

Maybin (2002) – Teacher's voice is a 'struggle to produce [teacher's] own meaning out of the myriad connotations and associations of the words we use'
Roberts (1998) - [Teachers] operate with mental representations of the world which are our knowledge, and which change as we learn'. They construct knowledge...

*overview of doctoral dissertation (2005)

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

This qualitative study focuses on the constructive relationship between direct and indirect contextual forces that impact upon teacher educators. The study assumed an ecological perspective explained by the understanding that not only are teacher educators influenced *by* their professional context, but also that they have an influence *on* those same contexts.

Three questions guided this study: what are the influences that shape teacher educators' professional perspectives? How are those perspectives represented through their voice? And how might those perspectives construct meaning for the future practices and development of teacher educators.

As researcher, I had three assumptions to this study: Teacher educators act as ecological conduits through which experience and knowledge are received, reconstructed and expressed; Teacher educator lives are influenced by factors both external and immediate to their working contexts; teacher educators influence change through their ontological and epistemological constructs.

METHODS

Case study – Semi structured interviews with 5 university teacher educators in Vancouver, Canada .

Analysis in 3 phases:

Phase 1 –
utilizing grounded theory (reference) Lead to the construction of an initial ecological model:
Landscapes = perspectives
Soundscapes = the voice that speaks those perspectives

Phase 2 –
landscape analysis - microgenetic analysis – focusing on the conditions influencing change in teacher educators

Phase 3 -
soundscape analysis - discourse analysis looking for emotive expressions

ANALYSIS RESULTS

The first research question – what are the influences that impact upon teacher educator perspectives? – was revised based on phase I above – to *What are the influential landscapes and soundscapes of teacher educators?* The second research question was revised to *how are the influential landscapes reflected in the perspectives and voices of the teacher educators?*

Landscapes are:

- Places for the construction of knowledge
- Interdependent contexts
- Spaces that Influence Perspectives
- Acquired through experience and unconscious attitudes

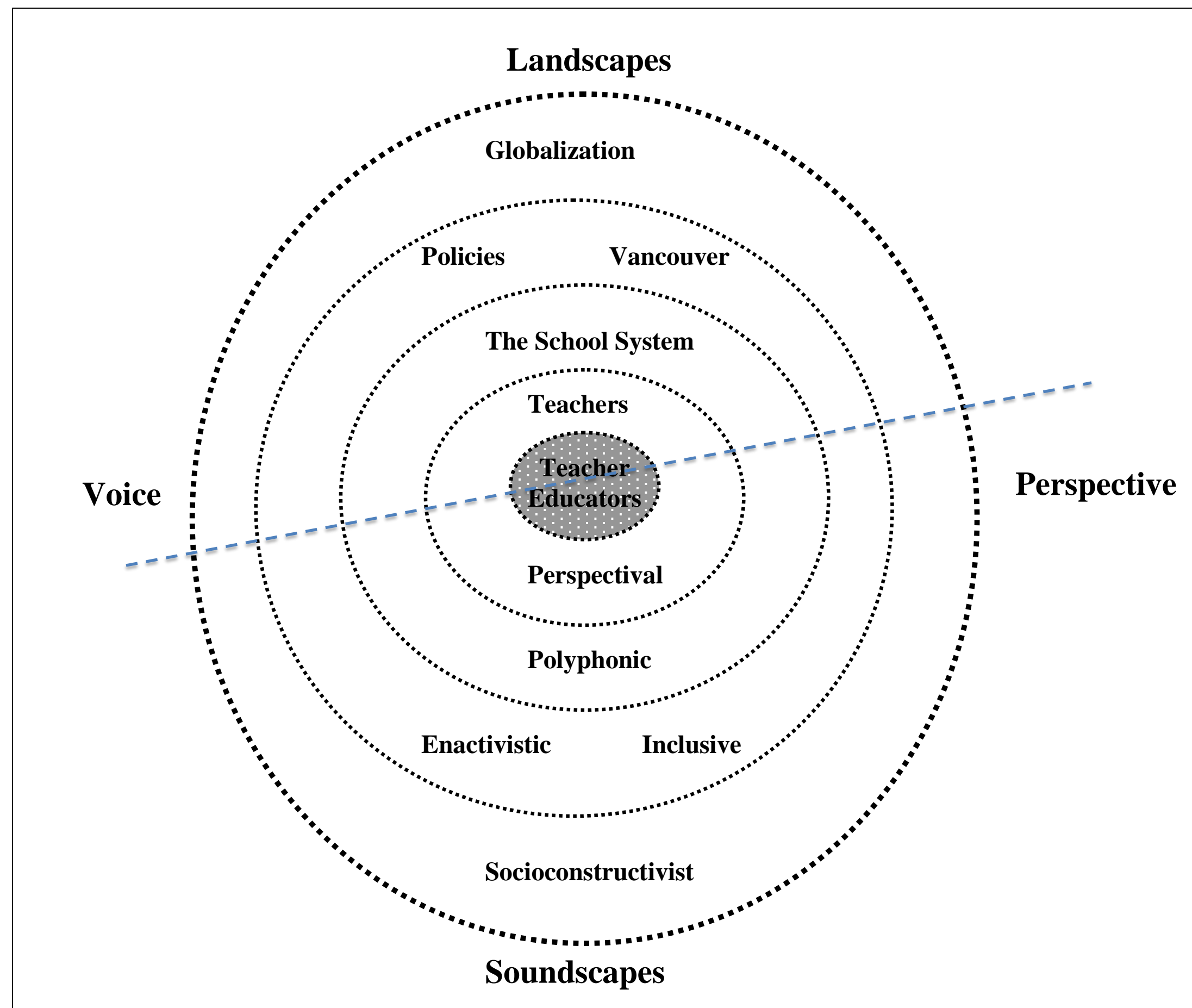
Bronfenbrenner's (1998) theory of *The Ecology of Developmental Processes* was applied to understand the landscapes and the implications upon teacher educators. His layered model represents the impact of forces upon the teacher educator and their impact upon those layers. In this study the layers impacting upon teacher educators are globalization, policies, Vancouver, the education system, and teachers.

