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MARKETS, STANDARDS, TEACHING, AND TEACHER EDUCATION

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Market-based approaches to teacher education are growing internationally. There are concomitant moves to create uniformity and a system of more centralized authority over what counts as important teacher skills and knowledge. These kinds of reforms are overtly meant to help. Each is closely connected to the larger arena of education, where momentous ideological transformations are underway. The possible hidden effects of these efforts can be understood only if we look both inside teacher education programs and to the larger social field of power on which they operate. The author argues that the conscious originating motives for both market-oriented and uniform standards approaches to improve the quality of teacher education may not guarantee the effects of such policies in the real world of real schools. Such reforms may have quite dangerous consequences unless we situate our efforts within an honest analysis of what is happening in education in general right now.

SITUATING TEACHER EDUCATION IN ITS LARGER CONTEXT

There have been numerous proposals to reform teacher education within the past decade. Although many of them have been quite thoughtful, a considerable amount of the discussion has taken place in something of a social and ideological vacuum. It has not been reflective enough about the major changes that have been taking place in curriculum, teaching, and evaluation in schools in many nations. Yet, these transformations are already having a profound effect on the ways teaching is done, who controls it, and what schools themselves are for. Without a serious examination of these transformations, we will be unable to prepare our current and future teachers for a world in which the rules have changed (Liston & Zeichner, 1990). In this article, I want to focus on these changes, especially the forces of what I have called “conservative modernization,” in which what schools are for, how they are funded and controlled, and whom they are to serve are moving in specific directions (Apple, 2000b, 2001). Conservative

modernization is the result of a tense and sometimes contradictory blend of three kinds of reforms—neoliberal market-based reforms, neoconservative reforms involving strong central cultural authority, and new middle-class emphases on technical and managerial solutions to moral and political problems.¹

The effects of this combination of neoliberal, neoconservative, and managerial tendencies on teacher education are and will be increasingly visible. In the United States, England, and many other nations, there are proposals to totally deregulate teacher education so that competition among institutions of higher education, private for-profit training agencies, and school districts themselves will supposedly reinvigorate teacher education and make these programs more cost-effective and efficient.

The influence of this approach is visible in the arguments for deregulation advanced by the Fordham Foundation, for example. For groups such as this, the free market, by itself, will solve problems by deregulating both teacher hiring and teacher education. In such marketized plans, quality will be guaranteed by directly

relating teacher skills to student performance on standardized tests (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 176).

At the same time these more market-based approaches are growing internationally, there are concomitant moves to create uniformity and a system of more centralized authority over what counts as important teacher skills and knowledge. Some of these are seemingly partly progressive, and others are attempts to centralize control over what teachers are to do even though their rhetoric is couched in the language of increasing professional competence. Reports such as *What Matters Most* are often seen to be at the more progressive end of this continuum and are indicative of the move toward higher standards and higher levels of “professionalization” in teacher education (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 1996). Although many of NCTAF’s recommendations have been seen as controversial or have been largely ignored by many colleges, universities, and school districts, theirs and similar documents have been seen as major advances by a number of well-known advocates for uniform and higher standards. In their minds, these recommendations will lead to important gains in professionalism and respect among other things (see, e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000; Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 2000).

All of these latter efforts are occurring at a time when an increasingly active state is engaged in policing the results of teacher education programs, adding more standardized tests for teachers and future teachers to take, and attempting to ensure that teacher education programs are held publicly accountable for their “products.” Thus, state report cards are being produced wherein teacher education programs are ranked and placed in situations in which they, in essence, are competing with each other for both funding and status.

Each of these kinds of reforms is overtly meant to help. Each is closely connected to what is happening in the larger arena of education, where major transformations are occurring and where momentous ideological transformations are under way. The possible hidden effects of these efforts can only be understood if we look

not only inside teacher education programs but also to the larger social field of power in which they operate. After all, if these tendencies have hidden effects in education in general, then it is all too possible that these same deleterious results will emerge in the field of teacher education as well.

Much of my argument in this article will be grounded in an unromantic appraisal of the current balance of forces surrounding conservative modernization. I shall want to claim that conscious originating motives—for example, the move to create uniform standards for teaching and teacher education to improve the quality of education for all—may not guarantee what the effects of such policies will be in the real world of real schools. Indeed, I will argue that such reforms may have consequences that will be quite dangerous unless we situate our efforts within an honest analysis of what is happening in education in general right now.

I base my argument in the simple assertion that teacher education does not stand alone. It is deeply connected to more general tendencies in educational politics. Because of this, my analysis here will focus largely on this larger context, but connections to current proposals for reforming teacher education under similar rubrics should be obvious. In the process, I shall extend my analysis beyond the borders of the United States because the dynamics I shall describe and criticize are truly international. There is compelling evidence from not only inside but also outside the United States that should make us very cautious in assuming that reforms based either on markets or standards will actually deliver what they promise. I shall begin with a general picture of the directions in which educational reform seems to be heading.

NEW MARKETS, OLD TRADITIONS

As I have shown in a series of recent books, a new set of compromises—a new alliance and new power bloc—has been formed that has increasing influence in education and all things social. Although there are clear tensions and conflicts within this alliance, in general, its overall aims are providing the educational conditions believed necessary both for increasing

international competitiveness, profit, and discipline and for returning us to a romanticized past of the ideal home, family, and school (Apple, 1996, 2000b, 2001).

