

Trusting the Possibilities: Giving Voice to Vito's Ideas

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My work with Vito Perrone and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) began in 1979 when I came to the University of North Dakota as his Associate Dean. My work with the person and the place was a turning point in my professional life and critical to the educator I have become. How I was so fortunate to be chosen for the position is one of those mysteries that can only be explained by Vito's trust in the possibilities he always saw in people.

The work I did with Vito and with the groups he invited me to join led me to refocus the way I attended to schools, teachers, and children. CTL tried to relate to schools in a way that was unusual in my experience. Instead of the distant view cultivated by many in higher education, the importance of working to achieve understandings of schools and teaching and learning from the inside and in partnership was the emphasis. From Vito, this urge to refocus and shift perspective came in at least two forms. History and the story it tells was then and is now ground for much of his thinking and advocacy. He stands as a "reminder that our work as educators is not without a history; that many of the problems we currently struggle with were faced by others before us, sometimes confronted differently, often times more intelligently" (Perrone, 1998, p. 1). He rued the a-historical stance that educators often take, a stance that tends to simplify. As a corrective, he urged teachers and schools to tell their stories and to keep the records that would be needed to write their histories. Directly related to this position are Vito's ideas about how policy should be developed. As he states in the Introduction of *Portraits of High Schools*, policy recommendations need to emerge from "adequate descriptions of school practice" that show the everyday life and work of schools as it exists in its variety across the country. To be adequate, these descriptions have to give voice to the local knowledge of the people and communities whose schools are being described. To be adequate, the policy that emerges from knowledge of the particulars of schools should create

room for educators to use their best professional judgment in the implementation of practices aimed to support the large human and democratic purposes of education.

I have chosen to make my tribute to Vito Perrone a story of school work that goes deeply inside and that reflects one school faculty's efforts to develop their educational voice, deepen their understandings of children, improve their teaching practice, and create a kind of school history. My history with Central Park East 1 Elementary School (CPE 1) is a long one, and it stems from my work with Vito and the people I met through the North Dakota Study Group. CPE 1 is a small school founded thirty-six years ago by Debbie Meier and colleagues in East Harlem, New York City. Vito was deeply interested in the founding of the school, having been one of the progressive thinkers that had articulated the alternative vision of public schooling it was established to enact. As CPE 1 is a favorite school of Vito's, I chose to tell a story from my work in that school as a way to illustrate some of his values and attitudes and how I see them living in my work with schools and teacher education.

At this point in its history, CPE 1 is undergoing a struggle of definition resulting from an increasingly unfriendly context and the loss of a long-time strong and trusted leader, Jane Andreas. Finding a way to exist/co-exist in a context that is increasingly and intrusively standardizing without giving up their educational values and the practices that enact those values is the core of CPE 1's struggle both with the surroundings and in finding a new leader. This story is one incident of this struggle.

I came to my work with the CPE 1 teachers in the fall of 2004, having read a book by James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (1998). The book is not about schools. A piece of historical anthropology, the book is about state efforts to bring beneficial change to people and places and why these efforts fail in the long term. In a chapter in which Scott talks about cities, he says:

An aerial view of a town built during the Middle Ages or the oldest quarters (*medina*) of a Middle Eastern city that has not been greatly tampered with has a particular look. It is the look of disorder. Or, to put it more precisely, the town conforms to

no overall abstract form. ... [However] the fact that the layout of the city, having developed without any overall design, lacks a consistent geometric logic does not mean that it was at all confusing to its inhabitants. ... For a stranger or trader arriving for the first time, however, the town was almost certainly confusing, simply because it lacked a repetitive, abstract logic that would allow a newcomer to orient herself. The cityscape of Bruges in 1500 could be said to privilege local knowledge over outside knowledge, including that of external political authorities. ... Historically, the relative illegibility to outsiders of some urban neighborhoods ... has provided a vital margin of political safety from control by outside elites. A simple way of determining whether this margin exists is to ask if an outsider would have needed a local guide ... in order to find her way successfully. (pp. 53-54)

Scott (1998) goes on to say that one strategy of the state coming in as an outsider in making cities more legible is to map them. Another strategy was the total redesigning and simplifying of the city. He says that the data that this simplification is based on has several characteristics (*e.g.*, utilitarian, static, aggregate and impersonal, and standardized).

