

Abstract

Exploring school advisors' practices: Dwelling in/between the tectonic spaces is a story about three teachers assisting their student teachers in becoming teachers, and my safari through their landscapes; what i describe as dwelling in/between the tectonic spaces. Those spaces between school advising and student teaching, desire and fear, comfortable and uncomfortable, predictable and unpredictable, all speak to the fact that school advising is a complex phenomena.

The exploration began with two research questions that guided the study: what is the school advisor's understanding of her practice? What is the school advisor's understanding of how one becomes a teacher?

i worked with three school advisors from two large urban secondary schools during the 13 week secondary student teaching practicum in the 1994/95 school year. Diane and Jill came from Maskini Secondary School. They worked with one student teacher, Betty. Jessica came from Lord Cook Secondary School, and worked with two student teachers, Chety and Tiany.

Several data generating procedures were integrated and a co-researching relationship fostered between the school advisors and me. The data generating procedures were conversations, participant observations, video and audio-taping. Student-teacher assessment forms written by the school advisors were part of the data; and i kept a journal throughout the study.

As i became immersed in the study, listened to several conferences between school advisors and student teachers, and held various conversations-on-actions with the school advisors, i realized i was dealing with a very complex phenomenon. Interpreting the data from the point of view of the two research questions that i began with, and trying to understand the school advisors' practices and their understanding of how one becomes a teacher from that view, would have meant camouflaging the dynamics and conflictual nature of such practices. Asking a what is question demanded that i objectify the school

advisors. That would have meant sealing myself off from the atmosphere that i inhabited in those classrooms, the sounds of pedagogy that i heard, and the smiles that radiated the rooms. That would have meant not acknowledging what it was like for me inhabiting places full of love and hope. It would have also meant blocking off the painful moments that were evident at times. The moments and situations speak of what and how school advising **was like** and **could be like**. The data transformed the research questions.

The complexity of school advising needed to be spoken of according to what it **was like** and **could be like**. Thus, what school advising **was like** and **can be like** or what the 1994/95 practicum *was like for the school advisors is told in narratives and metaphors generated from the various conversations. The narratives, the situations, and the metaphors speak about what we have to grasp as a whole. They help us understand each advising of a student teacher by a school advisor on a certain day, in the tone of a previous incident, reminder, and suggestion. The narrative fragments and the synopsis make sense in the whole. Like parables they constitute what Paul Ricouer calls "networks of intersignifications."*

i have used geographical terms such as safari, tectonic, landscape, terrain, and paths, to *communicate what the practicum was like for us as co-researchers. This study assists us in understanding what school advising could be like by offering accounts of what it was like for the co-researchers, Jill, Jessica, Diane, and myself. These accounts describe school advising and student teaching as processes of **reorientation by disorientation** which can be tectonic. For student teachers, the practicum is a reorientation to what was familiar when they were secondary students. For school advisors, the practicum is familiar because it is a yearly occurrence. However, this study found that student teaching and school advising can be very disorienting processes to the parties involved. The tectonicness highlight the need to nurture relationships in teacher education programs which include*

pedagogical relationships in the classrooms, triadic relationships during the practicum, student teacher-student teacher relationships, and, school advisor-student teacher relationships.