The seemingly contradictory discourse of competition, markets, and choice on one hand and accountability, performance objectives, standards, national testing, and national curriculum on the other has created such a din that it is hard to hear anything else. Even though these seem to embody different tendencies, they actually oddly reinforce each other and help cement conservative educational positions into our daily lives (Apple, 1996).

Historically, behind parts of the emerging conservative discursive ensemble was a position that emphasized “a culturalist construction of the nation as a (threatened) haven for White (Christian) traditions and values” (Gillborn, 1997a, p. 2). This involved the construction of an imagined national past that is at least partly mythologized and then its employment to castigate the present. Gary McCulloch (1997) argues that the nature of the historical images of schooling has changed. Dominant imagery of education as being “safe, domesticated, and progressive” (i.e., as leading toward progress and social/personal improvement) has shifted to become “threatening, estranged, and regressive” (p. 80). The past is no longer the source of stability but a mark of failure, disappointment, and loss. This is seen most vividly in the attacks on the “progressive orthodoxy” that supposedly now reigns supreme in classrooms in many nations (Hirsch, 1996; Ravitch, 2000). For conservative groups, the “dogmatic orthodoxy” of progressive education “had led directly to educational and social decline.” Only the Rightist reforms instituted in the 1980s and 1990s could halt and then reverse this decline (McCulloch, 1997). Only then could the imagined past return.

These sentiments are constantly echoed in the public pronouncements of such figures as William Bennett; E. D. Hirsch, Jr.; Diane Ravitch; Chester Finn; and others; all of whom seem to believe that progressivism is now in the dominant position in educational policy and practice

and has destroyed a valued past. All of them believe that only by tightening control over standards, curriculum, and teaching (and students, of course); restoring “our” lost traditions; making education more disciplined and competitive as they are certain it was in the past—only then can we have effective schools. These figures are joined by others who have similar criticisms, but who instead turn to a different past for a different future. Their past is less that of cultural authority; rather, it is one of market freedom. For them, nothing can be accomplished—even the restoration of authority—without setting the market loose on schools so as to ensure that only good ones survive (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

We should understand that these policies are radical transformations. If they had come from the other side of the political spectrum, they would have been ridiculed in many ways, given the ideological tendencies in our nations. Furthermore, not only are these policies based on a romanticized pastoral past, but these reforms have not been notable for their grounding in research findings (Whitty, 1997).

Yet, no matter how radical some of these proposed reforms are and no matter how weak the empirical basis of their support, they have now redefined the terrain of debate about all things educational. After years of conservative attacks and mobilizations, it has become clear that “ideas that were once deemed fanciful, unworkable—or just plain extreme” are now increasingly being seen as common sense (Gillborn, 1997b, p. 357).

Tactically, the reconstruction of common sense that has been accomplished has proven to be extremely effective. For example, there are clear discursive strategies being employed here, ones that are characterized by plain speaking—speaking in a language that everyone can understand. I do not wish to be wholly negative about this. The importance of these things is something many progressive educators, including many writers on critical pedagogy, have yet to understand (Apple, 1988, 2000a). These strategies also involve not only presenting one’s own position as common sense but also usually

tacitly implying that there is something of a conspiracy among one's opponents to deny the truth or to say only that which is "fashionable" (Gillborn, 1997b, p. 353).

It is hard to miss these characteristics in some of the conservative literature, such as Herrnstein and Murray's (1994) publicizing of the unthinkable "truth" about genetics and intelligence, E. D. Hirsch's (1996) latest "tough" discussion of the destruction of "serious" schooling by progressive educators, or the Fordham Foundation's (1999) lament about the nature of teacher education.

MARKETS AND PERFORMANCE

Let us take as an example of the ways in which all this operates in one element of conservative modernization: the neoliberal claim that the invisible hand of the market will inexorably lead to better schools and better preparation for teachers in these schools. As Roger Dale (cited in Mentor, Muschamp, Nicholls, Ozga, & Pollard, 1997) reminds us, the market acts as a metaphor rather than an explicit guide for action. It is not denotative but connotative. Thus, it must itself be "marketed" to those who will exist in it and live with its effects (p. 27). Markets are marketed, are made legitimate, by a depoliticizing strategy. They are said to be natural and neutral and governed by effort and merit. And, those opposed to them are hence, by definition, also opposed to effort and merit. Markets, as well, are supposedly less subject to political interference and the weight of bureaucratic procedures. Plus, they are grounded in the rational choices of individual actors (Mentor et al., 1997, p. 27). Thus, markets and the guarantee of rewards for effort and merit are to be coupled to produce neutral yet positive results. Hence, mechanisms that give evidence of entrepreneurial efficiency and effectiveness must be put into place. This coupling of markets and mechanisms for the generation of evidence of performance is exactly what has occurred. Whether it works is open to question. Indeed, as I shall show shortly, in practice, neoliberal policies involving market solutions may actually serve to reproduce—not subvert—traditional hierarchies of class and

race (see Apple, 1996, 2001; Whitty, 1997). Perhaps this should give us reason to pause.

Thus, rather than taking neoliberal claims at face value, we should want to ask about their effects that are too often invisible in the rhetoric and metaphors of their proponents. I shall select a number of issues that have been given less attention than they deserve but on which there is now significant research.