From my point of view, New York City's Department of Education efforts these last two years has been to redesign and simplify schools to make them all in the same image. Through my work in New York, I see the effects of these standardizing efforts up close and from the inside. My role in these schools that want *not* to be unintelligible to outside authority/observers but that do want to be allowed to be different, has been to work against the merely utilitarian, static, aggregate and impersonal, and standardized.

Vito's vision of schools is one, I think, which stands against efforts to simplify and standardize the educational process. In *Teacher With a Heart: Reflections on Leonard Covello and Community* (1998), Vito describes many of the possibilities he sees for schools and teachers. For example: Schools can have the power to be continuously transformational of the individual and the community; schools should always be asking, "What if?" in the effort to engage new possibilities; teachers should be willing to know their students more deeply than

surface appearances and to be in solidarity with them; schools should not look at students as the source of their failures but look first to themselves; teachers, administrators, and parents should “join in the struggle to reduce the power of externally devised tests” (p. 48). This is a stance that supports neither stasis nor the impersonal.

I see my work in schools as rooted in the values and ideas Vito articulated and lived. Through helping teachers maintain their sights on the necessary complexities of their work with children, I help them try to both stay in dialogue with ideas about education different from theirs and resist aspects of “outside intrusion” they believe erode achievement of their educational purposes. So, like Vito, I help them hold on to their histories and to the values that have shaped that history.

The story I share here is about one small piece of work I did this past year with the CPE 1 staff. These teachers have a long history of looking closely at their teaching practice and at children's work. Many of the teachers are long-time practitioners of the Descriptive Process of the Prospect Center² and participants in Prospect Center's Institutes and Conferences. Almost from the start of the school, teachers have collected the children's work in order to be able to look longitudinally at their learning and development. I was invited to work with the staff twelve years ago and have helped them do focused inquiries into topics such as the work of the children, issues the school faced such as including a special education classroom into the mix, and the ways teachers teamed to meet children's needs. The school's development as an inquiry community was strengthened mightily by the work of Jane Andreas, who directed CPE 1 from 1995 to 2003.

In the fall of 2004, the CPE 1 teachers invited me to plan an inquiry around a defining practice of their school, “project time.” We were interested in describing project time because of the stress the teachers were feeling from the press of the system and from needing to help their new director understand values and practices that were at the heart of the place. Project time and the open-ended ways teachers and children work during that time is a core part of the school, and the teachers were (and are) worried about eroding this core. In addition, the descriptive inquiry processes used to collaboratively study teachers' and children's work in the school were getting harder and harder to find time to do.

The current educational climate in New York City is one that forces the implementation of teacher-directed instruction that in turn directs children to learn a set body of information and skills measured by mandated tests. This press leaves little room for the exercise of teachers' professional judgment based on their knowledge of the children in front of them, children's choices of materials, topics, or modes of working and learning, or the inquiry that is required for both of these possibilities to be alive and generative. In the current context, teachers and schools are judged to be good or not by their test scores and by how close they come to having their classrooms and practices meet a checklist of points easily recognized and evaluated by an outside evaluator.

"Project time" does not easily fit into this context. It is about choice and variability of approach and puts the teacher in a role that demands careful observation, deep knowledge of the children in the room, and a constant process of judging when to step in and when to let the child move on his own. Importantly, project time is not easily observed, recognized, and evaluated by a person coming without a map.

