

"Student as Consumer": A Critical Narrative of the Commercialization of Teacher Education

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Abstract

In this article, we, two teacher educators, examine the "student as consumer" ideology and its detrimental effects. Through a critical narrative, we explore the process of the commercialization of teacher education as we experienced it. Our personal stories indicate, the commercialization of teacher education is wide ranging and far-flung as it infiltrates every aspect of teacher education: the hiring and firing of faculty members based on market needs, the recruiting of students for profits, the creating of quick programs to maximize economic gains, the judging of professors' teaching performance according to consumers demands, the standardization of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for economic efficiency, and the sacrificing of the critical mission of teacher education for practical and technical training. Based on our narrative and analysis, we call for teacher educators, prospective teachers, and concerned citizens to unite and resist the aggressive invasion of corporate culture, market principles, and commercial values in teacher education. We particularly urge fellow teacher educators to become public intellectuals and cultural workers and engage themselves in the ongoing struggle for social change and cultural transformation.

Over the past two decades, the rising trend of neoliberal globalization has ushered great changes in social affairs. North American multinational corporations, driven by their profit-making impulses, have greatly accelerated the imposition of their organizational forms, social relations, and ideologies on the so-called Third World regions. While moving business out of North America, these corporations have shielded themselves from the cost associated with minimum wage laws, taxes, and

environmental regulations (McLaren, 2005; Giroux, 2004a; Giroux and Giroux, 2003). The ascendancy of market ideologies over democratic imperatives has left more people across the globe in the throes of poverty, pollution, and hopelessness. In essence, corporate culture is gaining increasing control over every aspect of life. As McLaren (2005) notes correctly, "capital is in command of the world order as never before" (p. 27). Higher education is no exception.

Economic ideology is being normalized within educational arenas as market principles and commercial criteria are invading college campuses. A "school as business and student as consumer" mentality has been created; it infiltrates every fabric of college life. With the sharp reduction of public aid to higher education, colleges and universities turn increasingly to the private sector for support, while private enterprises are eagerly looking for market opportunities on college campuses (Washburn, 2005). In admission, colleges use typical economic incentives, such as future market-outcome guarantee and monetary rewards (scholarship), which are common to business recruitment and maintenance, to attract prospective students. Once students are accepted, they are treated as customers on campus and are provided services they pay for. A "student (consumer) is always right" slogan alters the professor-student relationship. Economic logic leads further to the proliferation of hiring contingent adjunct faculty and part-time instructors who are increasingly becoming the dominant teaching force. In the classroom, many professors are forced to tailor their pedagogy to meet the needs of consumer-students and their future market demands. As Stilwell (2003) points out, conventional notions of professionalism are being challenged and academic work commodified.

This "student as consumer" phenomenon and the associated commodification of academic knowledge and thinking have fractured the progressive purpose and function of higher education. Historically, the university has been viewed as a "humanizing force in society, where the value of people is always a priority" (Giroux, 2000, p. 47). The value lies in personal development, not in crass economic reward in the marketplace. As fundamental structures for fostering moral and democratic life, colleges and universities play an integral and active role. They are responsible for educating individuals who can become active participants in democracy and work towards creating a society predicated on the foundations of justice and equity. The

progressive and democratic missions of higher education are under a savage attack by this corporate ideology. Brodsky (2002) does an excellent job capturing how higher education is being "redefined" by corporate imperatives:

Make no mistake--the corporate university is not about providing an education. It is about image and PR, about corporate funding, grants, business partnerships, profit, and control. Anything that interferes with these goals will be reshaped, reduced, or eliminated. . . The redefined university will have very little resemblance to that interconnected community that has evolved over hundreds of years.

The commercialization of teacher education is in full force today. Corporate ideologies and practices have led to the "the detheorizing" of teacher education (Hill, 2004, p.151). For instance, in England and Wales, Conservative and New Labor governments have created "new regulations for teacher training and education" (Hill, 2004, p.152). Teacher educators have been positioned to teach courses designed to train classroom teachers to "manage" their classrooms with a set of behavior techniques, instead of having the freedom to create democratic projects "centered around the transformation of property relations and the creation of a just system of appropriation and social wealth" (McLaren, 2005, p. 90).

