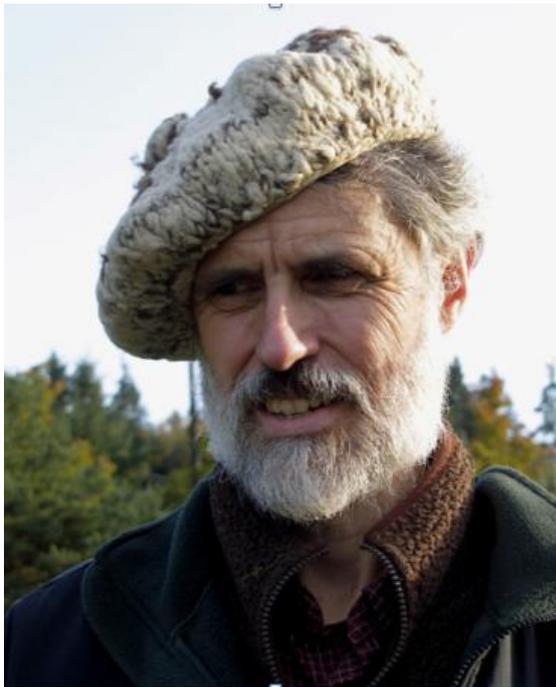




## Building Bridges Between Ideas, People, and Possibilities: An Education Professor Looks Back

Michael S. Knapp



Retirement often leads the newly retired on strange and interesting pathways. In my case, this life transition two years ago brought an urge to reflect on what I had been doing during my decades-long career as an education professor, education policy researcher, and school teacher. As I did so, the metaphor *bridge building* repeatedly surfaced as a way to capture many aspects

of what I did, and what many of us do, in academic practice. The metaphor was particularly useful for underscoring how my work as an academic related to making educational systems and results more equitable, something I take to be a central challenge facing all educators. A book-length reflection and this article are the result.

The opportunity to build figurative bridges arose again and again across my career, and in places I least expected it. Close encounters with students, mentors, seminal ideas, and problematic situations kept pushing me to see new possibilities for my own and others' learning. These encounters have occurred in my work as a scholar, teacher, advisor, participant in a collegial community, organizer of research teams, and servant of the field. I will relate and probe these stories, followed by some reflections on the lessons that may lie within them for surviving and thriving within academia, while maintaining a focus on issues of equity and social justice. But first, a brief note about where the metaphor comes from and how I came to entertain it as an educator and scholar.

### Discovering Education, Education Research, and a Useful Metaphor

I am not sure how education, a focus on equity, and I found each other, but at least the following events converged. I grew up in the 1950s in New York City, in Manhattan's upper West Side, at that time a distinctly unfashionable part of town. Lincoln Center had yet to be built, an event that would set in motion a chain reaction of gentrification that now characterizes the West Side. In those years, however, drug

addicts were shooting up in “Needle Park” at 72<sup>nd</sup> and Broadway, just down the street; the cross streets were filled with brownstone tenement buildings, many overflowing with recent arrivals from Puerto Rico. I heard Spanish every day and was curious about it. I even purchased a paperback at age 12 entitled *Learning Spanish With Pictures*, but I didn’t get much farther than “Yo soy un muchacho.” In short, I lived in a White and relatively privileged cocoon, attended a private school, and found or sought relatively few opportunities to interact with the urban neighborhood surrounding me.

My mother, however, became heavily involved in the city’s public schools, setting up a reading volunteer support system that went citywide, and that eventually sent hundreds of tutors (mainly unemployed homemakers in those years) into the schools to work intensively and somewhat successfully with boys and girls who were struggling with reading. Dinner-table conversations were filled with the latest events in Mom’s efforts to help Harry X from a local high school, a ninth grader reading at a second-grade level, write and then read his own books about himself, among his other accomplishments. The conversations often turned, as well, to her engagement with an unresponsive City School District office at 110 Livingston St. I took it all in, though seeing little of myself in it; at the time I was dreaming of becoming a fisheries biologist.

Fast forward to college. I arrived in the fall of 1964, just as the Civil Rights Movement and the Great Society were picking up steam. I was at loose ends. Fisheries biology had floated away along with other science-related futures, and I had no clue where I was headed. Five months into my freshman year, another student asked me if I would help interview some elderly people in a low-income housing project at the other end of town? Well...why not? The interviewing was part of a multi-service, student volunteer effort serving the Roosevelt Towers Housing

project, primarily through recreation groups and tutoring for youngsters ages 7 through 14, along with some family visiting and community development work. The students running this ambitious venture were quick to note the large number of isolated elderly living in the Towers and the problematic relationship between them and the kids. Wasn’t there some way the service program could connect and work with the elderly population as well as the young people? We interviewers knocked on doors, introduced ourselves to surprised, but surprisingly friendly, elderly people who lived difficult lives. They welcomed the chance to talk, and before long were eager to participate—in fact, organize—a social club. It was eye opening, mind opening. It was my first close encounter with urban poverty. I discovered interesting and capable, if needy, human beings on the other side of the door. I kept going.

One thing led to another, as it often does. Before long, I found myself running an emergent “Old Folks” program in the Towers Community, as well as tutoring fourth graders and participating on the multi-service program’s staff steering committee. A year later, another volunteer and I were running the whole program, 150 volunteers strong. We raised money, hired professional consultants, set up sophisticated group training systems, coordinated efforts across five different program components, and tried to inspire a leadership team. It was the core of my college experience; academic studies definitely took a secondary place. The heady atmosphere of the mid-1960s urged us on. We were out to eliminate poverty, and believed we could. Hubris and naiveté aside (poverty persisted, despite our efforts), the seeds of a career in education, broadly conceived to include far more than schools and aimed at equity, had been planted in me. I knew that I was headed for work that would (1) try to enrich learning opportunities for those who faced impoverished circumstances, in or out of school; (2) offer systems of support for any and all direct work with people in poverty,

and in which support providers were learning as much as those they worked with; (3) consider as crucial parts of the equation the larger community and social circumstances in which people lived; and (4) put in place the right kind of leadership conditions to sustain the effort over time.

A subsequent stint in the Peace Corps in Malawi (Southern Central Africa) further solidified these commitments. There, as part of an AID-funded curriculum development outfit allied with the African Primary Science Program, I spent two years helping to introduce a hands-on, inquiry-oriented science curriculum to all 2,000 elementary schools in Malawi. This country, then run by an absolute dictator who wanted the best for his people and assumed he could get it by fiat, told the Domasi Science Center to adapt the 12 science units it had been piloting *and* introduce them to *all* schools in the country...by the start of the *next* school year (eight months away). Training systems, professional learning, and leadership were all involved in this all-consuming effort, and much, much more. For instance, the project involved writing and publishing the curriculum books, engaging a resistant Ministry of Education developed on the British model, and identifying a “science specialist” teacher in each of the nation’s schools. And all of this occurred in a third-world context, only recently escaping from colonialism, in which elementary schools lacked the most basic of facilities.

An additional part of the Peace Corps experience foreshadowed my subsequent academic work: once trained and back at their respect schools, the science specialist teachers would be trying to implement what we gave them in month-long summer institutes, but to what avail? How would we know? I proposed to find out by doing an informal but systematic “study” of first-year implementation, in order to guide our efforts for another round the following year. With no formal knowledge of evaluation and guided by little more than hubris and a Honda motorcycle,

I managed to visit the 100 schools in the Lilongwe District across a four-month period. The results were understandably underwhelming—perhaps 25% of the specialists were making a good faith effort to realize the curriculum, with regular observable classroom practices and activities, and another 30% were making sporadic attempts, though with considerable difficulty. The remaining specialists were lost. But with our glass half full, or so it seemed to us, we ventured forward into another year of training and implementation, armed with (some) data about what was happening and (some) ability to anticipate trouble spots.

In neither my Roosevelt Towers nor Peace Corps years had I thought of myself as building bridges, but it doesn’t take much to see the metaphor at work. I was connecting with people across social class, racial, and cultural divides, trying to help them realize and reach new possibilities for the lives. In addition, I was trying to find ways to coordinate effort across a large number of workers, and support their learning, so they could carry out the service, whether volunteer work in a low-income housing project or science teaching in an African elementary school, with greater chance of success. Directly or indirectly, all these bridges were about enhancing equity—enabling people who would otherwise be denied learning or life opportunities to attain them. Education and learning was at the center of it.

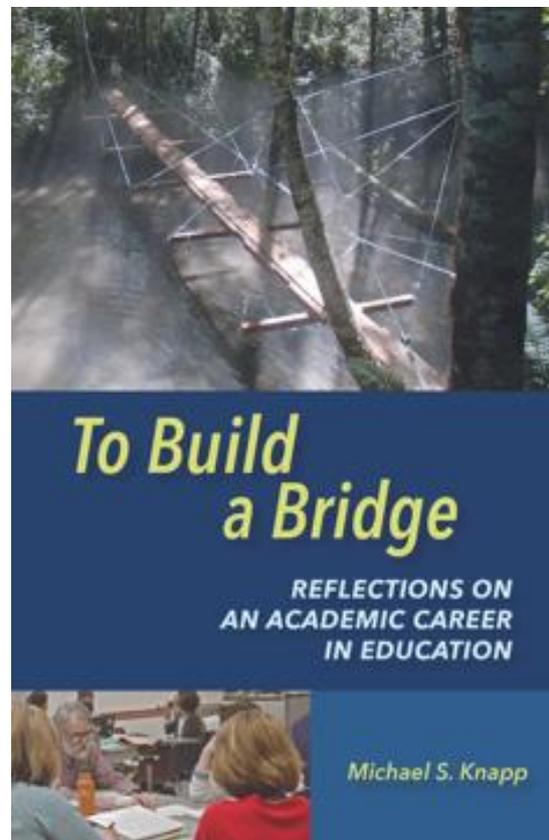
At more or less the same time, Ralph Ellison was putting the matter eloquently: “Education is all a matter of building bridges, it seems to me” (Ellison, 1963). He had a particular context in mind: what he saw around him in New York City, as recently arrived Black youth tried to make their way through schooling and society, at the same time their teachers (mostly White) tried and usually failed to reach or teach them. The bridges he had in mind would connect teacher to child and vice versa, as well as displaced urban dwellers to their Southern rural roots. But the teachers didn’t

see the possibility of bridging these disconnections, nor did the students. A huge opportunity was missed by not recognizing the metaphorical “creeks” to be crossed, nor visualizing the possible ways to do it or the kinds of two-way crossings that would be possible or desirable once bridges were in place. I had not read him at the time, but my own thinking was headed in a similar direction. He was—and I am—all about building bridges between ideas, people, and possibilities.

The metaphor came more fully into consciousness for me many years later, through the unlikely route of my bridge-building hobby. On property that I own in the Cascade Mountains, a 40-foot wide creek, two-to-three-feet deep in the summer, separates the cabin from a stretch of wild river-bottom land and ultimately the Sauk River. If you want to cross without getting your feet wet, you need a bridge, or some equivalent. About 20 years ago I took on this challenge, and over the years have happily constructed a variety of floating and suspended bridges that could be easily put up or taken down, and which accomplished the goal of facilitating crossing. The temporary nature of the bridges was essential; winter flooding of the Sauk filled the entire river bottom and would carry away any structures left in place, no matter how sturdy. Besides, designing and erecting new structures each year provided a fulfilling challenge for someone with an interest in spatial design and who has always enjoyed using his hands as much as his head and emotions.