In an effort to help teachers see better what they do during project time and thus be better able to stand behind their practices and articulate them to others, I recommended that we do a study in three phases. For the first meeting two teachers, one who teaches pre-K/K and one who teaches fifth and sixth grades, described their teaching practices. I knew that the descriptive stories would help listeners—some new to the school and unfamiliar with project time—see the complexities of this work, the ways children's needs and interests were central to this approach, and the important thinking and decision-making teachers do as they work in this way. In this school, the natural next step in a study such as this is to turn to children's work in order to see what a child is making of and learning from the classroom opportunities; so I recommended that we look at the project time work of a fifth- or sixth-grade child who struggled to learn in traditional ways. My thinking was that, given the questions that are always raised about whether or not a child who struggles can gain anything from practices that are as "indirect" as project time, it was important for us to put that important issue to the test that looking at work provides. By the time of the third meeting, outside pressures had increased and teachers in the school

were needing to take a stronger stand regarding their leadership's understanding and advocating for the school. I suggested that we review the notes of the first two sessions and articulate the ways that project time and the descriptive inquiry process we used in the study defined the school and kept the school's environment for both children and teachers growing and supportive.³

To give the flavor and some of the substance of the reviews of teacher practice, I summarized the teachers' stories and shared passages in their words that show some of the complexity of their thinking. As I re-read these teachers' words in order to write this essay, I was struck by how much this work I do with teachers stands on the shoulders of Vito's belief that important knowledge about children, teaching, learning, and schools is held by the people in them. If we are to understand the work of educating, we must have access to that knowledge. The way Vito, in *Teacher With a Heart* (1998), puts Leonard Covello's stories of teaching and schools in the 1930s alongside issues facing educators today stands as one example of this point. How much we learn about schools and the art of teaching from this historical example.

The two teachers who described how project time lives in their classrooms were articulating their important practical knowledge. Yvonne Smith is a pre-K/K teacher who has taught at CPE 1 for twenty years. Her description of her work with the youngest children in the school shows how she introduces materials and the processes of project time to three-, four-, and five-year-olds. Leslie Gore is a fifth and sixth grade teacher and has taught at CPE 1 for three years. Her description of her work with the oldest children in the school reflects the fact that many of them come to project time with a lot of experience and are ready for long-term and in-depth study.

To begin this story, I lay out what Yvonne and Leslie named as the purpose of project time in their classrooms. The two statements, side-by-side, give a window on the span of expectation that exists in this school. As is evident throughout this study of project time, standards exist; they just are not standardized. The standards teachers hold have emerged over time through their work with children and from their beliefs about what good work is. Alongside these standards, children are allowed to hold their own for what is good and valued work. For the youngest children, Yvonne says project time is:

Their introduction to and their way of learning the materials and learning to work on their own and learning to work with each other. I call it work time and not project time because it is a time of working and often there are not ongoing projects. Although as the year progresses more ongoing projects and work coming from them and what they are interested in doing does come. In the beginning of the year much of it comes from me. But as I see what it is they're doing, that's when I know where to go next.

For the oldest children, Leslie states,

I know that I want project time to be based around kids having the ability to become experts about something that deeply interests them. I want them to have a connection to what they're learning and to have the tools that they use to access information (tools being the reading and the writing). I want students to know those tools are relevant and useful and not to learn them because anyone is pushing it upon them saying you need to know this but because they're necessary for them to do this search.

Setting up is one of the important teaching ideas and places where standards for teaching are evident. Yvonne tells us that it takes her 10 to 14 days to set it up, starting with her block area and library and then moving to pretend, math, construction, writing, clay, paint, puzzles, dry and wet sand, water, animal study, and a space for bear house sewing. This is refreshing and almost amazing to hear because many other teachers with whom I work now as graduate students tell me that they are told exactly how to set up their room. They are given a map for the way all rooms in their school are to look, and they follow it to the letter as they will be rated on this when observed. How different it is to hear Leslie and Yvonne describe all the things they think about as they set up their rooms for project time.

