Theme: Restructuring Teacher Education

Traditions of Reform in U.S. Teacher Education
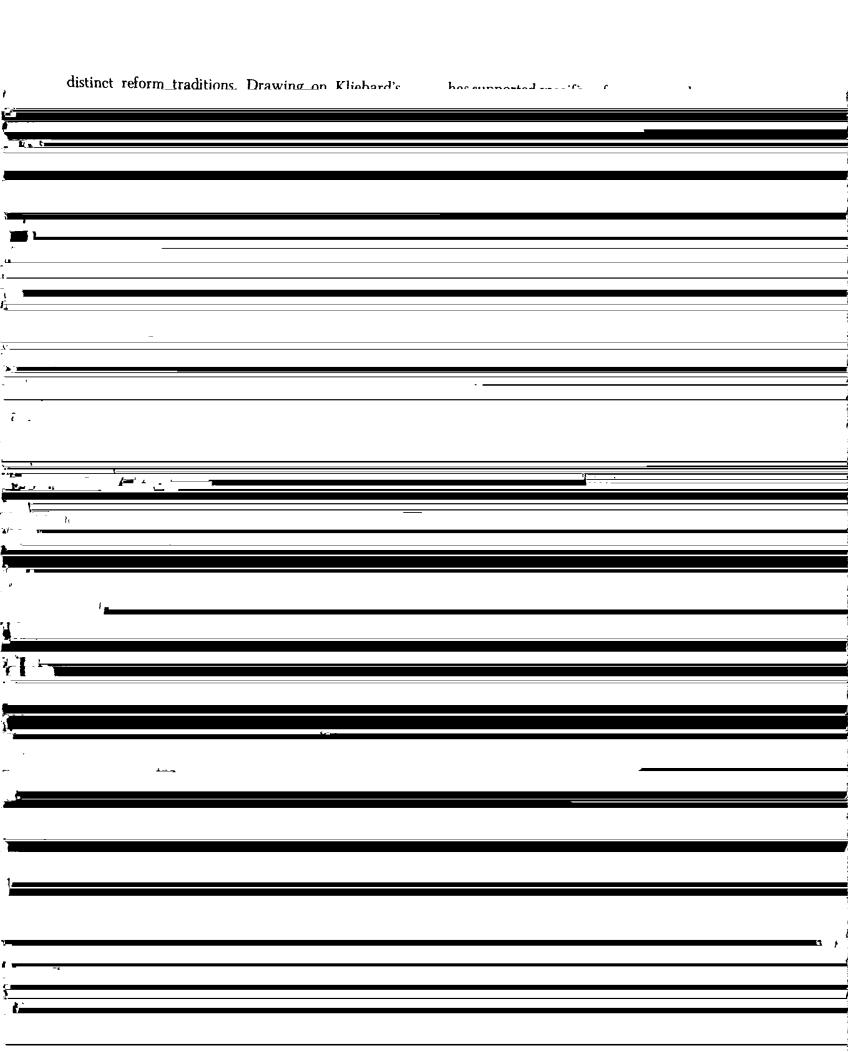
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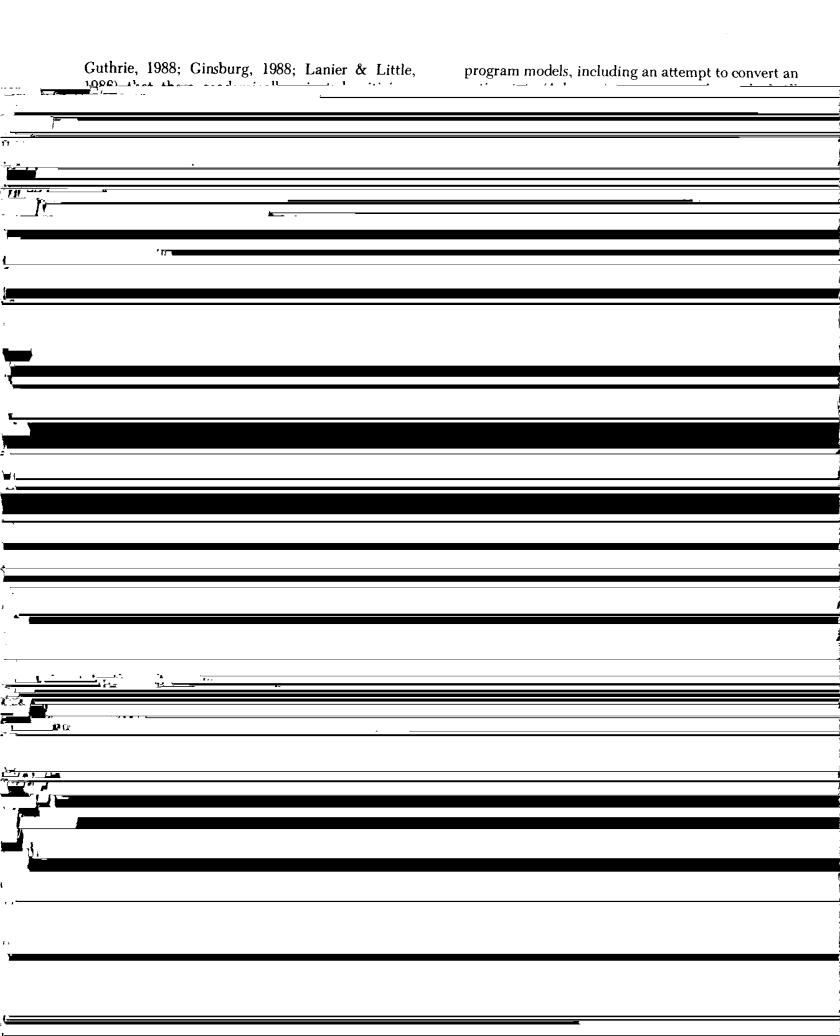Daniel P. Liston
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Four traditions of reform in 20th century teacher education in the United States are described:
academic, social efficiency, developmentalist, and social reconstructionist. Each tradition is il-