It only occurred to me recently that I had my hands on a potent metaphor. Out of nowhere three years ago, writing a brief biographical note for my 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion book, I found myself saying, “...I have been building bridges all my life, and mostly out of words, both spoken and written. It has been reassuring to make the kind you can actually walk across.” Subsequently, I couldn’t get the metaphor out of my mind; it has remained there since, so much so that when I first felt the urge to

look back over my career, a book-length reflection emerged: *To Build a Bridge—Reflections on an Academic Career in Education*. (Knapp, 2016). This article draws on that book, placing some of its insights into a more autobiographical account of my work.



In brief, the book and this article argues we academics are, or can be, bridge builders, but we easily miss, as I did, important opportunities to do so in our dealings with ideas, with each other, with our students and advisees, and with the field we purport to serve. The need for us to do so is especially acute, if we take seriously the imperative to make educational systems and our own practice within it more equitable than they now are. It took me a long time to see this possibility. Probably my roots in a privileged part of society, growing up White among well-educated people, and with the means to access many kinds of learning opportunities, slowed down the recognition. But with the wisdom of hindsight, bridges built within my practice and across my career have taken me closer to understanding the dynamics of privilege and inequity, as we academics live them, and

where my most useful contributions—past and future—might lie.

To be clear about what I hear and see in this metaphor. For starters, I treat a bridge as a *structure* connecting two places that otherwise are separated from one another by some obstacle (creek, river, chasm, highway, train track, or other divide) that complicates or prevents crossing. As such, the metaphorical bridge powerfully symbolizes the possibility of connecting things that might otherwise remain disconnected, at the same time that it enables repeated, safe *crossings*—in two directions. That is true of all bridges, mine included. And of necessity, it draws attention to the two *banks* (in the case of a creek) and the nature of the *obstruction* (e.g., deep or turbulent water) between them. The *building* of bridges, then, is a process of design, construction, adaptation, and trial and error, all within a set of constraints imposed by time, place, and available materials. For me, the metaphor embraces the entire process—from conceiving of the *possibility* of a bridge to scouting out suitable locations (which implies being able to visualize the other “bank”), tackling the design problem, and the actual connection of parts into a viable whole.

These metaphorical attributes apply in many ways to experiences I had throughout my career. I will start where my career as a researcher began, and where the bridge building is perhaps easiest to see, looking *outwards* (from the vantage point of the researcher) at the educational system and the patterns of inequity that permeate it.

### **Looking Outward: Shedding Light on Creeks and Bridge Building in the Educational System**

Returning from the Peace Corps, I was still two steps removed from academic practice in a university-based faculty position. A four-year stint teaching science in a junior high school, and four more of graduate study intervened. I took me quite

some time, in fact, to see the potential value of academic work as it is carried out in institutions of higher education.

Furthermore, I came of age in the 1960s, when higher education institutions seemed an obstacle to change and poorly equipped to support professional learning, or perhaps anyone’s learning (my “education” working in a volunteer social service program was technically extracurricular, after all). Even graduate study seemed suspect. It didn’t help that my few encounters with academics in the seven years following attaining a bachelor’s degree in 1968 were not very inspiring. In a similar vein, the principal of the school where I taught science and who recently graduated from an Ed.D. program asserted that there was no good education research. Only by stages, as I puzzled about my practice, read more widely, and came across pieces (written by academics) that really made me think, did I come to the point of seeking out graduate study.

But even as a graduate student, I still harbored doubts. My goal at the time was to learn how to develop evidence and insight for decision makers, thereby to exert more direct influence on the system than I perceived possible from a university home base. This direction resonated with what I had seen in Africa. Good evaluation, I presumed, could make good things happen in pursuit of a more equitable education system. So, to all who would listen, I announced upon arrival at Stanford University for Ph.D. study in 1976, that I was *not* headed to a university—ever. Faculty were not entirely sure what to make of this, but evaluation was a focus of much interest and some fascinating intellectual work in those years. Though I planted myself within the sociology of education as a home discipline, I spent a lot of time in Lee Cronbach’s orbit, as he and a group of academics fashioned their “95 Theses” for the reform of program evaluation, to nail to the door of the federal program evaluation establishment (Cronbach & Associates, 1980). This work, and much of what I was exposed to at Stanford, was intellectually

exciting and seemed to equip me for the destination I had set for myself.

**Studying the system as a policy researcher.** Joining the Educational Policy Center of SRI International in 1980, I set out to rigorously evaluate federal education programs, largely focused on Title I of Elementary & Secondary Education Act and related policies, but also math and science education policies. Ostensibly we were focused on interventions that would enable heretofore “disadvantaged” youngsters to catch up to their more advantaged counterparts in public schools, and experience a more fulfilling schooling experience. The rhetoric was rosy, but the actual accomplishments of these programs far less so. What we learned from a decade of policy studies had more to do with understanding the creeks to cross than actually helping the policymakers and local educators construct the right kinds of bridges, thereby enabling their students to cross. And we learned a great deal about the political swamplands and how hard they might be to bridge, if one wanted to sustain governmental initiatives or even create coherent ones to begin with.

Admittedly, the metaphor of a “creek” to cross in an inequitable educational system does not begin to communicate the enormity of the obstacles that confront educators and the people they are educating. Rather, a series of raging rivers would come closer, though even that image does not do justice to the larger ecology of forces and conditions that generate inequity in education and society. But to be consumed by these forces in all their complexity can paralyze both the scholar and activist, obscuring the most feasible opportunities for educators to seize and inhibiting our agency in doing so. To that end, it helps to identify specific sets of connections—or more precisely, *disconnections* and divides that reflect, as well as generate, a host of inequities—as the targets of our efforts.

I first tuned into the extent and nature of these disconnections while at SRI.

The programs on which our studies focused operated off a familiar script, locating the problem of persistently low performance among economically disadvantaged children in the nature of the teaching that individual children received, prompting solutions that emphasized tutoring and small group pull-out instruction. Economic deprivation (sometimes taken to mean cultural deprivation as well) and poor-quality instruction were the assumed culprits. Hence, the policy prescription: give these students something extra and separate, to compensate for the deficiencies in their life circumstances and schooling, and they would be able to succeed in school.

The mixed results of these policies begged for deeper explanation. To an extent, federal policy discourse continued to expand the boundaries of the problem, and I along with others across the 1980s and into the 1990s began to get our minds around a much larger phenomenon: an educational system that systematically underinvested in the schools, teachers, and materials used by the neediest youngsters, while favoring their more affluent counterparts. Related features of the situation exacerbated the problem. For one thing, the quality of instruction and the degree of challenge in the curriculum that all children of poverty were exposed to, not just the lowest performing ones, left much to be desired, and these clearly predisposed educational outcomes to display and maintain a pronounced “achievement gap.” As both a cause and a result, educators tended to focus obsessively on the children’s learning deficits, often assumed to reflect limited capabilities, and the stage was set for a self-fulfilling prophecy of low expectations. To compound matters, the system provided little support for instructional improvement through leadership, professional development, and other means. Teachers who wanted to do better generally were not sure how, and received little guidance. Various reform experiments initiated by government and others showed promise in tackling many of these conditions, but tended to produce

islands of excellence rather than system-wide improvements. At the same time, the juggernaut of high-stakes testing and externally imposed accountability created problematic conditions for educators and may have been counter-productive, even as it created urgency and highlighted the problem.

**Deepening the picture of educational disadvantage and associated interventions.** In a decade of contract research, I couldn't help notice how little influence the products of this scholarship seemed to be having. I wanted to understand why, and I wanted to help others variously positioned within the system to both understand and take action. By then, I had recognized how much I (and others) depended on what the best university-based academics produced as a basis for policy-oriented inquiry. And I also was more fully aware of the limitations of contract research. Done well and under the best of conditions, it can answer a number of important questions. But sponsors of these studies do not always ask questions that need to be asked. And the products that emerge cannot always say everything the researchers learn (I made a point of publishing independently in academic outlets during these years as well, but received little encouragement to do so). In 1990, when a position opened at the University of Washington, I jumped at it. I had crossed another career bridge, from a pre-academic phase to one fully embedded in the university-based academic world.

As I stepped back from studying federal educational reforms, other dimensions of the challenge of an inequitable education system came into view for me. An awakening of insight and interest was noticeable across the educational reform community, and among human services professions more generally. I quickly tuned into research unpacking the

dynamics of cultural discontinuity, whereby an ethnically diverse student population from low-income backgrounds and a largely White, female teaching force from middle-class backgrounds encountered each other and almost literally didn't "speak each other's languages" (with a growing immigrant population this was often literally true). The larger social forces of institutional racism and the tendency for class-based systems to reproduce themselves, inequities and all, were also more clearly at work, and along with them a host of out-of-school factors derived from poverty. Differential patterns of resource allocation persisted in ways that consistently allocated fewer resources to students, schools, and teachers who worked with historically marginalized young people.

But apart from looking outward at the state of the nation's education system and the dynamics of inequity within it, I found myself making several other discoveries about the system and about interventions aimed at it. The new research on program implementation, emerging in the 1980s from researchers at Rand and elsewhere, was revealing how inexorably education initiatives were shaped and

**Push yourself to connect—that is, build bridges—to ideas and lines of inquiry from other discourse communities.**

reshaped by the successive state and local contexts in which they unfolded. I joined this line; it made utter sense to me, as did the notion, articulated so well by Milbrey McLaughlin (1987, 1991), that one could not mandate what mattered most in education. I began to see the scene of *policy* action residing in instruction itself, in local school and community contexts, and in the dynamics of professional learning and beliefs. Structures, incentives, and resources emanating from policymaking sources could be part of this story, but only part. This realization set in motion for me decades of work, extending long beyond the contract research years, to unpack how policy instruments interacted with what mattered most in teaching and learning. That meant, among other things, getting really clear

about the ways governmental action could be connected to the classroom (this time, across an intergovernmental bridge). Ultimately, it also meant one had to examine the premises about teaching and learning embedded in reform policies, something that led me to tackle the debate then raging about compensatory education services: whether they could enhance advanced, conceptual skills in literacy and math as well as “basic” skills. Our finding from a rigorous national study: they could “teach for meaning” as well as for facility at basic skills.

It also meant joining research on teaching with research on reform policy and policy implementation, something that had not been done much before the 1990s. The U.S. Department of Education decided to devote one of its national research centers to this purpose and sent out an RFP soliciting bids. Prompted by Milbrey McLaughlin and several of her colleagues, I headed up the successful proposal process and the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CTP) was borne, combining work at the University of Washington with scholarship under way at Stanford (on the contexts of teaching), University of Michigan (on policy-practice connections and the longitudinal effects of investment in instructional improvement), and Teachers College/Columbia (on state-level, teacher-focused reform strategies). These related but as yet unconnected lines of inquiry crystallized into a research program on “teacher policy” and “teaching policy”, a term we used just as often to emphasize that instruction itself was what educated young people, not the teacher’s characteristics. Thereby, a productive bridge was built between bodies of research that supported an important facet of the standards-based reform movement of the 1990s and beyond, as it morphed into a stricter accountability-based reform movement in the 2000s.

