's Dissertation (page numbers)
Social Foundations of Education as a Field of Study	16-19	3-5
The climate within Teacher Education and the field of Social Foundations	34-37	21-24

## **APPENDIX B**

### **RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION**

The purpose of this qualitative-interpretive research study is to come to a deeper understanding of the place and curricular space for the field of Social Foundations in Education in teacher education at your institution. For that reason, I will be interviewing administrators and teacher educators at your institution regarding their perspectives on the field in teacher education generally and on the BEC structure of courses that included coursework in the field in teacher education at your institution.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. Your responses are confidential and all research-related materials (e.g., recordings, transcripts, researcher notes) will be kept under lock and key. Further, in the resulting dissertation document, you and your institution will be given a pseudonym.

This study is being conducted by Deanna Hill. Ms. Hill can be reached by phone at 678-548-6589 or by email at [deannahill@bellsouth.net](mailto:deannahill@bellsouth.net).

## **APPENDIX C**

### **THE STUDY**

Since its inception at Teachers College in the 1930s; through the teacher-based competency movement of the 1970s; and into the outcome-based professional standards movement of the present day, the field of social foundations has been called upon time and time again to justify its place and curricular space in teacher education. Over the years, scholars have described the field as marginalized (Greene, 1976; Nash and Agne 1982); in “crisis” (Shea, Sola and Jones 1987); “eroding” (Sirotnik 1990); in “disarray” (Johanningmeier 1991); and in “transit” (Warren 1998). In responding to these challenges, various scholars have attempted to reconnect (Shulman 1990), reconceptualize (Soltis 1991), reconstruct (Butt 1993), reframe (Beadie 1996), and reconceive of (Bredo 2002) the field of social foundations in teacher education.

In the past, critiquing social foundations was largely academic because states required coursework in the social foundations as a prerequisite to certification (deMarrais, 2005; Shields, 1968). Now, with states replacing course requirements with standardized outcomes-based tests as prerequisites to certification (deMarrais, 2005), there is no such guarantee. Universities or,

more specifically, administrators and teacher educators hold extraordinary power over the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations in teacher education.

I set out to understand how Jefferson administrators and teacher educators conceived of the field of social foundations and how and why the field seemed to be being pushed out of teacher education. I hoped that, in doing so, I could come to some deeper understanding about where the field of social foundations had been and might be heading – not only at Jefferson but in teacher education writ large.

I purposefully excluded from the study the experiences and perspectives of foundations scholars. As Wagoner told us back in 1976<sup>37</sup> and as Butin reminded us in 2005<sup>38</sup>, we tend to talk to and among ourselves. Instead, I sought to understand this apparent erosion through the experiences and perspectives of those Jefferson administrators and teacher educators most able to shape the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations in teacher education.

Drawing on discourses in the field of social foundations and teacher education; internal documents generated by Jefferson administrators and faculty, and interviews with Jefferson administrators and teacher educators; this study seeks to contribute to the literature on the field of social foundations by inserting into the complicated conversations (Pinar, 2004) the experiences and perspective of administrators and teacher educators. Additionally, this study seeks to contribute to research by examining the changing nature of the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations as it is specifically manifested in Jefferson’s teacher education program. Moreover, this study seeks to contribute to theory by beginning to reimagine

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<sup>37</sup> Wagoner (1976) said of foundations scholars, “[o]ur own panels and papers and publications are all vitally important, but we tend to talk only to ourselves. We typically stand alone against pressures most difficult to counter” (p.?).

<sup>38</sup> Butin (2005b) said of foundations scholars, “[w]hile SFE scholars have long sustained productive dialogues within their own disciplinary boundaries, discussions across such boundaries have been few and far between” (p. 214).

the place and curricular space for the field in teacher education. The following four research questions will guide the inquiry:

1. What are the historical antecedents for social foundations of education as a field of study and how, historically, did social foundations of education become a part of the traditional teacher education curriculum?
2. What is the nature of the erosion in the place and curricular space for the field of the social foundation of education?
3. How is the erosion manifested in a school of education in a large, urban research university in the Middle Atlantic region of the U.S.?
4. How might we reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations of education in teacher education?

Questions 1 and 2 allow me to situate the inquiry within the field of social foundations of education and within teacher education more broadly. Question 3 allows me to critically examine the changing nature of the field in teacher education generally and as it is specifically manifested at Jefferson University specifically. Question 4 allows me to begin to reimagine the place and curricular space for the field of social foundations of education in teacher education.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **LIST OF KEY BASIC EDUCATION DOCUMENTS**

1. Basic Education Committee (1987, January 26). [Basic Education]: A Plan for the School of Education (Memorandum to the School of Education Faculty);
2. Curriculum and Instruction Program Coordinators (2004, January). [Basic Education] Proposal from the Program Coordinators, Department of [Curriculum and Instruction];
3. Dean (2004, October 27). Charges to the School of Education Academic Affairs Committee”;
4. Dean (2004, October 31). “School-wide Graduate Requirements” (Occasional Essay);
5. Academic Affairs Committee (2005, October 3). Review and Recommendations for Basic Areas of Education (submitted to the School of Education Council);
6. Dean (2005, November 18). Strategic Plan for the School of Education (Draft);
7. Dean (2006, February 5). [Basic Education] Requirements – Interim Process (email to all School of Education faculty); and
8. Associate Dean (2006, February 6). School Council (email to all School of Education faculty).

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