They both want their rooms and the materials in them to call out to children and to be accessible to them. Yvonne's thinking permeates the process of set up. Everything is labeled and low enough to be seen and reached by children. The physical environment and materials in it must speak to the children and suggest the work that can happen.

I want for them to be able to get what they need and to be able to put things away. ... Both setting up and cleaning up are important parts of what kids do and what they learn from. And the notion of getting it ready for the next time. That it's going to be there for them and that they will return to it is important. ... I want, when the children come into the room, first day and every day after that, for the room to say what it's for. So it's important that things be laid out for them. That the painting table says, 'You're going to paint.' ... That the block area says, 'Come build.' Pretend says, 'Try something on and imagine.' ... I also believe and set the room up to say to them that you can do this. That I'm not here to do it all for you. That you're going to figure a lot of this out and that you are going to do it with me and you are going to do it with the materials you are going to use and do it with each other. ... The room demands and says independence, dependence, and interdependence.

Leslie mirrors this way of thinking as she describes thinking about the needs of her older children.

I know that I want to make sure there are labels on everything so it's clear where certain materials go. Certain books I want to highlight, ... and I also want different areas of the room to look inviting. It's my experience that you can have some books on a bookshelf for a long time, but you take them out of the bookshelf and put them in a bin with a really funky, big label, and the kids all of a sudden are attracted to it.

They think about what children need in order to get their work done. The nature and the varying needs of the children they teach direct decisions. Their knowledge of children is striking here as is the importance of small details. For Yvonne it is setting up for pairs; for Leslie it is table space. Describing dry sand, Yvonne told us how it "is set up for two children and the materials reflect that it's set up for pairs" and how she constantly uses the language of two-ness—couple,

pair, double—so the children get “a sense that two-ness can be expressed in lots of different ways.” She also acknowledged the nature of the young child in her room.

And there are sets of two such things because in September, and longer than that, three-, four-, and five-year-olds often can't share, and I don't want them to have to share. I want each of them to find their own set of tools in the sand table, whether it's dry sand or wet sand, or water. And they see that, and they divide things up. And I talk to them about how they divided things up, that there's one for each of them.

On this same point, Leslie talks about how she and her fellow fifth/sixth grade teacher

think about whether there are enough tables. Are there enough big tables where kids can spread out and do a lot of big projects? Where is the construction going to happen? In my room there are purposely tables with three chairs and tables with four chairs and then individual places where the kids can work. I know that I want them to have the opportunity to collaborate in different sized groups.

A third aspect of setting up for project time is creating a common space for the work of the classroom community. In Yvonne's room it is the block area. For Leslie, the community area is the meeting area.

Set-up turns out to be about providing materials and organizing space. The process is one of making a map based on the teachers' deep understandings of the materials and the children they want to use those materials. The process is not one of following someone else's premade map.

I turn next to Leslie's description of the nature of the work she wants and expects children to do during project time. I think she gives us insight into what children's work in school can be. It is far from the canned projects that have set outcomes so common in classrooms. The work that Leslie describes seems filled with adventure:

At the beginning of the year kids are expected to stay with a work choice for only one or a few days. We want things to be open-ended and to give children a starting place for their work and offer possibilities to carry their ideas further. So, for example, with animal study it was pretty easy. It's in the science area. There are microscopes and there are little dishes, but then there are the animals themselves and the environment that they're in. Just thinking about possibilities. One child began an animal study and was just fascinated by the way the geckoes moved. And so they tried to set up an obstacle course for the geckoes and observe what the geckoes did in that obstacle course. ...

During the time that they work, the children can work pretty much at their own pace. They're able to try out ideas, make mistakes, make observations, ask questions, take in new information, share what they know about something, and move around the room with a sense of authority.