The idea of bridging disparate but potentially related discourses stayed with me, and I worked to keep teacher policy conversations connected to thinking about

equitable instruction for the children of poverty. As I put it in 2001:

Three sets of conversations are searching for each other in a dark wood. The forest is inhabited by the children of poverty who, for the most part, find themselves concentrated in particular schools and districts across the land in which they encounter an impoverished education. The first conversation concerns what it takes to teach such children well. They present teachers with many challenges, for they generally come to school with little idea how to “do school,” often struggle with the language, and may even lack basic health and social supports that most would assert are prerequisite to learning. The second conversation concerns what policymakers and program designers can do to promote and sustain capable teaching for these children and, indeed, all children. The third concerns the linkages between these children’s schooling and the pluralistic, capitalistic society in which they live. Viewed from this vantage point, the enterprise of education demonstrates logical, if unfortunate, consequences of large social forces that tend to limit the opportunities of the children who grow up in poverty. The persistence of these consequences raises important questions about the possibilities and limits of both policy and teaching in improving the learning experiences or lives of children from low-income families (Knapp, 2001, p. 175).

This and other work undertaken by CTP colleagues and myself kept the focus on the quality of teaching and learning in context and the ways that policy action might realistically and productively enhance it. Before too many years, some of us were building and crossing a related bridge, between research on leadership (which overlapped with policy) and research on learning improvement (which reflected

high-quality teaching, among other things). I will return to this matter later.

A similar bridging principle applies within a single discourse community, as one synthesizes findings and framing ideas from studies undertaken by different scholars on the same topic. Relatively few scholars treat their “lit review” work as an end in itself, but rather, as part of the process of defining a focus for empirical study. But I found myself repeatedly drawn to what Boyer calls “the scholarship of integration,” as contrasted with the “scholarship of discovery”, often as a way to frame a way to think about a research problem (Boyer, 1990). In such ventures, the review synthesis or framework is the stand-alone scholarly product. For example, a doctoral student and I tried in 2004 to construct a picture of policy-practice connections, by synthesizing what was known about the impacts of state standards-based reform on teaching practice (Knapp & Meadows, 2005). We argued that the only meaningful way to do so was to view the impact question from two vantage points, the first tracing “downwards” from the policymaker and the second “upwards” from the teacher. In effect, we used our literature synthesis work to construct two parallel *intellectual* bridges, each enabling traffic in an opposite direction. Our focus was ultimately the *practical* bridge between policy action and instructional result, what I have called an “avenue of influence” in other writing connecting policy action with teachers’ response (Knapp, 2002). Such products can be generative, a big goal in research.

***Interpersonal and intellectual bridgework.*** The reports emerging from SRI studies and later CTP investigations reinforced for me an image of research that contrasted with what I had internalized in graduate school. Research was not solo work. Even if most of your time was spent alone in front of your own computer, pouring over transcripts or printouts, making field trips, or puzzling through research problems in the privacy of your own mind, the process and the result was

joint work. And in the contract research world, that meant big teams of people working closely together under significant time and resource constraints. How to make sure these people worked as a team? How to guarantee that the whole was greater than the sum of the parts, and was intellectually coherent? How to ensure that key team members got appropriate credit for their work? I spent a lot of my time at SRI and since seeking good answers to these questions, and noted how easily one could slip into exploitation, credit-grabbing, and collective team dysfunction. An essential kind of *interpersonal* bridge building lay at the center of this work.

**Look for opportunities to join or create teams of scholars who approach problems with different disciplinary lenses, theoretical assumptions, or methodological tools.**

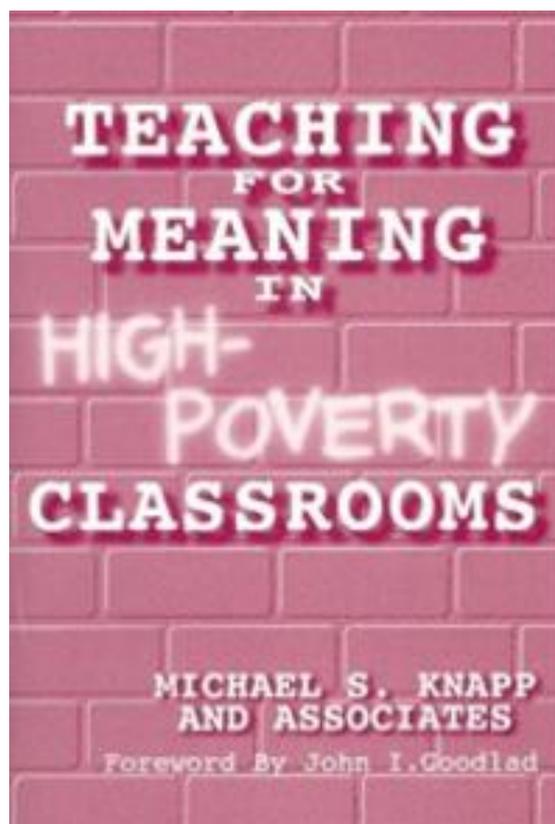
The answers I evolved were part of a career-long process of learning to lead research ventures in ways that integrated effort and diverse thinking about research problems. Take the matter of authorship credit. The *Teaching for Meaning* book was authored by Michael S. Knapp & Associates, with chapters therein lead- or co-authored by one or more of eight other team members (the “Associates”), often with me as a co-author. This assignment of credit signaled both the important role that the other team members played in developing the study’s results and conclusions, and the central role I played in connecting their efforts together into the study’s overall “story line”. I followed this pattern subsequently on various large-team studies, as well as on other publications—

clarify authorship credit early, share credit, carve up the overall work into identifiable chunks that others can take the lead on, do the work together, and let the world know. It was hard for me to imagine any other way, even though once I was in a university, I was periodically reminded that multiple-authored pieces “counted for less” than single-authored ones, and I often heard horror stories from other research institutions about hard work that went unrecognized or was misappropriated by high-status principal investigators.

### **Looking Inward: Learning to Build Bridges in My Academic Backyard**

By the time I arrived at the University of Washington in 1990, I was well acquainted with what scholars do: look outward at the educational system and seek to inform actors within it. From that vantage point, however, it hadn't occurred to me that I was part of the system, and that what took place within it, especially the dynamics surrounding inequity, also might be at work in my own backyard. There, an often hidden set of norms, relationships, and routines formed a kind of *infrastructure* for academic learning, teaching, advising, collegial work, and knowledge creation. Over time, possibilities for strengthening this infrastructure came into view, and along with it, insights into what it might mean to do academic work that promoted equity. More creeks to cross. More bridges to build.

In addition, little did my new employer, nor I, know that I had barely a clue how to be a faculty member. Although I had been a full-time practicing researcher for more than a decade after graduate school, I had not begun to wrap my mind around the “impossible job” of a university-based academic. How to be a scholar *and* a teacher *and* an advisor *and* a participant in collegial community *and* a servant of the field? And what did all those parts have to do with each other, or my overarching goal of addressing educational inequities? The answers emerged by stages, and often in places I least expected.



Rude awakenings: academics don't all work in teams, and by intention, don't necessarily work where they can be found. I went on several trips during my first quarter as a professor, and took pains to alert my Department chair and secretary about my whereabouts, only to be asked: why did I bother? My answer (so they or anyone would know where to find me) fell on deaf ears. In a similar vein, I routinely went looking for meetings that seemed to implicate me, and there weren't any, or the few I encountered did not have much to do with my—or our—work together. And the research I was to do was up to me to define, design, and carry out, by myself. What a difference from a world in which everything I did was in teams of at least six people and often closer to 26, where so much that mattered took place in meetings, where everything was the joint result of many minds, often approaching the problem from different disciplinary perspectives! Across my first decade and more of academic practice, I began to see several creeks and experiment with ways to cross them.

**Crossings between disciplines, departments, and community settings.**

A first excursion into this new academic world began to clarify for me what it meant to work in an academic institution. I joined a team of faculty from five University Departments (Nursing, Social Work, Public Health, Public Affairs, and Education) who were seeking to develop and document a way for these professional schools to prepare their graduates for *interprofessional* practice—that is, forms of service whereby people with different human services training or locations collaborated effectively with each other to address the complex needs of young people and families. I was to be an in-house evaluator as well as member of the group’s steering committee. The role entailed an active attempt to bring data to bear on program development and decision making and an interdisciplinary team context that would guarantee me a certain number of substantive meetings. The shoe fit.

Three years and considerable grant money later, the team was not much closer to its goal, though it had engaged in a good deal of experimentation. Once again, the effort revealed as much or more about the creeks to be crossed than about any viable means of crossing. We spent nearly a year, to begin, trying to learn each other’s “languages”—how we each thought about professional practice; what was the appropriate unit and form of service; how we would collectively “diagnose” what was needed in a given child, family, or community; or how to organize our efforts according to the diagnosis.

A difficult set of creeks to cross came immediately into view. As the faculty team struggled to create a sustainable program among the five collaborating professional schools, it ran up against some significant structural and cultural constraints. To begin with, the basic organization of the university into departments and sub-units defined by specialized bodies of knowledge, each with strong incentives for preserving a distinct

identity and body of expertise, stood in the way of cross-departmental collaboration. Each member of the steering group was an individual intellectual entrepreneur, and steeped in a discipline that located “the problem” differently, and that was unwilling to subordinate the problem finding process to that of another discipline. Who was to take the lead? As we later noted,

Interprofessional work calls into question the assumption that, when working with complex human problems, specialized expertise is of highest value. Of greater or equal value are the understandings or action implications that emerge *at the intersection* of different bodies of expertise, as diverse professionals jointly plan and conduct appropriate services. Implicitly, no one person holds sufficient expertise to arrive at satisfactory solutions to this class of problems.... (Knapp & Associates, 1998, p. 145).

To be fair, we were challenging some of the most basic premises of the institution in which we were based. As such, it was no wonder that the steering group had such difficulty building organizational bridges among University departments. But the opportunities and difficulties we encountered, both those attempted and those we missed, weren’t only internal to the University. A central goal of this project was to establish different and better relationships between the University-based training effort and several community sites where much of the training would happen. To this end, the project team tried to develop working relationships with a school in Seattle and with a community-based network of human service providers, home-based in another school district. Our premise was that graduate students from the different human services disciplines could not learn everything they needed to know on the University campus; they needed to be learning in a community setting.