In the United States, government officials and business leaders have also created market-driven policies and programs, which are aimed at blocking the next generation of schoolteachers from examining the sociopolitical, historical, and economic forces creating unequal power relations in schools and the wider society (Bartolome, 2004; McLaren, Martin, Farahmandpur, & Jaramillo, 2004). President Bush's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education bill has altered the nature of teaching "expertise." Many teacher educators, administrators, and citizens in the United States now deem K-12 teachers "highly qualified" based on their ability to master a fix body of content on a plethora of corporate-inspired examinations (Au, 2004; Leistyna, Lavadez, & Nelson, 2004). Unfortunately, with the corporate controlled politicians' shallow configuration of today's ideal educator, we are losing the conception that educators must possess the critical insight along with the courage to interrogate educational practices and policies that stifle the humanizing nature of education, such as the ability to recognize how corporate and government leaders benefit from the institution of draconian educational policies like NCLB. Moreover, many more teacher candidates, who seek

to enter public education as a second career, have opted to either bypass traditional teacher education programs for newly created market-driven, fast track alternative programs or have sought emergency or other temporary routes to certification. This trend is witnessed in the 38, 519 individuals who entered United States' K-12 classrooms through alternative route programs in 2004. In 1999, only 12,283 individuals chose similar, market-driven routes (Feistritzer, 2005a, p. 11).

Although the forms of alternative certification programs do vary across the United States, their market-oriented approach to teaching and learning is antithetical to producing "rigorously educated teachers with an awareness of the complexities of educational practice and an understanding of and commitment to a socially just, democratic notion of schooling" (Kincheloe, 2004, p.50). For instance, in 2004, almost 38% of teachers procuring a teacher credential through alternative programs in the United States *never* enrolled in an education course (Feistritzer, 2005b). The remaining alternative programs also failed these teachers, as they were not aimed at encouraging schoolteachers to think critically about the pre-existing, asymmetrical institutional arrangements in schools and the wider society.

Some commercial organizations, such as Sylvan Education Solutions and Kaplan Inc., have attracted post-baccalaureate and midcareer changers seeking a teaching credential through "a full menu of initial teacher preparation in addition to professional development opportunities" (Hinchey & Cadiero-Kaplan, 2005). Hinchey and Cadiero-Kaplan (2005) show how corporate-driven forms of teacher education do little to produce critical schoolteachers, but do a great deal to maximize profits for corporate leaders. Future teachers learn how and what they will teach from reading scripted curriculum textbooks, completing online technical coursework and regurgitating information on many high-stakes, computerized examinations. A recent survey compiled by the National Center for Education Information cements the point that alternative route programs fail to rigorously train practitioners, who are capable of promoting social justice in their classroom. The survey found alternatively certified teachers lacked a sophisticated understanding of the role neoliberal social and economic policies play in undermining the democratic nature of schooling. Compared to public K-12 teachers, who obtained their credentials in traditional teacher education programs, alternatively prepared teachers were more receptive to corporately-

sponsored education initiatives, such as standardized testing, charter schools, and vouchers (Feistritz, 2005c)

In the following pages, while reviewing the extant literature dealing with this pressing issue of the commercialization of teacher education, we, two teacher educators who have been working in Northeastern United States colleges for several years, examine how this "student as consumer" ideology is structuring and restructuring our professional lives. Specifically, our aim is to show how this commercialization of education has affected our teaching, our relationship with students, and the overall culture of teacher education programs. We also provide recommendations to our fellow teacher educators on how to subvert this reactionary trend and continue to strive for a more humane, democratic, and moral educational system and social world.

Our stories

Teacher Educator #1:

Over the past four years, I have educated over a thousand students, within various teacher education programs, located in the Northeastern United States. Although I enjoy mentoring students and sharing my ideas in relation to teaching, schools, and society, I have found myself struggling with commercial ideologies structuring life inside the classroom. Like many graduate students, I entered the university setting as part of the growing pool of "contingent members," individuals who serve as a cheap source of labor for colleges that are seeking flexible employees as they believe "cheaper is always better" (Bradley 2004; Hess, 2004). For over two years, I remained at the beacon call of administrators, filling in courses that were created particularly by market demands. Very often, I was called upon just a week before the start of a semester to teach courses I was not fully prepared for.

Through my experiences as a "temporary" worker, I gained a better perspective as to how corporate culture operates in academic institutions to position students to play a powerful role in the learning process. The college reinforces students' pre-existing commercialized notions surrounding education, teaching and learning by conditioning them to accept "the market" as the solution to all our problems and to view education as purely a commodity. In essence, this translates into the idea that

'paying' tuition provides them with the entitlement of determining what should be taught and how they should learn. Thus, the "consumer is always right" mentality is intruding our classroom and dismantling the democratic and moral dimensions of higher learning.