programs. It is argued that this framework of reform traditions can help clarify some important
differences among ideas and practices in teacher education that appear on the surface to be
similar.

A tradition is an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who reject all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretative debates through which the meaning and ration-

years. Although several recent analyses of the development of teacher education programs within colleges and universities in the 20th century have illuminated many of the tensions and conflicts impeding the reform of programs (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988; Herbst, 1989; Powell, 1976; Schneider, 1987), attempts to identify lessons that have been learned

distinct reform traditions. Drawing on Kliebard's _____ has supported specific ___ of ___ ____

Guthrie, 1988; Ginsburg, 1988; Lanier & Little,

program models, including an attempt to convert an

women and gender that challenge Platonic dichotomies throughout the curriculum and have critiqued the pedagogy and social relations in their program

oriented teacher education reforms (e.g., M.A.T. programs) to respond to needs for preparing teachers

tion, has involved faith in the power of the scientific study of teaching to provide the basis for building a teacher education curriculum. This tradition emerged largely within schools, departments, and col-

mailing surveys to experienced teachers in 42 states. The final list of 1,001 teaching activities was subdivided into 7 major divisions (e.g., classroom instruction, school and classroom management). These

teacher education curriculum. For example,

havioristically based C/PBTE movement that drew

developed a solid body of knowledge and a fresh set of conceptions about teaching on which to base teacher education. For the first time, teacher educa-

product studies of teaching, current versions of the social efficiency paradigm have also drawn upon recent descriptive studies of classrooms, research on

oriented progressive schools that were springing up all over the country. Perrone (1989) referred to this work when he wrote about the progressive tradition in U.S. teacher education. Advocates of what was

opment and children's interests. Educating prospective teachers to conduct observations and plan activities for children on the basis of their observations was a key feature in developmentalist proposals for

often referred to as the "new" or "modern" education were often critical of the failure of teacher education institutions to supply them with creative and imaginative teachers who understood student

teacher education reform.

The teacher-as-artist metaphor had two dimensions. On the one hand, the artist teacher, who has a deep understanding of the psychology of child development

teacher's experimental attitude toward practice. Child study was to become the basis for teachers' inquiries, and teacher educators were to provide instruction to prospective teachers about how to initiate and sustain ongoing inquiries in one's own classroom about the learning of specific children. Mitchell's (1931) summary of the aims of the Coop-

tions of the "open education" movement into a teacher education curriculum: the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota, the American Primary Experimental Program at the University of Vermont, the Educational Program for Informal Classrooms at Ohio State, and the Integrated Day Program at the University of Massachu-

to knowledge of human development in teacher edu... take precedence over individual gain. Although col

improvement of present conditions

Consistent with this emphasis on the role of diverse... Although Education 2005...

who can aid in the process of educational improvement inspired proposals for teacher education programs

ideological insularity

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