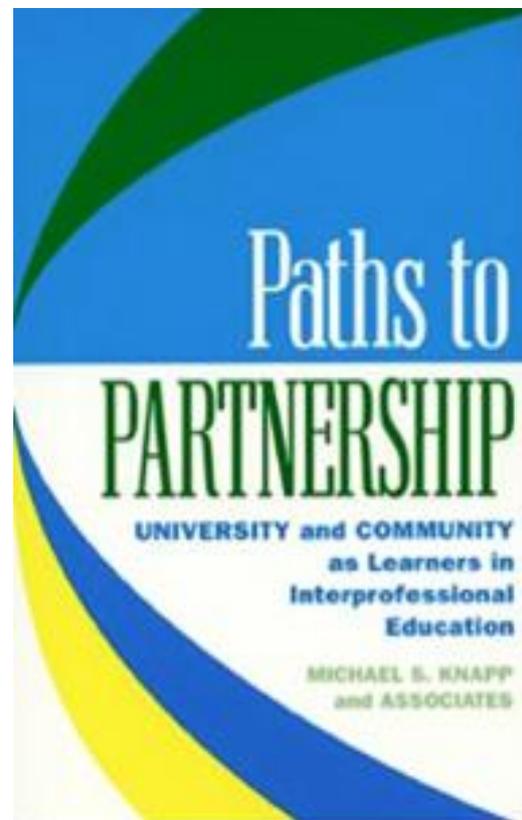
A collaborative partnership with the first of these field sites never developed

properly. Too many of us showed up at the school for too-short periods of time, and though eager to help, we accomplished little more than coordinative confusion. After a year's struggle to define what useful roles a part-time social work intern, administrative intern, nursing candidate, and others could do for and with the school, the project team beat a hasty retreat. In contrast, the relationship with the second field site flourished over the years in which the project continued. As we later described it,

The relationship-building process at this site took place on various levels: the network leader was invited to join the interprofessional program's steering committee, and she participated actively in the policymaking that guided the program over time. Structures such as the monthly Providers Network Meetings were in place that kept the Network as a whole in touch with itself; at the level of service delivery, staff such as a school social worker and school psychologist made themselves available to mentor interns and otherwise interact with program staff. Both sides of the relationship—university and community—saw mutual benefit in the exchange.... The relationship evolved through some distinct stages toward one in which community members had more roles to play and became more central to the program's training mission, at the same time that the program, primarily through its students, made contributions that were directly linked to community-defined needs (Knapp & Associates, 1998, p. 174).

In this field site, we were able to establish programmatic features that enabled a solid, two-way bridge to exist between university and community. This kind of inter-organizational bridge building was time- and labor-intensive, enabled by four years of grant funding. When the grants ran out, we

were unable to secure institutional resources to continue it. Another rude awakening: the kinds of program we were trying to realize would require institutional investment to



support it over the long term. When the external funding dried up, nothing remained. In this instance, we did what scholars do: captured it all in book form and moved on. In addition, I took another logical step. When confronted by a difficult practical and intellectual puzzle—write a methodological piece about how to study it; an *Educational Researcher* article on how we should study comprehensive, collaborative services was the result (Knapp, 1995).

The set of inter-organizational connections and professional integration sought in this project was undoubtedly overly ambitious, in all likelihood unrealizable in most university settings. More mundane and realizable infrastructure challenges occurred repeatedly, and I turned my attention to tackling them. Some concerned basic aspects of faculty work, like advising graduate students.

**Crossings in the collegial environment.** The individualistic norms governing faculty activities in my setting were just as noticeable in our work as advisors, if not more so, than in other aspects of our practice. When I first arrived at the University, I was unsure about how to tackle the advising part of my role, yet I found surprisingly little conversation among faculty about advising practice. When the conversation did happen, it revealed that we all had very different approaches to this central academic function. It also surfaced that I was not the only one who was unsure of how to proceed. While some differences among advisors are natural and unavoidable, lack of consensus about expectations, milestones, and other norms can be really confusing for students, as well as setting the stage for inequitable treatment of advisees. When students compared notes with each other about their advising experiences, some were clearly unhappy, and justifiably so, it seemed. We heard about it often enough. Wasn't there something we could do about it beyond minding our own advising business?

In response, several colleagues and I pushed hard to have regular interactions around advising and to focus conversation on developing norms to guide our practice. Though we ultimately wanted to stimulate shared advising norms across the whole College, we confined our efforts initially to the Area of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies, where we were located. There, the dozen of us with advising responsibility developed a collective *Draft Memo to Ourselves*, shown in Exhibit 1, which laid out basic expectations and principles we would try to realize in our work with our advisees. We called it a "Draft" intentionally, even as it evolved over time. In our view, it was the record of a continuing, even permanent, "conversation-in-progress."

The *Draft Memo* reflected an ideal to which we aspired. None of us fully realized these principles, nor did the Memo eliminate differences in our advising

approaches. But it provided a reference point for our thinking, a shared image against which we could assess our advising practice and towards which we could strive. The *Memo's* language implied the bridge building that individual advisors do, or can, with their advisees through an active relationship, socialization to a scholarly community, and help for the advisee to connect with a more secure professional identity. In pushing for individual advising relationships that took on this character, the very existence of the *Memo* and its origins in a group conversation *created a collective, overarching bridge* among the Area's faculty advisors, which in varying degrees we tried to cross.

The creation of the *Draft Memo* highlighted for me several lessons about *collegial* bridge building in an academic environment. To begin with, the default tendency—a substantial creek to cross in this kind of organization—was to ignore the issue. We all had plenty of other things to do, and the incentives pushed us to keep at our individual pursuits (course teaching, writing and research, taking care of our own advisees, however we saw fit). Trying to evolve a joint solution to the "advising problem" was extra work. However, in a self-governing institution, there was little to stop us from taking initiative to address an issue that concerned us as a collective. No one in authority told us to do this, or not to. A few of us simply banded together and made it happen, inviting others into the process until we had created something that connected all the faculty in the Area. In effect, we were leading "from the middle." Leadership does not always come "from the top." These experiences began to coalesce in the back of my mind into an image of leadership as bridge building, a notion that came into much sharper focus in my subsequent scholarship on leadership for learning improvement in schools and districts, a matter I return to later.

**Exhibit 1**

**Draft Memo to Ourselves:  
Conversation-in-Progress about our Advising of Graduate Students**

**Where Responsibility Lies: Advisor, Advisee, Supervisory Committee, etc.**

1. **Locus of responsibility in the Advisor-Advisee relationship.** *We assume that students are responsible for their own professional development, not us; we are a resource to their development, and a guide.*
2. **Our mission in relation to the Supervisory Committee and College Student Services.**
  - *We are the proactive leader of the student's Supervisory Committee, not a reactive convener.*
  - *In conjunction with Supervisory Committee members—we are responsible for **substantive** decisions regarding a student's program of study and progress through the College, while leaving **procedural** record keeping to the Office of Student Services.*

**Our Roles as Mentors and Advocates**

3. **Mentorship.** *As Mentors, we are attentive to students' professional development, model what it means to be an inquiring educator, and help students to visualize future professional roles for themselves as leaders, scholars, and educators.*
4. **Socialization into intellectual communities.** *We take steps to foster students' socialization into appropriate intellectual communities.*
5. **Advocacy for the Advisee.** *We are the student's advocate, as needed, in all matters arising in their progress through the College.*

**Making It Happen**

6. **Making ourselves available to the Advisee.** *We make ourselves available, within reason, as much as our Advisees need us, to cope with the demands of their programs.*
7. **Approaching our advising work planfully.** *We approach advising as an integral part of our teaching roles, as an activity for which we prepare ourselves, as we do for instruction.*
8. **Being attentive to procedural requirements and students' timely progress through the College.** *We take initiative, with the student, to be aware of procedural requirements and deadlines, anticipating when things need to happen to ensure timely progress.*
9. **Fostering student-faculty interaction.** *Within the limits of our resources, time, and imaginations, we try to create opportunities for faculty-student interaction and joint professional work.*
10. **Offering a "limited warranty" for students who have completed their studies.**

*We extend to students who have completed their degrees the usual support (e.g., by writing recommendations), and also attempt within reasonable limits to support their careers and their ongoing connection with the UW community.*

There were many other examples of this kind of bridge building in the institutional environment I worked within, some initiated by me, many others by other faculty who kept an eye on the health of the collective in addition to their own careers and accomplishments. The net result was a workplace environment that, on the whole, supported our efforts to be better teachers, advisors, and scholars. On balance, it was a fun and productive place to work. As I compared notes with colleagues in other institutions, I came to realize that this was no small accomplishment in academia. Far more likely, and certainly easier, was the “organized anarchy,” that some scholars of higher education have described, and in which many enjoy working.

**... engage your students in exploring problems of practice and research actively, so that each becomes a resource to others' learning, at the same time that you are such a resource.**

**Crossings in advising.** As a bigger picture of advising work came into view for me and my colleagues, I found myself asking harder questions about what I was doing as an advisor and to what effect. It quickly became clear that I was not necessarily helping all my advisees move towards a secure professional identity. After my first half-dozen years at the college, I took a hard look at those of my doctoral advisees who were not completing their degree programs: of the five who had dropped out or stopped out in that timeframe, four were students of color. Their reasons were varied, but the underlying principle was clear. I wasn't understanding their needs in sufficient detail, nor helping them find productive ways to persist in the face of their unique adversities. I only learned by stages to see and understand where and how psychological, social, intellectual, and

interpersonal bridges could be built that would enable these advisees to realize their obvious potential.

Across my 25 years in a professorial role, I had many advisees and supervisees of color (e.g., more than 40% of my Ph.D. advisees), and following my first half-dozen years, all but two successfully completed their degrees. In these advising relationships, bridge building occurred at several levels. For one thing, almost every one was pursuing an area of study, and ultimately a thesis or dissertation topic, that focused on bridge-building dynamics in the lives of students or communities of color. Neither they nor I used the metaphor at the time, but in retrospect it fits very well, as some illustrative dissertation and thesis titles from recent years suggest:

- *Professional Socialization of International Students in Differing Disciplinary Contexts in US Doctoral Study* (Huang, 2009).
- *The Role of Community-Based Organizations in the Movement of Young Men of Color into Postsecondary Studies: A Qualitative Case Study* (Garnett, 2015).
- *The Persistence of Second-generation Cambodian American College Students: A Qualitative Study* (Pon, 2014).
- *Case Study of First-Generation Chican@/Latin@ Students' Access and Engagement in Undergraduate Research* (Salvador, 2015).
- *How Asian American Women Perceive and Move Toward Leadership Roles in Community Colleges: A Study of Insider Counter Narratives* (Irey, 2013).

Thus, for example, socialization into the scholarly profession is all about constructing and crossing a bridge to it, from a location outside a scholarly community and not yet qualified or welcome to participate in it. Gaining access to, and becoming engaged in, research opportunities as an undergraduate implies connections that enable newcomers, who do not know how to seize these opportunities or even that

they exist, to visualize the possibility and cross over to it. Each of the socially defined groups on which these dissertations or theses focused were faced with significant obstacles; in each case, my advisees' research detailed what it meant for members of these groups to build and cross bridges to a desired professional destination. So my first task as advisor was to help the dissertation or thesis writer do a really competent, theoretically grounded job of studying these transition processes, so that useful, intellectually defensible insights could emerge.

But as an advisor, I was doing more than helping someone produce a competent study of bridge-building processes in the external world. These students were simultaneously exploring, more vicariously, their own experience: as an international student in graduate school, young man of color in high school, second-generation Cambodian American undergraduate, Asian American woman in community college administrative roles, and so on. In this way, the dissertation experience was helping them learn to build *their own* bridges to a more secure sense of their professional identity and acceptance in a scholarly world that otherwise might not "see" or accept them, given their backgrounds. Importantly, in this process I, too, was a learner. Internally, I was constructing my own more specific and culturally informed bridge from initial understandings, which were limited and generic, to a deeper grasp of each group's learning trajectory.