This mentality is born out in my first set of student evaluations. While I valued students' opinion on my teaching performance, I was perplexed at many of their views. Several students, who were dissatisfied with the course, evaluated it through the eyes of a consumer. The course would be considered valuable if it satisfied their market-related personal needs, not as to whether it helped them become more thoughtful educators or critical citizens. For instance, they even drew a conclusion about my teaching performance based upon the fact that they were requested to purchase textbooks, which they thought were too many and too costly.

Other students suggested that this foundations of education course was too rigorous and should never be taught. Apparently, doing that type of critical, intellectual work puts a cramp into students' busy schedules. The clinical nature of the program made it arduous for my students to interrogate the social, historical, and economic forces that create hate, hostility and violence inside and outside the schools. The required course readings along with the critical in-class discussions challenged many of their entrenched beliefs surrounding North American schools and the wider society. For many students, it was the first time they were compelled to examine the unearned privileges they, as other White, middle class citizens, acquire merely from their racial status. A few students went so far to state that the course should be dismantled entirely and I should go along with it. In its place, the pre-service teachers suggested a more "practical" course be offered, implying that teacher education institutions should merely operate as breeding grounds to train compliant teachers, individuals who lack the critical insight and courage to "deflect and transform the invasive power of capital" within their schools as well as within their own social worlds (McLaren, 2005, p. 92).

Although I was troubled by these comments, as every teacher wants their students to grow intellectually in the classroom, I became truly disenchanted when I found the college often sided with the students and engendered a corporate way of teaching and learning. The administration examined my teaching performance solely by whether it

created happy customers. As a result, I was not invited to teach again at this institution because the chairperson's "bottom line" mentality—good teaching is characterized by producing happy students. By treating teaching as a commercial relationship, the institution overlooked that my intellectual labor may have left positive marks on many students. My critical role in helping future teachers understand the nature of education and become critical teachers themselves was eradicated.

Fortunately, I found another academic community willing to take a chance that my teaching would not disrupt too many of their "customers." I now serve as a tenure-track teacher educator. Yet, this environment is not divorced from commercial imperatives. Several practices seeped in commercial logic play a significant role in structuring life inside the classroom. For example, good teaching is associated with being very "flexible." On three separate occasions, I have been asked by the administration to teach courses in which I have very little background knowledge. Although my evaluations were adequate, as there were no complaining "customers," I am left to wonder whether I am complicit in the deskilling of the university professorate. Without adequate background knowledge, my teaching may lack the direction needed to guide students to reflect critically upon core subjects under investigation. If we replay this flexible professor scenario across teaching education programs, we may find that universities are collectively failing to give future teachers the intellectual knowledge necessary to solve problems in and out of K-12 classrooms.

The structure of our teacher education program reflects the growing trend of maximizing profit for universities. It embodies a customer-friendly approach to learning. In our most popular program, most students take 18 graduate credit hours within two days and they can earn their license to teach without giving up their full-time jobs. Such curriculum design, on the surface, seems to work well for all parties involved. Students are on the "fast track" to get certified, while the college feeds its coffers by maximizing enrollment. However, what is sacrificed in this arrangement is students' intellectual development. With the little amount of time students have to read and reflect upon course material, they prioritize focusing on "practical" knowledge and believe this is what they only need to "survive" in the classroom.

After a recent review by the state's accreditation agency, I am now even less hopeful that it is possible to quell the Department's shift towards a technical, corporate form of education. The administration and some faculty members have supported a standardization of curriculum, which will be accomplished by administration approved common syllabi, a common set of course readings, and common course "exit examinations." Both contingent and full-time faculty members must adhere to all the pedagogical mandates deemed salient for each course by the administration. These practices are supposedly designed to ensure that our students pass standardized, high-stakes examinations laid down by the state. State lawmakers have implemented these examinations due to the Federal government's policy (part of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998) which seeks to "improve" teacher education by "requiring states to report institutional pass rates on certified examinations and denying aid to institutions that lose state funding" (Maher, 2002, p. 3).

Unfortunately, exponents of this standardization of education are not concerned that a standardized education is a direct assault on our professional autonomy. They are unable, or unwilling, to see how this form of education strips our power to gauge what is important to teach and how students should learn. They also fail to recognize students' standardized test results may be used as a quick source of information to guide key departmental decisions, policies and practices. For instance, some faculty may face heavy reprisals, as have many K-12 teachers in North America, if their students fail to master the fix body of content knowledge deemed essential for being a "highly qualified teacher" by the state or the administration (Leistyna, Lavandez, & Nelson, 2004, p. 4).