The English experience, from the earlier Conservative government to that of the current New Labour one, is apposite here.² Rather than leading to curriculum responsiveness and diversification, the competitive market has not created much that is different from the traditional models so firmly entrenched in schools today (Power, Halpin, & Fitz, 1994). Nor has it radically altered the relations of inequality that characterize schooling.

In their extensive analyses of the effects of marketized reforms "on the ground," Ball, Bowe, and Gewirtz (1994) point to some of the reasons we need to be quite cautious here. As they document, in these situations educational principles and values are often compromised such that commercial issues become more important in curriculum design and resource allocation (Ball et al., 1994, p. 19). For instance, the coupling of markets with the demand for and publication of performance indicators such as examination league tables in England has meant that schools are increasingly looking for ways to attract motivated parents with able children. In this way, schools are able to enhance their relative position in local systems of competition. This represents a subtle but crucial shift in emphasis—one that is not openly discussed as often as it should be—from student needs to student performance and from what the school does for the student to what the student does for the school. This is accompanied too uncomfortably often by a shift of resources away from students who are labeled as having special needs or learning difficulties, with some of these needed resources' now being shifted to marketing and public relations. Special needs students not only are expensive but deflate test scores on those all-important league tables.

Not only does this make it difficult to manage public impressions, but the entire enterprise establishes a new metric and a new set of goals based on a constant striving to win the market game. What this means is of considerable import not only in terms of its effects on daily school life but in the ways all of this signifies a transformation of what counts as a good society and a responsible citizen. Let me say something about this generally.

Behind all educational proposals are visions of a just society and a good student. The neoliberal reforms I have been discussing construct this in a particular way. Although the defining characteristic of neoliberalism is largely based on the central tenets of classical liberalism, in particular classic economic liberalism, there are crucial differences between classical liberalism and neoliberalism. These differences are absolutely essential in understanding the politics of education and the transformations education is currently undergoing. Mark Olssen (1996) clearly details these differences in the following passage. It is worth quoting in its entirety.

Whereas classical liberalism represents a negative conception of state power in that the individual was to be taken as an object to be freed from the interventions of the state, neo-liberalism has come to represent a positive conception of the state's role in creating the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for its operation. In classical liberalism, the individual is characterized as having an autonomous human nature and can practice freedom. In neo-liberalism the state seeks to create an individual who is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur. In the classical model the theoretical aim of the state was to limit and minimize its role based on postulates, which included universal egoism (the self-interested individual); invisible hand theory, which dictated that the interests of the individual were also the interests of the society as a whole; and the political maxim of *laissez-faire*. In the shift from classical liberalism to neo-liberalism, then, there is a further element added, for such a shift involves a change in subject position from "homo economicus," who naturally behaves out of self-interest and is relatively detached from the state, to "manipulatable man," who is created by the state and who is continually encouraged to be "perpetually responsive." It is not that the conception of the self-interested subject is replaced or done away with by the new ideals of "neo-liberal-

ism," but that in an age of universal welfare, the perceived possibilities of slothful indolence create necessities for new forms of vigilance, surveillance, "performance appraisal" and of forms of control generally. In this model the state has taken it upon itself to keep us all up to the mark. The state will see to it that each one makes a "continual enterprise of ourselves" . . . in what seems to be a process of "governing without governing." (p. 340)

The results of the research of Ball et al. (1994) document how the state does indeed do this, enhancing that odd combination of marketized individualism and control through constant and comparative public assessment. Widely publicized league tables determine one's relative value in the educational marketplace. Only those schools with rising performance indicators are worthy. And, only those students who can make a continual enterprise of themselves can keep such schools going in the correct direction, a discussion to which I shall return shortly. Yet, although these issues are important, they fail to fully illuminate some of the other mechanisms through which differential effects are produced by neoliberal reforms. Here, class issues come to the fore in ways that Ball et al. make clear.

Middle-class parents are clearly the most advantaged in this kind of cultural assemblage, and not only—as we saw—because schools seek them out. Middle-class parents have become quite skilled, in general, in exploiting market mechanisms in education and in bringing their social, economic, and cultural capital to bear on them.

Middle class parents are more likely to have the knowledge, skills and contacts to decode and manipulate what are increasingly complex and deregulated systems of choice and recruitment. The more deregulation, the more possibility of informal procedures being employed. The middle class also, on the whole, are more able to move their children around the system. (Ball et al., 1994, p. 19)

As I shall argue in more detail later on, class and race intersect and interact in complex ways here. Marketized systems in education often expressly have their conscious and unconscious *raison d'être* in a fear of the other, and these often are hidden expressions of a racialization of educational policy. Because of this, the differen-

tial results will “naturally” be decidedly raced as well as classed.³

Economic and social capital can be converted into cultural capital in various ways. In marketized plans, more affluent parents often have more flexible hours and can visit multiple schools. They have cars—often more than one—and can afford driving their children across town to attend a “better” school. They can also provide hidden cultural resources such as camps and after-school programs (dance, music, computer classes, etc.) that give their children an ease, a style, that seems natural and acts as a set of cultural resources. Their previous stock of social and cultural capital—who they know, their comfort in social encounters with educational officials—is an unseen but powerful storehouse of resources. Thus, more affluent parents are more likely to have the informal knowledge and skill—what Bourdieu (1984) would call the *habitus*—to be able to decode and use marketized forms to their benefit. This sense of what might be called “confidence”—which is itself the result of past choices that tacitly but no less powerfully depend on the economic resources to actually have had the ability to make economic choices—is the unseen capital that underpins their ability to negotiate marketized forms and “work the system” through sets of informal cultural rules (Ball et al., 1994, pp. 20-22).