The differences between advisees from non-mainstream and mainstream backgrounds were not immediately apparent to me when I first took on graduate-level advising. For one thing, those advisees from historically underserved groups had a life story that might not have seemed to them (or others) relevant or a source of strength to their emerging identity as an educator or scholar with an advanced degree. Furthermore, prior educational experiences had not prepared some of them fully for the rigors of graduate study, necessitating timely

remediation and support. Moreover, the usual dynamics of stereotype threat and the micro-aggressions they all encountered on a regular basis further complicated their progress through graduate studies. As bridge builder and teacher of bridge-building skills, my task as advisor was to listen carefully to their stories, help them develop realizable goals, anticipate the obstacles that might arise, and provide practical ways for them to overcome these. It meant lots of time and conversations, as well as regular, specific feedback on their work and trouble-shooting of various kinds. Above all, I—and they—had to believe in them and their capacity to succeed (I did—and they did).

These are admittedly small contributions to countering systematic disparities in the educational system writ large, but they were ones that I or any academic advisor could readily effect with individuals moving through graduate study. And each individual who we helped to attain a meaningful advanced degree was in a position to help many others.

**Crossings in teaching.** The most telling infrastructure challenges I encountered happened within my teaching. There, I hoped to do exemplary work—I was part of a professional school, after all, preparing educators for exemplary practice. But what I saw around me (when I got the chance) and what I increasingly saw in my own work was not always inspiring. And to my horror, I began to see that there, too, was the possibility of reproducing inequities—a phenomenon I was thoroughly familiar with when looking outward at society and the educational system, but reluctant or slow to see looking inward.

This possibility first occurred to me, of all places, in a course I was teaching on achievement gaps in contemporary American schooling. Though not unique to this course, the social dynamics of student participation in *Policy, Achievement Gaps, and the Education of Disenfranchised Populations* were a microcosm of patterns that pervaded

graduate-level teaching at my institution and at many others. I taught this course a number of times, and the classes I faced were always diverse in many ways. Masters and Ph.D. students were often classmates, people with different professional profiles and interests learned alongside each other, and the range of cultural and demographic backgrounds was often wide. Add to that a small number of international students, who spoke English with a noticeable accent. The net effect was a group of learners, unsure of where they stood with each other and wary about participation, even though the course required significant discussion and interaction among class members. All too often, talented students of color were effectively silenced, usually unwittingly, by White students. This pattern appeared even though students of color might comprise a third or more of the 25 to 40 people in the room.

A similar pattern prevailed for the international students, and in some situations for female students. For example, unless I took steps to avert this possibility, outgoing and self-confident White students (usually men) felt free to dominate discussion, and were generally unaware of how they might be interrupting or failing to hear what a student of color was saying. In effect, the White students were simply *not recognizing the possibility* that the Other had something worthwhile to say. On their part, the students of color were likely to be experiencing a form of stereotype threat, and would be careful what they said, if they said anything at all. And underlying these dynamics, the parties very often did not know each other, not even each other's names. One faculty member that I respected a great deal summed up the situation very simply one day: "Strangers. They're strangers to each other."

My instructional response to difference evolved slowly. Despite the explicit attention in this course to issues of equity and difference, it took me years to recognize the dynamic in my class. I developed a name-learning ritual as one

proactive response that would create a different kind of climate in the room from the moment students first stepped in the door. To do so, I aggressively and playfully pushed people to learn each other's names and use names in commenting on each other's thinking. It made no difference how large the class was. Class members left the first class with a photo "cheat sheet" that had pictures and names of each class member, to pin on their refrigerator doors for practice before the next class. During class sessions, I made a point of introducing people to each other by name, in all kinds of situations, even as mundane as asking two students to help me move a table ("Could I get a hand with this, and you two know each other, don't you?... Oh. Diane, this is Tyrell..."). Furthermore, for the first four classes or so, I assigned seats in a rotating system to make sure people sat next to others they did not know or had not met in previous weeks. To cap it off, from day one I threatened them all with a mid-term quiz on the names—I always did such a quiz by Week 6 or 7, and people always aced it. (Note a prerequisite for the instructor: I, too, had to know everyone's names, and most often I had accomplished this by the time of the second class meeting.)

The effect was palpable. By chance, one of my students in a year-long qualitative methods sequence that I taught did her study on the experiences of international graduate students in several University departments, the College of Education included. Serendipitously, one of her subjects, a Latina woman named Carol (*pseudonym*) from South America, who had arrived in the United States less than two years before, had been in one of my courses. The paper captured this subject's account of the way the name-learning ritual and related practices in my course affected her:

[The instructor] always encourages us to learn our names in class. It is helpful. I think he has the theory that when we know each other's names, we feel more comfortable in class, and

we feel like the rest of the classmates care about us. I think that is true, because just getting in the classroom, and someone says “Hi, Carol!” I feel A! Okay. Somebody knows about me, and somebody cares about me. And also the professor, he knows your name and he asks really specific questions maybe about your previous assignments. So it is good—like I exist, I am someone here. I think that helps me to feel part of the class. (Yeon, 2014)

As the student’s comment suggested, this ritual, along with other pedagogical moves that encouraged people to interact extensively with each other, had the effect of breaking down barriers that otherwise would have easily emerged in the usual manner. Put another way, interpersonal, *relational* bridges were built that visibly and clearly crossed social divides the students had internalized long ago. Instead, they experienced a kind of open invitation to interact that so easily fails to develop in many social situations, especially in graduate school, where one does not want to look uninformed or stupid.

This practice was one small step among many in this course and others that helped to open the way, at least symbolically, if not actually, for those who might otherwise feel intimidated or excluded. Along with other techniques in my evolving instructional repertoire, it helped me see that I could anticipate and forestall the unproductive ways that students approach and experience difference. I picked up a few other ideas from colleagues who had developed strategies to address related issues, but most of us evolved them on our own, in proportion to our ability to recognize the inequitable dynamics that would otherwise be likely to prevail.

**... always keep equity in view, and be especially attentive to the aspects of your practice that ignore or even reproduce inequities.**

I wish I could say that these efforts at interpersonal bridge building in my courses were the result of my careful and critical self-analysis from the moment I arrived on campus. Far from it: I didn’t begin to explore my work as an academic teacher critically until pushed to do so—by my students. Even though my teaching often emphasized sociological processes in education and a close look at educational inequities, it took a focused intervention by some graduate students of color, half a dozen years into my time as a professor, to help me see what messages I was actually communicating. Though there was no

specific precipitating event, a group of Black, Latino, and Native American students who had taken the Achievement Gaps course (and some other courses I

was teaching at the time) asked to meet with me about the content and character of my course teaching. They walked me through various ways my courses might subtly be solidifying conventional views about difference, rather than confronting them and equipping people to do the same. Why, for example, did I include so few (if any) scholars of color in the reading lists? Why was I not finding more and better ways for the students of color and White students in the room to break out of preconceived patterns of interaction (or lack thereof)? Had it not occurred to me how students of color might be experiencing the classroom climate and the course content? Why were issues of race, class, and other differences not considered as frequently as they might be in the material of these courses? The conversation initially took me aback, but then took me forward, in ways I would never have predicted.

In the years following that time, I worked really hard at creating more supportive and equitable learning environments in my courses, the name-learning ritual among them. What I heard from students subsequently suggests I made

some progress in this direction, though there is always more to learn. In effect, I was engaged in an essential kind of *intrapersonal* bridge building, alongside (and very much informing) the relational and intellectual

bridgework that my courses sought to construct. This work is internal and is difficult to do, as well as to recognize in the first place. Colleagues can be as much help as students, but the norms of faculty practice—we teach alone—may not help. As a faculty collective, my colleagues and I missed many opportunities to share our practices and learn from each other better ways of ensuring equitable interactions in the classroom; *collegial* bridge building focused on our equity practices would have helped us a great deal in this respect.

**Learning from an inward look at academic work in our backyard.** I have gone on at some length about looking inward at my academic practice in its institutional context, in part, because it was so tempting to ignore. In a Research 1 university, it is easy to think of one's main purpose and value as scholarship. But once I had tuned into the full range of academic practice and began to understand its dynamics and consequences, the rationale for strengthening the relational and collegial infrastructure for our work became increasingly compelling. Building bridges was unmistakably part of it.

By stages, I discovered that the many parts of my job could cohere into a greater whole. The right kind of collegial environment spawned various collaborations, all of which formed an infrastructure for scholarly work as well as teaching and learning. My learning in all phases of my academic practice further refined my ways of seeing the world. Interpersonal bridge building opened the way for critique, both from my students and from other faculty. Students helped me

**Once you start constructing bridges that are both relational and intellectual, all kinds of things become possible, and the different parts of your job can better inform each other.**

think through research problems in courses or advising situations, while I did the same for them. In addition, many students were research colleagues—across my years at UW, 34 of them were co-authors on one or more books, book

chapters, journal articles, or center reports. Faculty colleagues became co-teachers, an arrangement I eagerly sought out (18 different colleagues taught with me at one time or another), as well as research collaborators and co-authors (21 different faculty in the University have co-authored one or more research products).

Once you start constructing bridges that are both relational and intellectual, all kinds of things become possible, and the different parts of your job can better inform each other. It took me a while to see this, but eventually I understood that: writing was teaching; teaching was a way to work on research problems, as well as helping other do the same; advising offered a window in on society, inequity, learning, and many other matters. I remember some conversations with junior colleagues who were complaining about how teaching took time away from scholarship; I noted for them that every syllabus could be thought of as an intellectual argument, containing the seed of another publication (e.g., a literature synthesis, a framework; see Malen & Knapp, 1997).

### **Bridging the Divide between the Academy and the Field**

Whatever I did in program development, teaching, advising, and collegial participation in the university environment left untouched an equally big question about the ultimate purpose of my work in a professional school: *how to inform and help shape the practice world?* Having lost faith in my capacity to do this from a contract research base, I ran into this question over and over in my years as an academic, and suspect it is one of those

enduring issues that will always confront university-based educators and scholars. For me and the colleagues I knew the best, the question devolved into more practical matters. One had to do with communication: how were we to share our research in a language and format that resonated with practicing educators in the preK-12 world? Our academic prose clearly didn't meet the need, however well it may have worked in journals and other scholarly outlets. Translation was called for. But beyond translation were bigger matters of relevance and applicability. What ensured that our research—and our teaching, for that matter—were engaging essential matters of professional practice in ways that had *usefulness* to the people populating that world? How were we to have an impact on the pressing challenges of the day? A final question concerned our teaching as much as our scholarship: what would make our curriculum and instruction speak powerfully to the issues confronting the practice world, especially for those of our students who were headed that way?

I came to a university faculty role with hunches about these matters, but unsure about how clear the divide might be between the academy and the field. The divide was abundantly clear to me from Day One. The University incentive system pushed me and my colleagues to produce intellectually viable scholarly products that would find their way into scholarly outlets, to construct and teach courses that drew upon the literature, to stay closely attuned to the conferences and professional networks to stay up with “the latest”, and to scour the philanthropic landscape for resources. These tasks took the vast majority of our time, leaving relatively little to be out in schools or other community settings, or interacting with practicing educators in the PreK-12 world. My research involved fieldwork, to be sure, so I periodically found myself in practice settings talking with youngsters, educators, or community members. Coupled with some supervisory work, which took me to schools, I got regular tastes of the “world out there”, but

only tastes. In effect, I had to rely heavily on my working experience in schools a dozen years or more in the past to anchor my thinking about the practical relevance of my work. It was hard to admit, but I was more disconnected from everyday realities in schools and educational settings than I wished.