Finally, the high-stakes, "professor-proof" curriculum sends a message surreptitiously to future teachers; it tells them they should rely on the state rather than their professional judgment to develop a curriculum and structure classroom practices that prepare our youth to be thoughtful citizens. If this occurs, our youth will be just like their teachers, unable to recognize the social and political forces behind the ubiquitous quest to control and profit off the labor of educators across the globe.

Teacher Educator #2:

As a junior faculty member who just entered the teaching profession, I teach courses in the social foundations of education, such as educational philosophy, critical issues in education, and multiculturalism in education. These courses, as I perceive, seek to provide future teachers a historical and theoretical framework to analyze and critique current educational issues. They are designed to help students develop an ongoing critical perspective regarding the larger socio-cultural and political-economic context and its impact on educational practice. Although I believe these courses have long-term meaning for students, their value cannot often be judged in terms of immediate practical outcomes. In other words, the subject matter is often difficult to translate directly into teaching strategies or techniques, as they require more abstract theorizing than detailing a concrete, step-by-step management approach to teaching and learning. Unfortunately I am increasingly facing such practical issues as I continue to receive students' inquiries about the course content, such as "How can you make Plato more useful in my classroom?" Or "Too much theory but I want to leave the class with something practical, something hands-on, something I can physically grab . . ."

These pre-service teachers' extreme job-preparation attitudes towards the coursework are further reinforced by the policies of the state government and teacher accreditation agencies. The top-down regulations on student teaching are strictly enforced in the education department as time and faculty-supervision are guaranteed to ensure those regulations. The clinical aspect of teacher education is viewed as more important to succeeding in the classroom than more theory-oriented courses. The college designates a half-half program for secondary students in which pre-service teachers must finish a semester-long student teaching experience after completing only one-semester coursework. Moreover, now new state mandates require teacher candidates to have more and more clinical experience even before they begin student teaching. One hundred hours of field-based experience have been added to the candidate's pre-student teaching profile. Even in a philosophy of education course, I am expected to make arrangements for such clinical experiences.

Put aside the question whether or not this separate, add-on program will likely help our students learn how to teach, such a requirement reflects a practice-based, job-

preparation mentality. This is a major and, dangerous, trend in teacher education, which has developed over the last twenty years, and is, not coincidentally, entangled with the larger economic globalization. As many have observed, teacher education has moved from the library and the lecture hall to the public schools, to become more clinical (Ryan, 1989 and Tom, 1984). While teaching strategies are emphasized, the social, cultural and philosophical foundations of education are trivialized, and the political, cultural, and aesthetic aspects of teaching and learning ignored. The vision of the good teacher is thus becoming the good technician: Anyone who can manage a classroom with some behavioral techniques and strategies and get tasks done is considered a good teacher. Pre-service personnel are directed to focus their energy and efforts on things with immediate and practical values. For example, they are more concerned about how to teach their future students to do well on standardized tests (since the tests will be the core of their teaching life) than engaging themselves in some critical examination of the rationale behind the "test mania." Many other challenging problems confronting our schools and wider society today, such as racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia, become irrelevant to our teacher candidates. They are not motivated and encouraged to tackle these issues. As classroom management and behavioral techniques become dominant themes in their minds, they are losing the consciousness and critical perspectives as educators.

The watering down of curriculum is best reflected in multicultural education courses in teacher education programs. The "tacos and egg-roll approach" (Rothenberg, 2001) to multicultural education prevailing in schools is also reinforced in teacher education programs (Derman-Sparks, 2002). After teaching a multicultural education course for two semesters, I became very disheartened by students' resistance to transformative education. Obsessed with technical training, students are not motivated to examine how institutionalized forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, create injustice and inequities in schools and the wider society. Some of my colleagues have adopted the "heroes and holidays" approach to multicultural education and tailored their pedagogy to meet the practical concerns of students. By doing so, they are unconsciously perpetuating the status quo in society. Future teachers will undoubtedly mirror their teacher educators' practices; they will fold in similar, sanitized pedagogies into K-12 classrooms. In addition, teacher educators engage in a form of silent self-censorship, a process of

reducing intellectual and critical work to mere, superficial, technical practice. For non-tenured or contingent faculty members, this process serves as a "safety net" to protect themselves against sudden termination of employment (Bradley, 2004).