Of course, it needs to be said that working-class, poor, and/or immigrant parents are not skill-less in this regard by any means (see Duneier, 1999; Fine & Weis, 1998). However, the match between the historically grounded *habitus* expected in schools and in its actors and those of more affluent parents, combined with the material resources available to more affluent parents, usually leads to a successful conversion of economic and social capital into cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1996). And, this is exactly what is happening in many nations, not only in elementary, middle, and secondary schools, but in institutions of teacher education (in, say, my own institution and many others) where it has required an immense amount of conscious effort to increase the numbers of working-class students and students of color. This is not an

accident but is structurally produced in exactly the same ways as markets are employed in other kinds of schooling.

These claims both about what is happening inside of schools and about larger sets of power relations are supported by even more recent synthetic analyses of the overall results of marketized models. This research on the effects of the tense but still effective combination of neoliberal and neoconservative policies examines the tendencies internationally by comparing what has happened in a number of nations—for example, the United States, England and Wales, Australia, and New Zealand—where this combination has been increasingly powerful. The results confirm the arguments I have made here. Let me rehash some of the most significant and disturbing findings of such research.

It is unfortunately all too usual that the most widely used measures of the success of school reforms are the results of standardized achievement tests. This simply will not do. We constantly need to ask what reforms do to schools and teacher education programs as a whole and to each of their participants, including teachers, students, administrators, community members, local activists, and so on. To take one set of examples, as marketized schooling grows in many nations, the role of the administration is radically transformed. More, not less, power is actually consolidated within an administrative structure. More time and energy are spent on maintaining or enhancing a public image of a good school, and less time and energy are spent on pedagogic and curricular substance. At the same time, teachers seem to be experiencing not increased autonomy and professionalism but intensification (Apple, 1988, 2000b). And, oddly, as noted before, schools themselves become more similar and more committed to standard, traditional, whole-class methods of teaching and a standard and traditional (and often monocultural) curriculum (Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998, pp. 12-13). Directing our attention to only test scores would cause us to miss some truly profound transformations, many of which we may find disquieting.

One of the reasons these broader effects are so often produced is that in all too many countries, neoliberal visions of quasi-markets are usually accompanied by neoconservative pressure to regulate content and behavior through such things as national curricula, national standards, and national systems of assessment. The combination is historically contingent; that is, it is not absolutely necessary that the two emphases are combined. But, there are characteristics of neoliberalism that make it more likely that an emphasis on the weak state and a faith in markets will cohere with an emphasis on the strong state and a commitment to regulating knowledge, values, and the body.

This is partly the case because of the increasing power of the evaluative state and the members of the managerial and professional middle class who tend to populate it. This signifies what initially may seem to be contradictory tendencies. At the same time as the state appears to be devolving power to individuals and autonomous institutions that are themselves increasingly competing in a market, the state remains strong in key areas (Whitty et al., 1998). As I claimed earlier, one of the key differences between classical liberalism and its faith in enterprising individuals in market and current forms of neoliberalism is the latter's commitment to a regulatory state. Neoliberalism does indeed demand the constant production of evidence that one is in fact making an enterprise of oneself. Thus, under these conditions, not only does education become a marketable commodity like bread and cars in which the values, procedures, and metaphors of business dominate, but its results must be reducible to standardized "performance indicators" (Whitty et al., 1998, pp. 37-38; see also Clarke & Newman, 1997). This is ideally suited to the task of providing a mechanism for the neoconservative attempts to specify which knowledge, values, and behaviors should be standardized and officially defined as legitimate. This is seen in the attempts in a number of states to specify, often in distressing detail, what students, teachers, and future teachers should be able to know, say, and do. This is a point I shall expand on in the next section of this article.

Of course, the state is not only classed but is inherently sexed/gendered and raced as well (Epstein & Johnson, 1998; Omi & Winant, 1994). Whitty et al. (1998) point to the gendered nature of the ways the management of educational institutions is thought about, as "masculinist" business models become increasingly dominant (see Fraser, 1989; Fraser, 1997). Thus, the attempt by state departments of education and state legislatures to make decisions about public schools and institutions of teacher education based only on the hard data of standardized test scores represents the dismissal of any types of situation-specific and qualitative understanding that is grounded in the lived experience of teachers in real schools. These broad ideological effects—for example, enabling a coalition between neoliberals and neoconservatives to be formed; expanding the discourses and practices of new middle-class managerialism; the masculinization of theories, policies, and management talk—are of considerable import and make it harder to change common sense in more critical directions.

Other, more proximate, effects inside schools are equally striking. For instance, even though administrators seem to have more local power in these supposedly decentralized schools, because of the cementing of neoconservative and managerial policies, administrators "are increasingly forced into a position in which they have to demonstrate performance along centrally prescribed curricula in a context in which they have diminishing control" (Whitty et al., 1998, p. 63). Because of the intensification that I mentioned before, administrators, teachers, and teacher educators experience considerably heavier work loads and ever-escalating demands for accountability, a never-ending schedule of meetings, and in many cases a growing scarcity of resources both emotional and physical (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Whitty et al., 1998, pp. 67-68).