Soundscapes are:

- An acoustic environment - sound production and a listener
✓Words are produced IN and BY the context
- An acoustic community
✓Involve more than one person and perspective
- The language teacher's voiced perspectives
- Voice alters depending on experience

Benefiting from Soundscape Theory by Schafer (1994), a soundscape is an acoustic environment in which there is a relationship between the place of sound production (the landscape) and a listener (the educator). Concepts of voice in this study enabled the interpretation of data to reflect the meaning and aid in understanding how teacher educators speak about a particular landscape.

Based on these results, a theoretical model was created for discussion.



The Ecological and Theoretical Model of the Study

The model illustrates:

- the interrelationships between the teacher and their context
- the interdependence between perspective and voice
- a template for others to adapt to their professional contexts

The second research question was revised and is addressed in this section: *how are the influential landscapes reflected in the perspectives and voices of the teacher educators?*

Nine themes emerged from the analysis:

1. Global influences: adaptation and change as an external tension representing the influence of factors outside the direct experience of teacher educators.
2. Changing demographic influences: changing linguistic and multicultural reality of Vancouver introduces both opportunity and challenge upon teacher educators.
3. Some influences reveal an external to internal movement: perspectives of the teacher educators reveal a response or adaptation to an external experience which are then internalized and expressed as part of their own theoretical repertoire.
4. Influences understood as a state of transition: perspectives expressed a relational notion of transition – a persons position is altered as a result of a chance in role, setting or both (Bronfenbrenner, 1998).
5. Some influences are experienced emotionally: representing the emotional professional relationship to a prominent or a series of prominent experiences.
6. Influences as individual and collective forms of knowledge: the teacher educators revealed a common contextual influence in their academic and professional lives and thus contributed to a community knowledge base.
7. Influences are expressed as professional identity: Teacher Educators' role as a professional academic is tied up with the ways in which their ideas are expressed and received.
8. Policy influences are personal and professional: some policies may pose conflicting demands on an individual teacher educators' professional perceptions and their personal beliefs.
9. Classroom influences are viewed as diverse: never pinning a consistent interpretation classroom was an evanescent idea with many meanings - classroom as a university class, a public classroom, a multilingual classroom, a space of tension, a space of policy failure, and a motivational space.

DISCUSSION:

If this study is to have value, then the theoretical model of the study needs to be looked at as a constructive process to be used by other groups or individuals of teacher educators in contexts different from Vancouver. The model is not about production of outcomes, but more about construction of meaning. In as much as the themes represent findings, and therefore an outcome, their applicability in contexts other than Vancouver may not be universally constructed by all teacher educators. For instance, emotion as a theme may not be as applicable all teacher educator contexts. This lack of specific application of the model to other contexts is the models strength: its emphasis on process.

Of particular significance with the model is that it explicitly engages the teacher educator in a process of discovery. The process requires investment and observation by an individual or group of teacher educators focusing on their contexts for the kinds of influences that may impact upon their professional perspectives and practices. The conceptions of voice expressed in the model are by no means static to that layer or particular landscape.

APPLICATION:

The third question of this study – *how can the perspectives and voices of teacher educators lead others in their professional theories and practices?* – can now be answered as a result of the study.

Research agenda 1: explore how teacher educators comprehend their local fit: they can benefit by engaging in or anticipating change . Their fit into their professional and contextual experiences is not contained and expressed in an objective or strategy to be simply passed on to others. It might initially be more constructive to classify fit as a way to critically look at our relationship with our professional roles and experiences.

Research agenda 2: explore ways that transitions are revealed in teacher educators' experiences: transition as a shift in understanding for the teacher educator is a look into the lives (Goodson, 1992; Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996) of teacher educators and will challenge the idea that everyone knows what happens throughout ones academic career.

Research Agenda 3: explore emotion as expressed by teacher educators: benefits of research into emotion in teacher educators will expand the knowledge base of university based educators and how they deal with colleagues, students and the community.

Research Agenda 4: explore how dialogue among teacher educators is and can be practiced: a benefit of looking at voice in this research reflects that the community speaks more loudly than the individual. Communities offer potential for improved understanding of practice through dialogue.

CONCLUSIONS

Teacher educators can benefit from more process oriented and engaged connection to their professional world. The ecological model offers an opportunity for teacher educators to pull-apart conditions that are expressed in their perspectives. Teacher educators will construct knowledge which will IDEALLY!!! lead to improved understanding of change, of their identity, of their professional roles, and eventually lead to improved practice.

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