As practice is emphasized over theory and doing is valued over thinking, corporate principles of efficiency, accountability, and profit maximization are increasingly affecting our life. Driven by profit making, the college is making every effort to recruit students; however, they are not providing the necessary facilities and teaching supplies to support high quality instruction. While teaching load and class sizes have been continually increased, the pedagogical ramifications of such moves are rarely considered carefully by the administration. Faculty members' concerns about these issues are often simply dismissed. For example, responding to my request to move out of an overcrowded classroom, the college registrar answered: "You are lucky enough to have a room to teach!" Although the faculty's voice is often ignored, students' complaints seem to work sometimes. For example, after the insistence of my students, the registrar's office eventually moved us to a bigger room. The bottom line is to keep students happy as consumers and ensure that their demands be met at all costs. Thus, the school reflects a shopping mall culture. Get people in with their money and make them happy to spend the money. Within this atmosphere, faculty members are expected to act like storekeepers.

Further analyses and recommendations: Resisting and subverting the commercialization

In this last section, we attempt to outline a brief recommendation for teacher educators and concerned citizens to recognize the corporate hijacking of teacher education and to participate in an ongoing struggle to subvert this reactionary trend. Our purpose is not to prescribe answers, but to invite further dialogue and debates. To start, we need to raise awareness in people in and outside of the college campus about this commercial invasion and reclaim the role and meaning of higher education and its faculty. This consumerism undermines our commitment to a moral and democratic life. Market values do not always reward moral behavior and democratic endeavor. Knowledge, learning and education cannot be commercialized. The commercialization of education undermines the power of self-definition, social responsibility, and the capacities of individuals to expand the scope of freedom,

justice, and operations of democracy (Giroux, 2000; Giroux, 2004a; Giroux, 2004b; Hill, 2004; Hirsch & Martina, 2003; McLaren, 2005; Weiler, 2002). Higher education should be the fundamental structure fostering social values. Colleges and universities embody, rationalize, legitimate, and promote beliefs and values that will become social and cultural policies and practices. Higher education also provides the training of people who will operate social institutions grounded in these beliefs and values. Therefore, we must guide our thinking and actions with a respect for and commitment to human worth, democracy, and moral mission. A commercial orientation undermines such mission. University campuses must provide a safe space for people to engage in free dialogue, critical reflection, and independent investigation about social problems and human development. Economic concerns or commercial values may have a place in our thinking, but it should not dominate our actions and undercut our overall commitment to the principles of justice, equity, and human freedom.

We must reclaim our role as faculty members in higher education. We are not temporary, dispensable workers susceptible to market demands, selling our labor whenever there is a commercial need. We are not shopping mall attendants or storekeepers that leave the value of our work judged primarily by the self-interests of consumers. We are the proud public intellectuals, "citizen-scholars" and "cultural workers" (Giroux, 1992; Giroux, 2004a; Giroux & Giroux, 2003), and our role is unique, irreplaceable, and critical to the well-being of society. As public intellectuals, we are committed to the public good, not to particular groups and their interests. As Purpel (1998) claims, our responsibility is not to some particular students or schools, but rather to the public community, to the highest aspirations of the nation and the culture. As citizen scholars, we have a moral obligation to educate for critical citizenry. We must take the responsibility to engage students in critical reflection, dialogues, and debates about the role of individuals in transforming society. Students must be given a chance to learn how to participate actively in democratic life, and they must reclaim their responsibility and agency to confront a politically bankrupt and morally empty society. As cultural workers, we must direct our energy and efforts to look beyond our classroom walls and tackle forms of injustice in the wider society. The problems of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, among others, are permeating our social and cultural structures and affecting life in schools. The increasing rule of market values and corporate culture reinforce the vacuous notion

that individuals can do nothing to confront those cultural ills and instead only become good consumers primarily concerned with buying and selling commodities.

Then, what actions should and can we take? We must advocate and dedicate ourselves to a moral mission to create and maintain a just and loving community on the college campus. The dignity of each and every person in our community must be affirmed. We must speak loudly against the cruelty and injustice of increasing competition, discrimination, and legitimation of hierarchy and privilege. Adjunct and part-time instructors are an integral member of our family and their contribution to the growth of our students is invaluable and must be appreciated. They deserve adequate financial pay and they must have a say on the governance of the school. While recognizing the value of adjunct faculty, we must stop the dangerous trend to make everyone, including the full-time faculty, dispensable temporary workers. The pure commercial purpose behind this move must be deconstructed and resisted.