Furthermore, as the research in England indicates, in nearly all of the countries studied, the market did not encourage diversity in curriculum, pedagogy, organization, clientele, or even image. It instead consistently devalued alternatives and increased the power of dominant

models. Of equal significance, it also consistently exacerbated differences in access and outcome based on race, ethnicity, and class (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000).⁴ This is exactly what we can expect in teacher education as well.

The return to traditionalism led to a number of things. It delegitimated more critical models of teaching and learning, a point that is crucial to recognize in any attempt to think through the possibilities of cultural struggles and critical pedagogies in schools and especially in our teacher education programs. It both reintroduced re-stratification within the school and lessened the possibility that detracking would occur. More emphasis was given to gifted children and fast-track classes, and students who were seen as less academically able were therefore less attractive. In a number of nations, the extent of this was nowhere more visible than in the alarming rate of students being excluded from schools. For many schools, stereotypes were reproduced (Lee, 1996). Children of African heritage were often clear losers in this situation (Gewirtz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Whitty et al., 1998). Much of this was caused by the intense pressure constantly to demonstrate higher achievement rates. This was especially powerful in marketized contexts in which the "main driving force appeared to be *commercial* rather than *educational*" (Whitty et al., 1998, p. 80).

So far, I have focused largely on England. Yet, as I mentioned in my introductory points, these movements are truly global. Their logics have spread rapidly to many nations, with results that tend to mirror those I have discussed so far. As Lauder and Hughes (1999) document, for example, in their study of multiethnic nations such as New Zealand, educational markets seem to lead to an overall decline in educational standards. Paradoxically, they have a negative, not a positive, effect on the performance of schools with large working-class and minority populations. In essence, they "trade off the opportunities of less privileged children to those already privileged" (p. 2). The combination of neoliberal policies of marketization and the neoconservative emphasis on tougher standards, about which I shall say more in the next

section, creates an even more dangerous set of conditions. Their analysis confirms the fact that markets in education are not only responses by capital to reduce both the sphere of the state and of public control; they are also part of an attempt by the middle class to alter the rules of competition in education in light of the increased insecurities their children face. "By changing the process of selection to schools, middle class parents can raise the stakes in creating stronger mechanisms of exclusion for blue collar and post-colonial peoples in their struggle for equality of opportunity" (Lauder & Hughes, 1999, p. 29; see also Brown, 1997).

The results from New Zealand not only mirror what was found elsewhere but demonstrate that the further one's practices follow the logics of action embodied in marketizing principles, the worse the situation tends to get. Markets systematically privilege higher socioeconomic status (SES) families through their knowledge and material resources. These are the families who are most likely to exercise choice. Rather than giving large numbers of students who are working-class, poor, or of color the ability to exit, it is largely higher SES families who exit from public schools and schools with mixed populations. In a situation of increased competition, this in turn produces a spiral of decline in which schools populated by poorer students and students of color are again systematically disadvantaged, and schools with higher SES and higher White populations are able to insulate themselves from the effects of market competition (Lauder & Hughes, 1999, p. 101). White flight then enhances the relative status of those schools already advantaged by larger economic forces; schooling for the other becomes even more polarized and continues a downward spiral (p. 132). These findings point out why we must be even more wary of moving toward these kinds of programs in teacher education as well because what we cannot afford in a situation of increased need of teachers from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds is a downward spiral of those students who are seen as the other.

The overall conclusions are clear. "[In] current circumstances choice is as likely to rein-

force hierarchies as to improve educational opportunities and the overall quality of schooling" (Lauder & Hughes, 1999, p. 14; see also Henig, 1994; Whitty et al., 1998). All of this constantly produces differential effects. These effects are not neutral, no matter what the advocates of neoliberalism suggest. Rather, they are themselves the results of a particular kind of morality. Unlike the conditions of what might best be called "thick morality," wherein principles of the common good are the ethical basis for adjudicating policies and practices, markets are grounded in aggregative principles. They are constituted out of the sum of individual goods and choices. "Founded on individual and property rights that enable citizens to address problems of interdependence via exchange," they offer a prime example of "thin morality" by generating both hierarchy and division based on competitive individualism (Ball et al., 1994, p. 24). And in this competition, the general outline of the winners and losers has been identified empirically.

NATIONAL STANDARDS, NATIONAL CURRICULUM, AND NATIONAL TESTING

I showed in the previous section that there are connections between at least two dynamics operating in neoliberal reforms: free markets and increased surveillance. This can be seen in the fact that in many contexts, marketization has been accompanied by a set of particular policies for producers, for those professionals working within education. These policies have been strongly regulatory and have been quite instrumental in reconstituting common sense. As in the case of the linkage between national tests and performance indicators published as league tables, they have been organized around a concern for external supervision, regulation, and external judgment of performance (Mentor et al., 1997) and have increasingly been colonized by parents who possess what is seen as appropriate economic, social, and cultural capital. This concern for external supervision and regulation is not only connected to a strong mistrust of producers (e.g., teachers) and to the need for ensuring that people continually make enterprises out of themselves; it is also clearly

linked both to the neoconservative sense of a need to return to a lost past of high standards, discipline, awe, and "real" knowledge and to the professional middle class's own ability to carve out a sphere of authority within the state for its own commitment to management techniques and efficiency. The focus on efficient management plays a prime role here, one that many neoliberals and neoconservatives alike find useful.