In addition to these standards and values about work, Leslie highlighted another—the idea that their thinking can “be pushed and extended through experimentation, inquiry, and problem solving. To reflect that idea I've put things out, such as a bin of unfinished sewing work, asking the kids, ‘What can you add on?’ Challenging the idea of what finished really means anyway.” Another way that this extending happens is through the sharing time when children volunteer to share their work. This happens in a variety of ways: sharing what they have done that day; retelling the steps they have taken from the beginning; sharing a part of their work that was difficult or surprising; asking for help with figuring something out. The listening class members respond with questions and/or suggestions. For Leslie, children taking ownership of the process enough to question classmates is key. The talk they do during sharing time reveals their engagement, choices they have made, and how the children learn from each other. In her Review, Leslie told stories of children who received challenging responses to their work. In one, a student tells the maker of a weaving that had holes in it that, “You know, I've noticed that you are the kind of worker who likes to get things done really quickly just for the sake of getting them done. Are you going to fix [those holes]?” The weaver went back and reworked her piece at the insistence of her classmate.

Fifth and sixth grade students at CPE 1 are expected to conduct deep inquiries called “search projects.” These projects develop out of interests and are opportunities to know something really well. They are a more specific version of what the children have been doing all along in project time and include a written narrative of their process of inquiry, a research report on an aspect of their work, a physical representation of their work, and an oral presentation of the work.

It’s a journey that kids are prepared to take. I always like to think of their whole search project from beginning to end. Sometimes their beginning is three years ago. But it’s a journey. They’re prepared to take it because it’s based on a way of learning which they’ve been engaged in from the early grades. And they’ve also been engaged in documenting their work and the process of their work. We spend a lot of time at the beginning of the year discussing the value of documenting our work so that the kids have a chance to experiment with what could make their record of their work better or more complete.

The story Leslie tells here is representative of the work that children do in their searches. That work most often grows out of work they have done before and so has a depth otherwise not possible. It is also work through which children learn the importance of their interests and of learning about the world through that which invites their deep attention:

I want to end [this Review] by describing one child’s journey. I’ve had this child for two years, and she did her search project in sixth grade, but fifth grade is when her journey started. In fifth grade Nikelle’s mother had entered a contest about clogged arteries through her job, and her mother would come home and ask her to help with this project that she needed to do for this contest. Her project involved clogged arteries and how they were different from healthy arteries. And Nikelle would come in almost every morning and during our morning meeting share about the stuff that her mother was doing and how interesting it was, and how her

mother would ask her for all this help. She'd say, "Do you have any books on ..., because my mother really needs to know. ..." "Do you have a picture of an artery?" She was always sharing about it. Sometimes she would just share with me privately. I watched her grow increasingly fascinated by the human body and all of its functions. She began spending a lot of time reading different books we had in the classroom about this subject. I would look over and just any chance she'd get—we have this huge human body book that has these foldouts—I would always just see her looking. There would be a group of kids around her saying, "Oh, look at that." There was just this buzz around the room about the human body.

She really didn't begin to connect that interest to her project work until the following year. She was working in junk construction in sixth grade. And one day at a share time she was laughing about her work, and she said to everybody, "Doesn't this look like a human heart?" She was discouraged at first because a lot of kids said, "No." And I said to them, "Well, tell her why you don't think it looks like a human heart." And they explained to her why they didn't think it did, based on what they knew about the heart. That really challenged Nikelle to make the heart better. And so she brought it back to the next share time meeting. This time she had included arteries that were attached. What she had done was go back to some of the books that she had found in the classroom. She did a lot of work at home also, and I know she bugged her mom to take her to the library to get books on certain things. At that next share time she spoke really with confidence, demonstrating a certain level of expertise on the heart and its function. She decided to take her interest further and developed that work into her search project. It was the time of the year when we started talking about search projects, and for her it was sort of a natural extension.

She wanted to work with somebody else so she didn't want to continue to do the work by herself. What she did was choose a few other organs she wanted to focus on. ... I asked her why was it that she was interested in those particular

organs. And she said that it was two things. Either she didn't know very much about them, and she wanted to know more [or] she also thought that some of them were really cool and the most interesting organs in the body.

