

A Pattern in an Infinite Regress¹

Robert Klitgaard²

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Welcome to Claremont Graduate University and this discussion of teacher education. This subject plants us in an infinite regress. The teacher whom we are teaching is trying to help students learn and also learn how to learn (discover, create, design). The student learns both subject matter and learning-know-how and techniques. The teacher in turn must know that subject matter and that know-how, and moreover must know how to convey both, how to instigate the student's demand for knowledge, how to manage a group and perhaps even mold a mini-community.

The job of teacher educators is to teach teachers how to do all that. We are also teachers. We also have the challenge of helping our audience of teachers or teachers-to-be learn and helping them learn how to learn. We also have to convey subject matter and know-how. We have to think about how best to convey these things—and beyond conveying, how to inspire, encourage, and create community.

Then take you, as Deans and leaders of institutions that do teacher education. You in turn have to think about what works in teaching teachers, perhaps about how to teach or inspire your professors of teaching to teach.

And now this conference. How can you as teachers and leaders of professors who teach teachers how to teach, teach each other how to teach teachers how to teach?

Do you begin to feel that vertigo of infinite regress?

I have a few thoughts but no answers (and I confess that the questions leave me somewhat dizzy).

Evidence matters. Education at all levels is famously a subject where many feel expert but few can prove it. Passion and commitment are crucial, especially in a profession or an art where monetary rewards lag. But evidence, and constructive reflection about it, also seem essential, especially if we're trying to learn rather than simply to expound.

That's why I admire so much your emphasis on accountability in teachers' education, as emphasized in your February 2006 AICCU conference. You'll find that emphasis is our

¹ Welcome to a meeting of Deans of Teacher Education of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA.

² President and University Professor, Claremont Graduate University.

aim, too, here at Claremont Graduate University. A stated goal of our School of Educational Studies is to combine social justice *and* accountability. In teachers' education, Professors DeLacy Ganley and Anita Quintanar and their colleagues are exploring several new ways to define and ascertain the effectiveness of the teachers we teach, to reflect back to the effectiveness of how and what we teach those teachers. This connection between evidence, reflection, and our own practice is, in their words, a matter of urgency.

The Teacher Education Internship Program colleagues "reflect upon, scrutinize and continually improve the TEIP curriculum with a key question in mind: *How does 'X' help our interns learn how to improve student achievement in today's schools?* Utilizing our combined understanding of academics and practice, every TEIP assignment and class is designed to develop the skills, strategies, and attitudes known to interrupt cycles of academic failure. Reflecting upon the curriculum is a near daily activity; it is done individually, collectively, and in regular meetings with the TEIP faculty. Our interns don't have the luxury to indulge in activities that don't directly and effectively cultivate their ability to reach students."

This models both the passion and the discipline, the desire to learn as we teach (or teach teachers, or teach professors of teaching teachers, or teach each other), that we seek at all levels of teaching. I'm glad to welcome you fellow seekers and inspirers and teachers to Claremont Graduate University, and I'm eager to learn from your deliberations.