There has been a shift in the relationship between the state and professionals. In essence, the move toward a small strong state that is increasingly guided by market needs seems inevitably to bring with it reduced professional power and status (Mentor et al., 1997, p. 57; see also Robertson, 2000). Managerialism takes center stage here. Managerialism is largely charged with "bringing about the cultural transformation that shifts professional identities in order to make them more responsive to client demand and external judgement" (Mentor et al., 1997, p. 9). It aims to justify and to have people internalize fundamental alterations in professional practices. It both harnesses energy and discourages dissent.

There is no necessary contradiction between a general set of marketizing and deregulating interests and processes—such as voucher and choice plans—and a set of enhanced regulatory processes—such as plans for national or state standards, curricula, and testing. "The regulatory form permits the state to maintain 'steerage' over the aims and processes of education from within the market mechanism" (Mentor et al., 1997, p. 24). Such steerage at a distance has often been vested in such things as national standards, national curricula, and national testing. Forms of all of these are being pushed in the United States both at national and state levels currently and are the subject of considerable controversy, some of which cuts across ideological lines and shows some of the tensions within the different elements contained under the umbrella of conservative modernization.

I have argued that paradoxically, a national or state curriculum and especially a national or state testing program are the first and most essential steps toward increased marketization.

They actually provide the mechanisms for comparative data that consumers need to make markets work as markets (Apple, 1996, 2001). Absent these mechanisms, there is no comparative base of information for choice. Yet, we do not have to argue about these regulatory forms in a vacuum. Like the neoliberal markets I discussed in the previous section, they too have been instituted in a number of other countries; and once again, there is important research available that can and must make us duly cautious in going down this path in teacher education and in educational policy in general.

One might want to claim that a set of national or state standards, national or state curricula, and national or state tests would provide the conditions for thick morality. After all, such regulatory reforms are supposedly based on shared values and common sentiments that also create social spaces in which common issues of concern can be debated and made subject to moral interrogation (Ball et al., 1994; Whitty et al., 1998). Yet, what counts as common, and how and by whom it is actually determined, is rather more thin than thick. We need to remember that none of this occurs on a level playing field. As with market plans, there are very real differences in power in one's ability to influence, mediate, transform, or reject a policy or a regulatory process (see Cho & Apple, 1998; Ranson, 1995).

The case of a national curriculum and national testing in England and Wales documents the tensions in these two accounts. It was the case that the national curriculum that was first legislated and then imposed there was indeed struggled over. It was originally too detailed and too specific and hence was subject to major transformations at the national, community, school, and then classroom levels. However, even though the national curriculum was subject to conflict, mediation, and some transformation of its content, organization, and invasive and immensely time-consuming forms of evaluation, its utter power is demonstrated in its radical reconfiguration of the very process of knowledge selection, organization, and assessment. It changed the entire terrain of education radically, both in schools and in teacher educa-

tion programs. Its subject divisions "provide more constraint than scope for discretion" (Ranson, 1995, p. 438). The "standard attainment targets" that have been mandated cement these constraints in place. "The imposition of national testing locks the national curriculum in place as the dominant framework of teachers' work whatever opportunities teachers may take to evade or reshape it" (p. 438). Although it is clear that the national curriculum and national tests that now exist in England and Wales have come about because of a complex interplay of forces and influences, it is equally clear that "state control has the upper hand" (p. 438).

The national curriculum and national tests did generate conflict about issues. They did partly lead to the creation of social spaces for moral questions to get asked. Teachers had a good deal of support when as a group they decided to boycott the administration of the tests in a remarkable act of public protest. This also led to serious questioning of the arbitrary, inflexible, and overly prescriptive national curriculum. Although the curriculum is still inherently problematic and the assessment system does still contain numerous dangerous and onerous elements, organized activity against them did have an impact (O'Hear, 1994).

Yet unfortunately, the story does not end there. By the mid-1990s, even with the government's partial retreat on such regulatory forms as its program of constant and reductive testing, it had become clearer by the year that the development of testing and the specification of content had been "hijacked" by those who were ideologically committed to traditional pedagogies and the idea of more rigorous selection (O'Hear, 1994, p. 68). The residual effects are both material and ideological. They include a continuing emphasis on trying to provide the "rigor [that is] missing in the practice of most teachers . . . judging progress solely by what is testable in tests of this kind" and the development of a "very hostile view of the accountability of teachers" that was seen as "part of a wider thrust of policy to take away professional control of public services and establish so-called consumer control through a market structure" (pp. 65-66).

The authors of an extremely thorough review of recent assessment programs instituted in England and Wales provide a summary of what has happened. Gipps and Murphy (1994) argue that it has become increasingly obvious that the national assessment program attached to the national curriculum is more and more dominated by traditional models of testing and the assumptions about teaching and learning that lie behind them. At the same time, equity issues are becoming much less visible. In the calculus of values now in place in the regulatory state, efficiency, speed, and cost control replace more substantive concerns about social and educational justice. The pressure to get tests in place rapidly has meant that

the speed of test development is so great, and the curriculum and assessment changes so regular, that [there is] little time to carry out detailed analyses and trialing to ensure that the tests are as fair as possible to all groups. (p. 204)

Echoes of these very same effects are seen throughout major cities in the United States as well. The conditions for thin morality—in which the competitive individual of the market dominates and social justice will somehow take care of itself—are reproduced here. The combination of the neoliberal market and the regulatory state, then, does indeed work. However, it works in ways in which the metaphors of free market, merit, and effort hide the differential reality that is produced. Although this makes a socially and culturally critical pedagogy in our schools and teacher education institutions even more essential, it also makes it much more difficult to actually accomplish.