In this situation, the “creeks” come quickly into view. I distinctly remember an intense conversation at a practitioner conference (one of the few I attended that was mostly populated with practicing teachers, administrators, and staff developers) at which the preparation of school principals was being discussed. One participant loudly proclaimed, “The preparation of principals is too important to leave to universities,” and heads nodded around the crowded room. Though the people in the room came from a variety of local settings served by dozens of universities, they shared a consensus that these institutions had little to offer. To be sure, many preparation programs leave much to be desired, yet these perceptions probably reflect a deeper state of affairs. Practitioners in the preK-12 field are consumed by the daily urgencies of their work, whether in the classroom, the school or district office, or in a variety of policymaking or community settings. From these vantage points, we academics can easily come across as out of touch, unavailable, or irrelevant. Our theoretically framed, precise analyses often seem to say more and more about less and less, or say it in a way that has equivocal or unclear meanings. The practical meaning or implications of our work is often not clear. On our side of the creek, the imperatives to be active scholars coupled with immersion in activities within academic institutions, may make us less than responsive to practitioner audiences and needs.

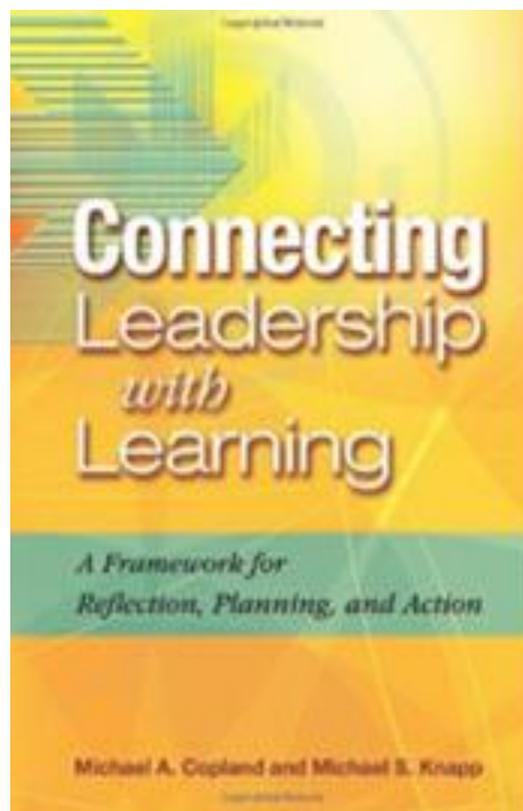
It dawned on me gradually that disconnections between the academy and the field have profound implications for our attempts to address inequity in the system. No matter how insightfully I probed the

dynamics of inequity, or the promise of interventions aimed at it, I was doing little to improve the situation if practicing educators didn't hear what I had to say and learn from it. The situation begged for better bridge building.

**Framing and communicating research to speak to practice and the policymaking community.** My efforts to develop a framework linking leadership with learning improvement, which I undertook in mid-career, opened my eyes to some of the possibilities. In the late 1990s, the Wallace Foundation was embarking on an extensive program of philanthropy related to the improvement of leadership in the public educational system. Picking up on some cues from the field and from the perennial question about whether good leaders could improve student achievement outcomes, the Foundation called for the development of a framework that showed how educational leadership and learning were or could be related. The product of this effort was to be written with practicing school and district leaders as a primary audience. The Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CTP), which I directed, secured a grant for doing this work. Over the next two years I led the charge to create an "empirically grounded" framework that drew together the best of what scholars then knew about the relationships between leading and learning, further informed by the best craft knowledge we could assemble, and all in the form and terms that would (hopefully) speak effectively to busy, practicing leaders.

Consider the connections we were seeking to make in this work. Though at the time we did not think of them as "bridges," the metaphor aptly captures much of what we were trying to do. First, we were seeking to characterize the connections between the work that educators did at several levels of administration and the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. The literatures on administrative leadership and on learning were entirely different and mostly unrelated, and so to carry out the task, we had to get the two bodies of research to speak to each

other. That also entailed pulling together what different scholars within each tradition had done, as well as what theorists were saying to empirical scholars and vice versa in either tradition, thereby bridging an age-old theory-practice divide.



A different set of connections lay in our premise that there existed some powerful *craft knowledge* among expert practitioners that could inform whatever the scholarly literature said. To integrate that into this work, we visited with over 300 practicing leaders in a variety of settings around the country, who had developed reputations as effective leaders; we picked their brains and experiences for insights into the leading-for-learning phenomenon, and also solicited their help interpreting what the research literature was saying. In connecting their experience and expertise with that of the literature, we also had to build bridges between their differences from each other, defined by setting, cultural background and worldview, sphere of

responsibility, and the reform history of their respective workplaces, among others.

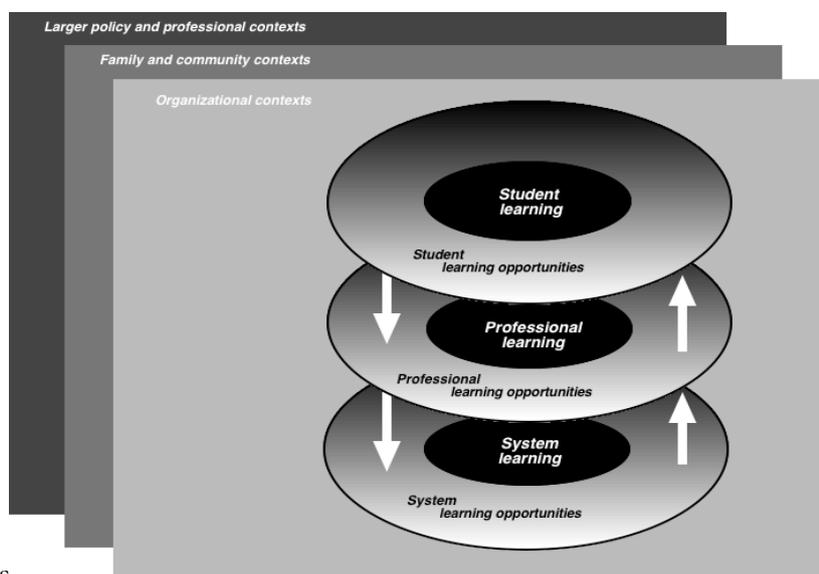
We pulled these sources of information together into a framework that succinctly connected leadership work with three “learning agendas” in schools and school districts. A visual figure, irreverently referred to as the “wedding cake,” helped us represent this idea, as shown in Exhibit 2 (Knapp, Copland & Talbert, 2003, p. 11). It asserted schematically that student learning, professional learning, and what we called “system learning” were continuously connected to each other in schools, with each potentially informing and influencing the others. The leadership challenge was to maximize the opportunities for learning of each one and to enhance the connections among them. Not shown in this figure, we elaborated elsewhere on leadership strategies and tools that could achieve that result. School and district leaders, we argued, were ideally positioned to build and maintain these bridges between learning agendas.

In constructing and presenting this kind of framework, we were striving to establish a set of connections between ourselves as academics and our audience, who were practicing leaders in a variety of school and district settings. We had to find a “language” and formats for communicating the ideas in terms that could be immediately useful and used by practitioners. What we produced, summarized in *Leading for Learning: Reflective Tools for School and District Leaders*, was meant as a way of guiding the thinking and actions of practicing leaders, more than as a foundation for research, though we also used it for the latter purpose years later (Knapp et. al, 2003).

It doesn’t take much to see the bridge-building metaphor at work in this instance. Wedding cakes

aside, we were creating and maintaining a set of connections (aka “bridges”) among ideas, people, and problems of practice that would be useful to practicing educators. In this project we were mainly doing intellectual bridge building. But along the way, we needed to establish other kinds of connections, between differently situated people and their thinking, between ourselves and our audiences. To accomplish this result, we spent large amounts of time with practicing school and district leaders, who were not only informants but also informal collaborators. The relationship we struck was part of a design to maximize the connection of the scholarship to leadership practice. The resulting *Leading for Learning Framework*, was not a conventional academic product. Rather, it sought to more explicitly connect what was known or thought in scholarly circles concerning the actual practice of leadership in schools. It may or may not have succeeded in this regard, though various practitioners told us they found it helpful. And when we ultimately published the *Framework* in book form, we did it through the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, rather than conventional academic publishers, as that outlet aggressively and successfully sought out practitioner audiences.

**Exhibit 2. Three Learning Agendas, in Context**



This was not the first time I had worked at framing and communicating research in a way that practice (or policy) audiences would grasp. All of my work at SRI International, for example, had policy audiences as the main communications target, and we worked hard at presenting findings with lay-language summaries, easy-to-scan technical reports, briefs, and other devices that would multiply the communicative potential. But not until the *Leading for Learning Framework* did I start to work closely with communications consultants, who had better ideas about formats, language, and other means for sending our messages without sacrificing the underlying rigor. Even then, however, we had barely begun to tap the vast array of possibilities in multi-media representations of research that have increasingly made themselves known. A scan of contemporary research websites reveals many such possibilities, combining words, images, video segments, and more, as well as interactive tools, all of which are meant to enable non-technical audiences to access and learn from research. These bridge-building tools have gotten much more sophisticated over time, and the astute academic would do well to become adept at using them, or to find collaborators who are.

In communicating about research's impact on practice, more than one kind of work needs to be done, ranging from guidance to practitioners to advocacy work with policy communities, especially at the federal and state levels. We dutifully tried our best to inform the relevant policy community in each case, but never took the next step towards an advocacy stance, which some scholars have done with great effect. I remember struggling to find a "voice" to push the findings of a Congressionally-mandated SRI study that I led, aimed to

guide the reinvestment of federal funding in math and science education in the mid-1980s (earlier in the decade, the Reagan Revolution had tried to zero out most of this funding; Knapp, Stearns, St. John, & Zucker, 1987). We built a strong case and had ambitious and wide-ranging recommendations for the National Science Foundation, some of which they ultimately appeared to follow. But we lacked the presence, skill, and *chutzpah* to "splash" our message and findings throughout the relevant federal and national networks. It was not a skill I ever mastered, although some of the main scholars in my Center (e.g., Linda Darling-Hammond) were very adept at it. Another bridge to build.