All faculty members must confront school policies and regulations and every other move designed to propagate this consumerist, corporate model of education. The program design and curriculum development must be organized around the purpose of students' intellectual development, not commercial gains. We cannot reinforce the job-preparation orientation in the name of practical or clinical growth. This is such urgent task in teacher education as state mandates and regulations increasingly emphasize and reward practical training over theoretical and critical reflection. The allegation that "It is important for colleges to provide teachers with the practical skills of teaching in the real world of schools instead of focusing on fanciful theories" is inherently flawed, because it legitimizes the role of teacher education programs in reproducing the prevailing, and very often pernicious educational orientation and de-emphasizes its independent and critical function. As Purpel (1998) notes, teacher education programs continue to prepare teachers to work in schools as they are rather than as they ought or might be, and in so doing they are perpetuating and validating the reactionary status quo. There are so many pressing problems and issues in current schools such as the excessive standardized testing, differential and very often racist, tracking, dehumanizing zero-tolerance policies, and the mind-numbing, sheep training character education, which are undermining the well-being of children and teachers. These problems are inextricably linked to the commercialization of schooling (Anyon,

1997; Casella, 2000; Gabbard, 2002; Kohn, 2000; Lipman, 2002; Porfilio & Hall, 2005; Saltman & Goodman, 2002; Yu, 2004)

In our classroom, we must reaffirm an ethical relationship between teachers and students. We should be guides and facilitators in the learning process. We should be role models of free inquiry and critical exploration of ideas. Our purpose is to educate for well-rounded intellectuals and active citizens. Market principles and commercial values cannot undermine our role and our approach to students. The extreme student-centered approach emphasized by many teacher education programs reflects the "consumer is always right" mentality and damages our educational and pedagogic commitment. We cannot always tailor our curriculum and instruction according to students' demands especially when such demands are tied to market values.

As teacher educators, our chief mission at this time must be to help pre-service and in-service teachers make sense of the complex forces driving the spread of neoliberal policies and practices, the globalization of capital, and commercial forms of pedagogies and knowledge within schools and the wider society. By incorporating units of instruction on globalized sweatshops, providing safe spaces to interrogate corporate-generated discourses, such as advertisements, films, textbooks, and curricula, and tapping the work of scholars who provide social, historical, and political analyses of institutional forms of oppression within educational institutions, future teachers will recognize that capitalist social relations are inextricably linked to breeding greed, violence, ecological injustice, hate and hostility (McLaren, 2005; Saltman, 2004). However, this revolutionary brand of teaching cannot be divorced from providing "collective dreaming" (McLaren, 2005, p.105) across the teacher education spectrum. Like McLaren (2005), we believe it is imperative that future teachers feel systemic control can be eradicated by joining other global citizens in a concerted struggle to achieve "social justice for all groups, and the eventual elimination of economic exploitation, racism, sexism, and homophobia" (McLaren, 2005, p. 105). We must become resourceful and offer support for teachers. For example, there are many progressive, critically-oriented websites, such as RethinkingSchools.org, Media-awareness.ca, Workplace, Z-net, Edchange.org, Nycore.org and Radicalteacher, which provide information on corporate actions as

well as capture the dreams of living in a society that is predicated on justice, democracy and equality (McLaren, 2005; Porfilio & McClary, 2004; Saltman, 2004).

Conclusion

Through our narrative analysis above, we have shown how recent far-flung and aggressive capitalist development driven to secure economic and ideological control is permeating education and schooling. As our personal stories elucidate, corporate culture, market principles, and commercial values are rapidly intruding and affecting teacher education programs. Teacher educators and their students, concerned citizens, and in-service teachers must see beyond this global trend and educate about its damaging effects. Critical scholars, whose mission is to create democratic schools and a more just society, must broaden their collection of perspectives and methodology tools for the purpose of taking inventory of the constitutive forces that are fostering commercial logics, policies, and programs across the teacher education landscape. They must also challenge, in their own web of social relations, the "school as business and student as consumer" mentality, which undermines the democratic and moral missions of teaching and learning. As public intellectuals and cultural workers, we must renew the vision of teacher education as an agent of social change and cultural transformation. We must assure ourselves that we have a voice and it must be heard. In addition, we are also obligated to engage our current and future educators in the same struggle.

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