But, it is important not to leave our discussion at such an abstract level or at the level of curriculum planning. What has happened in schools themselves in the United States and elsewhere when such pragmatic standards, curricula, and tests are actually instituted?

CREATING EDUCATIONAL TRIAGE

There have been analyses in the United States that have begun to document similar kinds of effects (Linn, 2000; Oakes, 1992; Oakes, Wells, Jones, & Datnow, 1997; Wells, Lopez, Scott, &

Holme, 1999). However, unfortunately, even though there are numerous examples of successful schools that have used more critical and democratic models (Apple & Beane, 1995), relatively unreflective and at times almost self-congratulatory policies around markets, standards, testing, and reductive forms of accountability are predominant.

Given this state of affairs, it is now even more important that we pay attention to material that demonstrates what can happen in situations in which the stress on higher standards and higher test scores hits both the realities of schools and the different populations they serve. David Gillborn and Deborah Youdell's (2000) volume *Rationing Education* does just that. It goes into detail about the powerful and often damaging hidden effects on teachers and students of our seeming fascination with ever-rising standards, mandated curricula, and overemphasis on testing in the United States, England, and many other nations. These include such things as creating a situation in which the tail of a high-stakes test wags the dog of the teacher, pressuring schools to constantly show increased achievement scores on such standardized tests no matter what the level of support or the impoverished conditions in schools and local communities, publicly displaying such results in a process of what might be realistically called shaming and threatening schools that do not show improvement on these tests with severe sanctions or loss of control. As Gillborn and Youdell show, the reduction of education to scores on what are often inadequate measures—often used in technically and educationally inappropriate ways for comparative purposes—has some serious consequences.

In many ways, *Rationing Education* (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000) provides what might be called a microeconomy of school life. It examines the ways in which certain valued commodities are accumulated by schools in a time of intense competition for scarce resources. In this case, the commodities are higher test scores, and the resources are both numbers of students and public recognition of being a good school. The authors describe this as the "A-C economy."

As in the United States, in England, schools exist in what is really a hierarchical ordering, a market, in prestige and reputation. They are valued by the number of students who get passing scores on particular national tests. The national tests are made public as a form of league tables in which schools are rank ordered according to their relative results. Schools with large numbers of students getting grades A through C are more highly valued than those with lower rates of passing—even though everyone tacitly knows that there is a very strong relationship between school results and poverty.

This situation creates an economy that has certain characteristics. Students with predicted higher test scores are even more valuable; students with predicted lower test scores are seen as less useful to the school's place in the market. The results of such an economy are even more powerful, for there is another key group of students who are focused on and on whom considerable resources, energy, and attention are devoted—students who are on the border between passing grades and failing grades. These students—often seen as middle-class underachievers—become objects of great value in the school. After all, if this key group can be pulled across the border into the A through C column, the school's results will be that much more positive.

Here is one of the places where the results are ominous. In such an A through C economy, specific students are seen as moveable. Other students' abilities are seen as increasingly fixed and less worthy of attention. The class and race characteristics of these latter students are striking. Poor and working-class students, students of African descent, and other ethnically "different" children are not valued commodities in this kind of market. Thus, divisions strongly rooted in racializing and class-based structures are not simply mirrored in the schools. They actually are produced in these institutions.

Policies that were put in place to raise standards, to increase test scores, to guarantee public accountability, and to make schools more competitive had results that were more than a little damaging to those students who were already the least advantaged in these same

schools. Yet, it was not only the students who witnessed these negative effects. The voices of teachers and administrators indicate what happens to them as well. They too begin to harden their sense of which students are able and which students are not. Tracking returns in both overt and covert ways. And once again, Black students and students in government-subsidized lunch programs are the ones most likely to be placed in the lower tracks or given academic and career advice that nearly guarantees that they not only will have limited or no mobility but will confirm their status as students who are less worthy.

Unfortunately, recent research on the effects of all of this in the United States confirms these worries. Linda McNeil's (2000) powerful and detailed investigation of what has actually happened in Texas as a result of state-mandated reforms involving imposed standards and curricula, reductive and competitive testing, and attacks on teachers' professionalism demonstrates in no uncertain terms that the very children and schools that these policies and practices are supposed to help are actually hurt in the process. Similar tendencies toward producing inequalities have been documented in the conservative modernization reforms in tax credits, testing, and curricula elsewhere (Smith, Heinecke, & Noble, 1999).

Landon Beyer (2000) pointed out that similar kinds of tendencies have begun to appear in teacher education. In a number of the proposals for reform through the creation of national standards, uniformity is directly connected to quality, and "difference" is then linked to inadequacy (pp. 7-8). The unconscious structuring of racialized and class-based assumptions can all too often then lead to exactly the same results as were found in the research I noted above. Attention is paid to those students who can move an institution to a higher score and hence a higher ranking on the league tables that structure the competitive rankings among institutions in a state or the nation. Which students will then be admitted? Which students will then be given the most attention? Unless we face these questions honestly, our reforms will simply be rhetorical.