### **Working directly with practitioners in scholarship and teaching.**

The *Leading for Learning Framework* project touched on a second area of promise in bridging the divide between academy and the field: finding opportunities to work directly with practitioners. Although far too seldom in my work, my experiences in this vein helped me visualize some ways of crossing the divide. A collaborative writing project with a big city school superintendent illustrates. In this instance, I teamed up with Rudy Crew, a distinguished

**In communicating about research to impact practice, there is more than one kind of work to be done, ranging from guidance to practicing educators to advocacy work with policy communities, especially at the federal and state levels.**

Black educator who was then the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, to write a piece for the U.S. Department of Education (USED), which was then trying to fashion better ways for research and inquiry to inform urban education reform. Seeking to bring together good scholarly thinking with leadership craft knowledge, USED invited us to work together in this spirit. We were able to identify several ways that data-based inquiry could further reform in the turbulent situations often found within American urban centers. Among other things, we noted:

...*Inquiry can provide an occasion for exploring and negotiating conflict.* Urban education often involves a struggle among participants who readily assume fixed positions based more in differing values and in the unequal distribution of power than in information or insight into what is actually taking place in urban schools, and why. Participation in systematic inquiry can offer an opportunity for moving the conversation beyond fixed and irreconcilable positions. One of us (Rudy Crew) has encountered this role for data and research as follows:

... *[In my conversations with the Mayor of New York City] I was able to give him legal facts—he's a prosecutor—I was able to say: here's the data. These are kids who will be more costly, if we don't fix things now. His question: what's the fix?... It helped defer the fight, even though I couldn't avoid it altogether, but [the data-based conversation] gave two different people, who had potentially every reason to fight, something to use to avoid the fight and concentrate on what could be done. We did that countless numbers of times... It allowed us to have a very different kind of relationship.* (Knapp & Crew, 2000, p. 8)

In this instance, various intellectual as well as practical bridges were being built—or referred to—in both the focus of our writing, and the process of doing it. Rudy Crew, a Black Democrat and strong advocate for children, was talking to the Mayor (Rudy Giuliani), a White Republican more focused on law and order, who was officially in charge of the city's school system. At the same time, I, a White academic, was collaborating with a prominent Black educator, a leader who faced the challenges of urban education and all the conflicts it generates

in a far more direct and regular way than I did. Our collaboration sought to highlight a kind of bridge building he was able to do, and do with considerable effectiveness in a politically divisive context. My collaborator was no great fan of academic work, which he (rightfully) saw as often too theoretical, beside the point, or simply out of touch with the realities of urban education. In short, even though we shared a progressive orientation to the issues, we had some basic bridge building to do to even get us to the point of productive collaboration.

Here, my collaborator and I established a basis of mutual trust—essential scaffolding for any relational bridge—and then proceeded to tackle one or more joint tasks, whether in research or teaching. One can think of the products of our work as part of the “bridge,” but equally implicated is the *process of two-way learning* that this collaboration entailed. A co-teacher of mine in my College's Ed.D. program, a full-time central office administrator in a nearby school district (and also an educator of color, who had gone through the program in an earlier cohort), frequently remarked how helpful his participation in this teaching was to him personally, giving him a source of new ideas for his own practice and additional perspective on what he was doing. And on my part, his participation in the course was an indispensable addition to both lesson planning and the classroom itself.

One of our co-teaching episodes succinctly captures the bridge building at work. Taught across a four-month period, my teaching partner and I set up a course module on *Education Policy & the Improvement of Teaching and Learning* that was tailored to the Ed.D. students, all practicing administrators who did their coursework in intensive monthly weekends supplemented by summer institutes, with practice-focused assignments to do in

**Seek out collaborators in everything you do. That means viewing and treating students, faculty colleagues, and practitioners, all as potential thought partners, co-researchers, co-teachers, co-authors.**

between class meetings. To reach our goal of teaching them how to design district-wide instructional policies, we fashioned an extended problem-based learning task of designing such a policy for a medium-sized district setting. But instead of turning design teams loose on a project aimed at any setting they were familiar with, we took my partner's school district, disguised it as the "Mt. Morrisson District," and asked the students to design their policies to meet one of a set of instructional challenges that it then was facing. We offered the class detailed information about these challenges, existing resources and constraints, and the community. My partner took on the role of context expert, filling in class members with further insights into the setting as their design work proceeded, and in response to questions the students posed. We changed relatively little about the site, except for a few crucial details, to maintain its nominal disguise, while keeping it as real as possible. The students (and I) much appreciated my partner's capacity to inform them in considerable detail about the nuances of the setting, and the prospects for meeting its instructional needs that their policy designs implied. And it was invaluable to keep the simulation as close to actual problems of practice confronting school districts similar to those in which the Ed.D. students were or would be working.

Teaching collaborations such as this gave students a way to see the practical meaning of the ideas about instructional policy design we were teaching and about learning-focused leadership principles, more generally. Similarly, the working collaboration and resulting curriculum design kept the learning closely connected to actual practice, while benefiting from the perspective that scholarly thinking can provide. I benefited through the close and continuing effort to make big ideas speak to

the messy realities of a particular school district. At the same time, my teaching partner got a chance to reflect on his own work and workplace, picking up ideas as he went. Well-built bridges enable two-way traffic.

Much more is possible in establishing regular working relationships between the academy and the field than these examples suggest or I ever attempted, in virtually every aspect of academic practice. For example, developments in scholarship, increasingly prominent over the last decade, seek a different conception of the relationship between researcher and the "researched." In "design research" and "engaged scholarship," for example, practitioners in field sites become co-researchers, at the same time that academics roll up their sleeves and help them develop solutions to problems of practice, which the collaborators will both implement and study (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Peterson, 2009; Van de Ven, 2007). In such instances, research and intervention are combined, with each party engaged in both. In effect, the collaborators are co-constructing new relational and intellectual bridges as they seek joint solutions to whatever problems of practice they are tackling. Recent developments among those who support scholarship may also be reinforcing this approach.<sup>1</sup> I came late to this party. But others can attend from much earlier in their careers.

### ***Connecting academic curriculum and teaching with practice.***

The collaboration with my co-teacher, just described, hints at a third and fundamental way to bridge the divide between academy and practice. The Ed.D. program in which this took place, which we spent a dozen years developing and redeveloping, became a laboratory for crafting university-based curricula that maximized their connections

<sup>1</sup> For example, in recent years, the Director of the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES), the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education, urged scholars to give those "under

study" a much larger role in shaping the focus, design, and conduct of research, through long-term partnerships which sought to answer participants' questions about pressing problems of practice. See Easton, J. (2010).

to actual practice. It was a constant challenge. We were preparing future leaders of school districts (most of our students were currently administering schools); what about their learning experiences with us would actually and demonstrably shape their practice?

I wrestled with this question repeatedly, and over time, evolved various solutions, among them problem-based learning tasks like the policy design module noted above. Sometimes, the learning tasks I developed were more limited, but still encouraged or required the student to insert themselves into practice settings, at the same time that they were asked to use theories and research findings to interpret what they experienced. In several iterations of the Achievement Gap course noted earlier, I sent people out into the field on brief excursions mid-way through the course to locate a classroom in which they believed the teaching might be “gap closing,” then observe one or two lessons, and finally write up and interpret what they saw (this became a final project option in one version of the course). The goal of the exercise was to move students from what had been, up to that point, an intellectual discussion on the sources and dynamics of achievement gaps, to an analytic process grounded in actual encounters between students and teachers. In watching what transpired in these encounters, my class members often noticed that much more was going on than they had imagined, which, when extended over many lessons, might or might not be helping to close achievement gaps. The task of observing and analyzing actual practice helped my students build bridges between intellectual frameworks and practical realities.

It took me some years to decide that graduate school curriculum should seek out such connections to daily practice. One

articulate colleague urged that the time in graduate study was a great chance to “get out of the streets and into the library.” But over time, the rationale of connecting more deeply and continuously with the practice world seemed increasingly compelling, and there were many ways to do it that did not sacrifice the chance to get minds around new ideas and perspectives. At a minimum, it provided the students who had this learning experience some opportunities to solidify the connections between big ideas and messy realities. Beyond that, it pushed my thinking concerning what exactly those connections would or could be.

### Lessons Learned

Having crossed a career bridge once again, now into retirement, it is easier to see some of the lessons that emerged from these decades of experience. My apologies to my readers: all the lessons come to me in bridge-building terms. I do so knowing full well that other metaphors may work better for some, and no one metaphor does it all. From time to time, I have found myself or others characterizing academic work with images of *growth*, *cultivation*, and *gardening*; and at other times, *exploration* of unfamiliar territories or *navigation* across unknown waters. More critically inclined colleagues of mine lean on imagery of *struggle*, *resistance*, and *interrogation*. Many of my students prefer the image of *journey*, which surely captures a central part of their experience in graduate

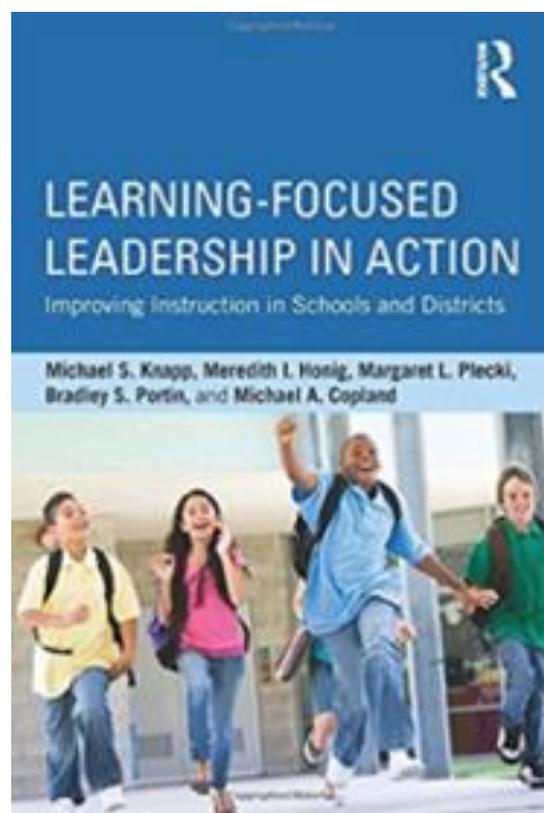
**... work continuously to bridge the divide separating university-based academics from their counterparts in schools, community settings, educational agencies, and postsecondary institutions.**

school. But in the final analysis and with the goal of enhancing equity in mind, I can't help but return to Ellison's metaphor: education is all about building bridges, especially for and with those who have least access to good learning opportunities and secure futures. By extension, so is educational research and academic practice. It's all about bridge-building between ideas, people, and possibilities.

Let me start with the ideas, a place where most academics feel comfortable. Acknowledging that you will feel most comfortable in a discourse community in which the members think similar thoughts, address related questions, and speak the same conceptual language, *push yourself to connect—that is, build bridges—to ideas and lines of inquiry from other discourse communities*. Some of the most seminal thinking and discoveries happen at the interface between discourses, connecting lines of inquiry that have heretofore ignored each other. Some of these discoveries emerged for me through scholarship that connects teaching and policy while also probing educational disadvantage, as has my work connecting research on leadership and learning. Crossing the boundaries between discourse communities such as these is often hard to do or even visualize, but the effort is worth it. Connecting scholars' work within your own discourse community, as you review and synthesize literature, affords a similar, perhaps easier, bridge to build. Keep in mind that the products of this reviewing are not just means to an end, but are useful intellectual constructions in and of themselves, worth sharing with others. The “scholarship of integration” has as much to offer the field as the “scholarship of discovery.” Bridging these bodies of work can be generative, one of our most important goals as knowledge creators.

While you are at it, *look for opportunities to join or create teams of scholars who approach problems with different disciplinary lenses, theoretical assumptions, or methodological tools*. The conceptual creeks to cross in such instances are not trivial, and you may have to work at it, as I have found repeatedly in the many interdisciplinary teams I have worked in or led. But as you become more “bilingual”, able to see and think through a research problem in ways that are unfamiliar, you will see new possibilities in your own line or preferred mode of inquiry. In doing so, you will undoubtedly encounter the swamps of differing, perhaps competing personalities. Because academia does not

necessarily draw participants known for their tact, humility, or ability to work together, you have some bridge building to do here, if you want the interdisciplinary team experience to be productive. Interdisciplinary teams are especially useful for the many-faceted research problems that sit inside educational inequities, but you will need strong intellectual and interpersonal connections to make good on what such teams can offer. My recent work connecting leadership and learning improvement illustrates what can result, when a diverse group of scholars coalesce around such challenges (Knapp, Honig, Plecki, Portin & Copland, 2014).