She also had done a lot of research on the Internet and found a lot of pictures of some of the organs. She had cut out a lot of the pictures and put them in the journal or on paper. Nikelle had this grand idea to make a life size figure with some sort of a door you could open and peak inside and see all of these things inside of the body. And she began by developing a method for herself, along with this other student. They decided to do one organ at a time. I mean she had the heart, the lungs, the intestines, skin, brain. But she chose one at a time and they would together just sit and pour over books and just look at books about this particular thing.

They did this all on their own. Over a couple of week-ends they went to the Children's Museum and then they went to the Science Museum because someone's mom found out that there was an exhibit. It was like everybody knew! Their families knew! Everybody in class knew that this was their thing: the human body.

After they found out about an organ, then they made a model of it. They ran into a lot of problems. Some of the problems were figuring out a way to make a structure to encase all of those things. Another problem was making each body part, internal and external, to scale. They resorted to lying down out in the hallway, and on a big piece of butcher paper they traced Nikelle's body. That was going to be the size. But when they started to cut different things and put the ribs on, I pointed out to them, "Is that rib coming up from the waist?" And she was sort of confused for a minute. That was one of the problems they ran into.

Another problem was finding appropriate materials to reflect certain qualities in the organs that they wanted. Like the intestines. They kept insisting that they wanted them to look a certain way and feel a certain way. But to find the right material to do that was very hard. I know they bugged Tim [the art teacher] to help them. It took a lot longer than

expected to figure out what size everything should be and exactly where to place it.

The ending place for their work was one that we chose together. It was one that Nikelle, I know, could say that she was proud of. It was an ending place that left her with a lot of questions still about the body and about certain materials and putting things together and constructing. But it was also a place where a lot of her questions were answered.

Throughout her Review, Leslie weaves the question about her role. What is it? What should it be? She doesn't use this language, but I think that one role that Leslie describes herself taking on is working alongside her students. She asks students to document their work, and she forces herself to do the same. Questioning your role as a teacher and so your relationship with your students and their learning is, in my mind, essential. How else will your practice develop—unless, of course, you are mindlessly following the directions of a supervisor and a model?

As I said, twice a week we do a share time and twice a week it's a writing time and recording time. And while they're writing, I write. I do that because I know that if I didn't do it, I would lose my understanding of what the value of it was. There are times when I will make just a transcript of what is going on in a certain area. I'll take notes on questions I hear the kids ask or just something I've observed and want to come back to.

I also use as part of my documentation what I write in their journals. After they've finished recording, I'll often write back to them. Sometimes they look at me and say, "Can't we just talk about it?" But, I like to do this letter writing thing. It's a way for me to keep track of things that I'm asking them. And it helps me to remember why I wanted to ask them certain things. I also like to take pictures of the kids working and try to put those up for them to see. ...

For me, my role is always changing. It's asking kids what they feel is going on. It's deciding when to leave things open ended for a particular child or when to just allow them the time to explore without asking any questions, and then

when I feel it necessary, to direct them in a certain area. And it's the children; they come to their work with different understandings, different goals, different objectives. The role is constantly changing, and it's not always easy to figure out what my role should be.

This Review was done in a circle of colleagues, and a good part of our time together was spent responding to the teachers who had shared their work. These descriptions generated some interesting realizations and understandings among colleagues about their own classroom practice and the school in which they worked. They gave voice to their "local knowledge" from their inside perspective. One point that became more apparent to the group was that the structure of project time is difficult to see by a person entering from the outside. Teachers who make room for this kind of work know where the structures are and how they support the children, and it was useful for them to hear from a couple of people new to the school that those structures are not readily apparent. This Review helped the new people better see where the structures were and how they worked.