TEACHER EDUCATION'S FUTURE

The implications of all of this are truly profound for teacher education. In conditions such as this, we may see an even greater marginalization of those students who are essential for the transformation of teacher education. If there is a return to a traditional curriculum measured by traditional and reductive testing that has profound effects on equity, we can also expect an even more highly stratified student population and an even more highly stratified school experience for these students. The unfortunate results of this may be even fewer working-class and poor students, fewer students of color, and a less diverse population in general who will enter our teacher education programs. This will be even more the case for those teacher education programs that are seen as high status and highly competitive. Where will we get the teachers to teach in our schools? What will they look like? Because of this, I want to claim in the strongest possible terms that anyone who is deeply concerned about the current realities and the possible futures of teacher education must start with an unromantic appraisal of what is happening in the larger field of educational reform. Unless we are willing to think critically about the larger arena of power that is currently reconstructing what education is for and whom it will serve (Beyer, 2000), we will once again be blamed for a situation that may have been created well before students get to—and do not get to—our teacher education programs.

I do not want to deny that the reforms being proposed in education and in teacher education, especially those involved in creating standards and increasing professionalism, have elements of insight. In theory, performance standards are aimed at reducing emphasis on simplistic paper-and-pencil standardized tests. The urge to give the public more information about what schools and colleges are doing is wise. The impulse to communicate to students and parents that education is very important and that educators are accountable to the larger society is itself a good idea. Yet, for all of their evident insights, it is almost as if the proponents of many of these reforms live in an unreal world

at times. As I noted at the outset of this article, among the most powerful driving forces in American education at this time are something that sounds suspiciously like social Darwinism and an impulse to use schools for restratification. At the same time, neoliberals, neoconservatives, and some members of the professional and managerial new middle class have created a tense but effective alliance in which market plans are coupled with proposals for national and state curricula and national and state testing. In essence, by putting in place national or state standards and then national or state performance testing, we can then set the market loose because consumers will have sufficient information to be able to choose among products (or schools). As odd as it may seem at first glance, the centralizing and rationalizing impulses of national standards, national curricula, and national testing may be essential first steps toward the long-term goal of marketization and privatization of schools through choice and voucher plans (Apple, 1996, 2001). This combination of strong state and weak state is exactly what is being tried in a number of nations under the new conservative policies being implemented. As I have shown here, the results have been more than a little undemocratic or very contradictory. Why should we expect that the results in teacher education will be any different?

Of equal importance is the fact that the fiscal crisis now being experienced in many states has meant that seemingly fine-sounding plans—sometimes quite similar to what even the more progressive advocates for standards have asked for—have served as excuses to put in place much of what their advocates are against. Thus, for example, in a number of states—even after a good deal of work was done on higher standards and more flexible forms of assessment—money was allocated by the state for only standardized, reductive, paper-and-pencil tests. It was too expensive to do otherwise. The rhetoric of higher standards and of more flexible modes of assessment coupled with the fear of declining economies and declining achievement created a sense of urgency to get more testing in schools. However, the rhetoric of *higher* and *flexible* ulti-

mately functioned to increase the power of mandatory state-centered testing of a relatively reductive kind at the same time as there continued to be no growth in the ability of schools to do anything more about even meeting the old standards and tests. It ultimately functioned to add one more way of intensifying teachers' jobs and blaming the school even more for the social dislocations of this society. Speaking as bluntly as I can, my own prediction is that one of the most powerful and damaging effects of the standards movement and the performance assessment movement will be to affix labels on poor children and their teachers that will be even harder to erase than before. If this has been the case for the elementary, middle, and secondary schools of all too many nations, isn't it likely that similar tendencies may occur in the field of teacher education as well? At the very least, without an awareness of these widespread tendencies in the larger terrain of educational policy and practice, we may be unprepared to counter these very same tendencies in our own institutions.

These worrisome tendencies both in schools and in teacher education institutions offer challenges to how we teach and what we teach. Of crucial importance is the question of whether our students in teacher education programs will be prepared to understand the ideological and political restructuring that is going on all around them. Will our current and future teachers be able to deconstruct the larger forces surrounding them? Will they have the tools to connect local with global tendencies, to think strategically about ways of interrupting neoliberalism and neoconservatism (Apple, 2001)? At a time when the very meaning of democracy is being changed, we cannot afford to ignore these radical reconstructions. Too much is at stake if we do.

NOTES

1. As I have argued elsewhere, there are actually four elements within this assemblage. For the purpose of this article, however, I shall exclude the fourth, the authoritarian populist religious conservatives who have increasing power in many countries. For more on this group, see Apple (1996, 2001).

2. Whether there have been significant changes in this regard given the victory of New Labour over the Conservatives in the last

election is open to question. Certain aspects of neoliberal and neoconservative policies have already been accepted by Labour, such as the acceptance of stringent cost controls on spending put in place by the previous Conservative government and an aggressive focus on raising standards in association with strict performance indicators. See, for example, Gillborn and Youdell (2000).

3. See the discussion of the racial state in Omi and Winant (1994) and the analysis of race and representation in McCarthy and Crichlow (1994) and McCarthy (1998).

4. What is also important here is the fact that this has consistently happened, even in the face of overt attempts to use such policies to alter existing inequalities. See also Whitty, Power, and Halpin (1998, pp. 119-120).

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