What happens in research teams at their best can also happen in the teaching we do as academics. Though it is perfectly acceptable to tell our students what we and other scholars think about problems of research or practice (yes, there is such a thing as a good lecture!), we can do more. Over time the following lesson emerged for me: *engage your students in exploring problems of practice and research actively, so that each becomes a*

*resource to others' learning*, at the same time that you are such a resource. My efforts in this regard (e.g., experiments with problem-based learning, role plays, in-class debates, assignments that took them to the field, team exercises) only scratched the surface of the many ways to connect learners with each other and all of them with challenging ideas. I found a similar dynamic in advising, which I came to see as another, more individualized form of teaching.

The lessons I have noted so far put emphasis on the collaborative dimensions of academic scholarship, teaching, and advising. A related lesson for me: *seek out collaborators in everything you do*. That means viewing and treating students, faculty colleagues, and practitioners all as potential thought partners, co-researchers, co-teachers, co-authors. This probably seems easiest to do with like-minded faculty colleagues, but in my experience, collaborations with practitioners and students have been just as beneficial, if not more (yes, students can be our *colleagues*, albeit junior ones). To work with the latter, we must cross some creeks created by status differences, professional locations and constraints, basic assumptions. As we face these creeks, it takes two to build many, if not most, of the bridges that matter in academic work. And once built, these structures enable two-way traffic. Both parties need to and can learn from each other. Look for co-bridge builders. You will find them.

If, and when, you have tried to undertake these kinds of collaborations, you no doubt have noticed that academic environments do not necessarily encourage them. The hierarchical incentive system we work within, emphasizing competition and individual accomplishment, to say nothing of the departmental structure rooted in specialized bodies of knowledge, confronts the would-be collaborator with creeks and swamps of the first order. Add to that, we typically teach alone, advise alone, and often do scholarship alone. Even to establish basic norms and understandings about our

collective work may not happen in the “organized anarchy” of the university. But *building collegial bridges in such an environment will pay off*. As members of a self-governing institution, you have the capacity to do so, despite the default tendencies of academia (and perhaps your own disposition).

An overarching reference point is helpful: *always keep equity in view, and be especially attentive to the aspects of your practice that ignore or even reproduce inequities*. In this regard, it helps to recognize that you are part of the educational system and its dynamics, including those that create and sustain inequities. It was so tempting as an academic to see education as something taking place *out there*. Looking outward, I could see and increasingly understand how privilege and disenfranchisement were intertwined; how policies aimed at ameliorating inequities could encourage positive changes in classroom interaction, but often didn't; how educators could engage in deep professional learning about educational disadvantages, but needed help to do so; and how leadership at different levels in the system could be part of the solution, though leaders missed many opportunities to do so. Much harder to see were the counterparts to these processes that took place in my own backyard, no less the commitment to addressing them.

As you try to teach, advise, and contribute to scholarship, while keeping equity in view, you will need help. To that end, *be hungry for critique, and do what you can to invite it, from faculty colleagues and students and practitioners, all three*. Being critical of others' work comes naturally to academics; being self-critical, less so. My experience has repeatedly reminded me of the opportunities for seeking and receiving critical feedback that I missed, or worse, avoided. In this regard, I urge you to take students and practitioners as serious and consequential critics of your work and thinking. Initially I didn't, until pushed (though even then I had probably projected sufficient openness to embolden my critics to come forward uninvited). Looking back,

I can trace certain advances in my teaching, scholarly thinking, and general practice as an academic to astute feedback from students or individuals I encountered in the practice field. The same can be easily said of faculty mentors, but they are not all we could or should be listening to. Openness to critique from all creates an essential set of bridges in our work.

A final set of potential connections, so easily ignored or downplayed, lie between academic work and that of the field we are trying to serve. In this spirit, I urge you to *work continuously to bridge the divide separating university-based academics from their counterparts in schools, community settings, educational agencies, and postsecondary institutions*. Practically, this can mean many things, among them: translating scholarly work into products and communication media that “speak to non-technical audiences” (despite the disincentive for doing so); seeking out occasions to work directly with practitioners or others outside academia on problems of research or practice (despite the time and effort this entails); and recasting curricula and teaching so that it connects as directly as possible to actual practice in the field (despite the lure of a scholarly comfort zone). Virtually all of the bridges I have noted in this article can come into play here. All will take intentional effort on your part. The default is for this creek to flow uncrossed, while academic practice and the

education system we purportedly serve continue as separate worlds.

A final exhortation: whatever your disposition and whatever your preferred metaphors, you can get better at the kinds of figurative “bridge building” I have been describing. But you will do so without clear guidance. As I found in crossing a creek in the Cascades, there are no blueprints for getting you or others from here to there and back. Only a process of looking carefully at the spaces to be traversed, creating and trying out designs, and learning from the effort will get you to the other bank. And if we care about equity, only by considering all the creeks and swamps and trying to cross them, while teaching others to do the same, will we make any headway in connecting ideas, people, and possibilities for their lives. It is worth our time and effort. Pick up your tools or your favorite metaphors, find some colleagues, and get to work. Good luck with this, and have fun.




---

## References

- Anderson, T., & Shattuck, J. (2012). Design-based research: A decade of progress in education research? *Educational Researcher*, 41(1), 16-25.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X11428813>

- Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. San Francisco, CA: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching/Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Cronbach, L. J., & Associates (1980). *Toward the reform of program evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Easton, J. (2010). Out of the tower, into the schools: How new IES goals will reshape researcher roles. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Denver, CO: April 30-May 4.
- Ellison, R. (1963). What these children are like. [Unpublished lecture]. Retrieved from: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-these-children-are-like/>
- Garnett, R. (2015). *The role of community-based organizations in the movement of young men of color into postsecondary studies: A qualitative case study*. Unpublished Masters thesis. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Huang, S. (2009). *Professional socialization of international students in differing disciplinary contexts in US doctoral study*. Unpublished dissertation. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Irey, S. (2013). *How Asian American women perceive and move toward leadership roles in community colleges: A study of insider counter narratives*. Unpublished dissertation. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Knapp, M. S. (1995). How shall we study comprehensive collaborative services for children and families? *Educational Researcher*, 24(4), 5-16.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X024004005>
- Knapp, M. S. (2001). Policy, poverty, and capable teaching. In B. W. Biddle (Ed.), *Social class, poverty, and education*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- Knapp, M. S. (2002). *Understanding how policy meets practice: Two takes on local response to a state reform initiative*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington/Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy.
- Knapp, M. S. (2016). *To build a bridge—Reflections on an academic career in education*. Woodway, WA: Beverly Creek Press.
- Knapp, M. S., & Associates (1998). *Paths to partnership: Universities and communities as learners in interprofessional education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Knapp, M. S., Copland, M. A., & Talbert, J. E. (2003). *Leading for learning: Reflective tools for school and district leaders*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy.
- Knapp, M. S., & Crew, R. (2000). *How research and inquiry can inform urban education: Notes for research planning at OERI*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, College of Education & Institute for K-12 Leadership.
- Knapp, M. S., Honig, M. I., Plecki, M. L., Portin, B. S., & Copland, M. A. (2014). *Learning-focused leadership in action: Improving instruction in schools and districts*. New York: Routledge.
- Knapp, M. S., & Meadows, J. L. (2005). Policy-practice connections in state standards-based reform. In A. Datnow, K. Leithwood, & N. Bascia (Eds.), *International handbook of educational policy* (pp. 133-134). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Press.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-3201-3\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-3201-3_7)
- Knapp, M. S., Stearns, M., St. John, M., & Zucker, A. (1987). *Strategic investment in K-12 science education: Options for the National Science Foundation—Summary report, Volumes 1 and 2*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

- Malen, B., & Knapp, M. S. (1997). Rethinking the multiple perspectives approach to education policy analysis: Implications for policy-practice connections. *Journal of Education Policy*, 12(5), 419-445.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 171-178.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737009002171>
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1991). The Rand Change Agent Study: Ten years later. In A. Odden (Ed.), *Educational policy implementation* (pp. 143-156). Albany NY: SUNY Press.
- Peterson, T. H. (2009). Engaged scholarship: Reflections and research on the pedagogy of social change. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(5), 541-552.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510903186741>
- Pon, N. (2014). *The persistence of second-generation Cambodian American college students: A qualitative study*. Unpublished dissertation. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Salvador, J. (2015). *Case study of first-generation Chican@/Latin@ students' access and engagement in undergraduate research*. Unpublished dissertation. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Van de Ven, A. (2007). *Engaged scholarship: A guide for organizational and social research*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Yeon, S. (2014). Negotiating participation and identity in globalizing classrooms: Graduate classrooms as a community of practice. Unpublished paper. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.



## About Acquired Wisdom

This collection began with an invitation to one of the editors, Sigmund Tobias, from Norman Shapiro a former colleague at the City College of New York (CCNY). Shapiro invited retired CCNY faculty members to prepare manuscripts describing what they learned during their College careers that could be of value to new appointees and former colleagues. It seemed to us that a project describing the experiences of internationally known and distinguished researchers in Educational Psychology and Educational

Research would be of benefit to many colleagues, especially younger ones entering those disciplines. We decided to include senior scholars in the fields of adult learning and training because, although often neglected by educational researchers, their work is quite relevant to our fields and graduate students could find productive and gainful positions in that area.

Junior faculty and graduate students in Educational Psychology, Educational Research, and related disciplines, could learn much from the experiences of senior researchers. Doctoral students are exposed to courses or seminars about history of the discipline as well as the field's overarching purposes and its important contributors.

A second audience for this project include the practitioners and researchers in disciplines represented by the chapter authors. This audience could learn from the experiences of eminent researchers—how their experiences shaped their work, and what they see as their major contributions—and readers might relate their own work to that of the scholars. Authors were advised that they were free to organize their chapters as they saw fit, provided that their manuscripts contained these elements: 1) their perceived major contributions to the discipline, 2) major lessons learned during their careers, 3) their opinions about the personal and 4) situational factors (institutions and other affiliations, colleagues, advisors, and advisees) that stimulated their significant work.

We hope that the contributions of distinguished researchers receive the wide readership they deserve and serves as a resource to the future practitioners and researchers in these fields.



## **education review // reseñas educativas**

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

**editors:** **gustavo e. fischman /**  
**melissa cast-brede / gene v glass**

**Supported by the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University**

### **Acquired Wisdom is**

#### **Edited by**

**Sigmund Tobias**

**J. D. Fletcher**

**David C. Berliner**

University at Albany

Institute for Defense Analyses

Arizona State University

State University of New York

Alexandria VA

Tempe AZ

### **Advisory Board Members**

Gustavo Fischman, Arizona State University

Arthur C. Graesser III, Memphis State University

Teresa I. McCarty, University of California Los Angeles

Kevin Welner, Colorado State University

 *Education Review/ Reseñas Educativas/ Resenbas Educativas* is supported by the edXchange initiative's Scholarly Communications Group at the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University. Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the *Education Review*. Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and ***Education Review***, it is distributed for non-commercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or ***Education Review***. ***Education Review*** is published by the Scholarly Communications Group of the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University.

Connect with *Education Review* on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Education-Review/178358222192644>) and on Twitter @EducReview