Contributing to the outsider's difficulty in seeing how project time works is the fact that the teacher is not the center of project time and the learning that happens through it. This fact necessitates the teachers themselves making their role visible to themselves and to others. These Reviews helped us see that the teacher's role is one of being present for children through the questioning, provisioning, helping children explain or talk about their work, and responding to a child's work that she does. The teacher steps back so the child can be the one in the spotlight and can learn to depend on himself.

Through these Reviews the CPE 1 teachers better saw what the teacher "stepping back" meant for children. Because they don't have to depend on a teacher to learn, children own their work and learning. They learn to be articulate about their work, and the sharing of work that happens regularly generates much for the group—excitement, new ideas to try, encouragement to move forward with work. One idea builds on another. The learning becomes much more powerful and rich than when one person thinks they have all the knowledge that they are going to impart but that might not be of any interest to the children.

One of the teachers in the group summarized his understanding of project time: "This approach to work teaches children how to learn and what learning is. It doesn't tell them, 'Do this or do that.' It shows them that learning is not about finding the one way to do things. It is about seeing the possibilities in materials. It is about learning to take risks with projects and ideas that matter to them."

I don't tell this story to advocate for a particular educational vision, even though I think, and I believe that Vito Perrone would agree, the education CPE 1 teachers work so hard to provide their students is very strong. Its strengths lay in the teachers' capacities to articulate and pose questions to their practice and to create a body of local, practical knowledge that includes the complexities of day-to-day work with children and that is not about static models. The core question in this time is how we can continue to make space for a vision of school that deviates so much from the current "state" vision. How can we protect alternatives from the "ongoing 'project of legibility'" described by Scott (1998, p. 80) and enacted by the current press to standardize and regulate? These questions are part of the family of questions that Vito has been raising through his life and work about the ways schools and education can be part of democratizing our society.

In Scott's (1998) "Conclusion," he lays out a set of ideas that I think underline aspects of Vito Perrone's thinking and work that have inspired my own.

Complex, diverse, animated environments contribute ... to producing a resilient, flexible, adept population that has more experience in confronting novel challenges and taking initiative. Narrow, planned environments, by contrast, foster a less skilled, less innovative, less resourceful population. This population, once created, would ironically have been exactly the kind of human material that would in fact have needed close supervision from above. (p. 349)

Scott goes on to talk about the importance of diversity to institutions and of the need to move away from "'canned' situations that permit little or no modification" to those that give room to participants' "wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence" that comes as a result of "responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment" (1998, p. 313).

CPE 1 represents this kind of institutional diversity and complexity. It represents efforts to offer the members of its community a place where they do not have to pay “the human costs of stultifying routines and ... rote performance” (Scott, 1998, p. 356). It represents a place where the community members can learn to enact their own potentials and capacities. CPE 1’s story and Vito Perrone’s life and work come together here to illustrate the vigilance and energy it takes to keep these values alive and vital.

References

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Endnotes

- ¹ I thank Jane Andreas, Elaine Avidon, and Andy Doan for reading my several drafts of this piece. Elaine Avidon’s responses helped immeasurably to make my drafting process a genuine one.
- ² The Prospect Center is a membership organization that “offers an alternative view of the person and of learning, thinking, and teaching” based in North Bennington, VT. Prospect’s descriptive processes, developed by Patricia Carini and colleagues, are cores of the work done by CPE 1 and described here.
- ³ I don’t describe in this essay the second and third part of this study. A full description is available from the author.

Cecelia Traugh came in 1979 to the University of North Dakota to work with Vito Perrone as Associate Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Her work there inspired her to re-immers herself in schools and the lives of teachers and children, and after a year as an Archive Scholar at the Prospect Center, she helped found Central Park East Secondary School and then became the director of the Friends Select Middle School in Philadelphia. After seven years in Philadelphia, she took the job of Director of Research and Evaluation of the Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman College in the Bronx. In the Fall of 2000 she was invited to help the faculty in the School of Education of Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY, re-imagine their teacher education programs, and she is now the Acting Dean of the School of Education, LIU/ Brooklyn.