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The Complexity of American Teacher Education

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1.1 Introduction

To refer to *teacher education* in the United States is actually something of a misnomer. Teacher education is a loosely coupled system in enormous flux, with pressure for change weighing on almost every aspect of the enterprise (Wilson, 2014). The term *system*, in fact, is insufficient to describe teacher education, a patchwork of organizations governed by layers of institutional, state, and federal policies (GAO, 2015). The American teacher education patchwork is so disconnected, in fact, that no single narrative is sufficient to describe policy movement in teacher education. For purposes of this chapter, our focus is on university “situated” teacher preparation programs—programs located in public and private colleges and universities but that rely a great deal on K-12 schools to provide clinical sites and opportunities for mentorship, observation, study, and practice.

The education of teachers is provided by a mix of traditional and alternative providers and while the market share for college and university providers has eroded, they remain the dominant form of teacher education in the United States (Lincove, Osborne, Mills, & Bellows, 2015). Teacher education includes traditional baccalaureate degree programs and post-baccalaureate programs (often leading to a master’s degree) offered at colleges and universities. But providers also include an array of school district providers, community colleges, online providers (e.g., TEACH-NOW and Western Governors University), as well as not-for-profit (e.g., Teach for America [TFA] or The New Teacher Project [TNTP]) and for-profit providers (e.g., University of Phoenix and Strayer University). Offerings span an array of subjects and school levels (elementary, middle, and secondary) and specializations often with a focus on particular student populations (English language learners or special needs). The U.S. Department of Education reported

in 2015 that there were nearly 28,000 programs offered by more than 2,135 providers enrolling some 464,250 students (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Much teacher education is driven by the demand for teachers at local schools and the curricula priorities of those schools—with few graduates venturing far from their preparation programs. After two decades of emphasis on disciplinary focused instruction in particular subject areas, teacher education is moving to a greater focus on integrated subjects (arts, STEM, language arts, social studies) with more expansive clinical preparation in schools—relying on master teachers drawn from schools to provide mentoring and supervision.

There are major efforts today to extend the role of university-situated teacher educators beyond the degree boundaries of colleges and universities and into the first few years of a teacher's assignment in the local schools. The integration of preservice teacher preparation, student or clinical teaching, teacher induction and mentoring, and beginning teacher professional development is prompting a reconsideration of the role of university-situated teacher educators. In order to create a more efficient and effective transition by candidates moving from university programs to beginning teaching assignments, initiatives have been designed to better integrate preservice preparation with initial practice (Stephenson & Ling, 2014). The focus is on the last two years of university training and the first three years of school teaching (or until a novice achieves tenured professional status—usually occurring in the third year of teaching). In such models, teacher educators “work” in both higher education and school settings—sometimes with joint appointments. In short, teacher education is growing, dying, expanding, and contracting.

1.1.1 An Environmental Scan

Our characterization of today's teacher education reflects forward-thinking environmental scans ordered in the 1990s and early 2000s by the leadership of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). Written quarterly, the original scans focused on political, social, policy, ideological, demographic, technological, and economic conditions and their impact or potential for impact on teacher education. The scans sought to identify the drivers for such conditions and to project the consequences of alternative actions or responses for colleges and schools of education in the United States. The documents repeatedly offered a “situational analysis ... intended to provide leaders of education schools with lead time to deal with threats and opportunities by flagging emerging issues” (Imig, 2004). One of the last of these contextual scans concluded that “if education schools fail to respond to the political, social and economic demands of the public, the policy community is fully prepared to bypass them and invest in the array of alternative providers who are determined to meet the needs of local schools and their communities” (Imig, 2004, p. 23).

The 2004 report cited above also promoted the use of evidence to better prepare teachers, partnerships with PK-12 schools, attention to the needs of diverse candidates, a focus on teacher retention, and building ties with community colleges—which have a larger and larger “footprint” in teacher education. More than a decade later these matters remain largely unaddressed and education schools are increasingly challenged to demonstrate results and rationalize their efforts.

Like the environmental scans described above, the present overview on the condition of teacher preparation describes major conditions that teacher education has faced for

the past decade, conditions that have resulted, or will result, in fundamental changes for all teacher preparation programs. The five conditions highlighted here are (1) an increasingly aggressive policy environment, (2) threats to teacher professionalism, (3) pressures to make teacher education pedagogy *practice-based*, (4) the changing demographics of school-aged children, and (5) an ever-increasing proliferation of providers. In what follows, we unpack these conditions, consider certain responses of teacher education programs, and make predictions and recommendations for the future.

1.2 Aggressive Policy Environment

One condition that teacher education has faced in recent decades has been an increasingly aggressive policy environment (Earley, Imig, & Michelli, 2011). At the same time the nexus of teacher education policymaking moved to national organizations (e.g., National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], AACTE, National Education Association [NEA], Fordham Institute, American Enterprise Institute [AEI], National Council for Teacher Quality [NCTQ], and the federal government), teacher education came to be seen as a primary lever to affect school reform (Reed, 2014). In response to encroaching policy efforts and accountability demands, teacher education programs have dedicated more resources than ever before to data gathering, assessment, compliance, and accountability.

As reformists drove an agenda that made teacher quality the centerpiece for the reform of American education, teacher preparation came to be viewed as an essential element in the transformation of schools. Nowhere was this more evident than in the framing and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the effort of governors, state school officials, and business leaders to create consistent national standards in mathematics and English-language-arts for all K-12 students at each grade level (National Governors Association, 2010; National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, 2013). The initiative brought particular pressure on preparation programs to transform the preparation of teachers for all subjects (Murray, 2014). Efforts were undertaken to align teaching standards to the Common Core, provide support for faculty development, and integrate Common Core into program approval and state teacher licensure protocols (Paliokas, 2014). In such efforts, long established alliances of liberal politicians and teacher unions and teacher advocates were shattered as politicians discarded historic loyalties and embraced a reformist agenda that demanded public accountability for preparation programs and teaching practices. The expectation that teacher education can serve as a primary lever for K-12 school reform is reshaping teacher education by way of accountability measures and significant policy shifts that often hold teacher educators responsible for the success of teachers in K-12 school classrooms across the country (Gastic, 2014).

The increased interest in teachers that eventually brought teacher education under the microscope of a so-called reformer coalition occurred in the context of sea change in the nexus of teacher education policy from state to federal (Cross, 2014; McDonnell, 2005; Reed, 2014). Over the last 25 years, these shifts and resulting directives have provoked intense debates among teacher education faculties regarding the preparation of teachers for local schools. National organizations and federal agencies set ambitious goals and high standards for all programs. The increased central control of teacher

preparation, particularly given the lack of research-based evidence to support many of these initiatives and federal mandates or state program standards, made such efforts easy to dismiss (Bales, 2011). For the most part, education faculties have railed against initiatives of both the Bush II and Obama administrations for education in the United States. Both the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Race to the Top regulations supported a reformist agenda that called for high standards for teaching and highly qualified teachers for all students (McDonnell, 2005; McGuinn, 2006; Superfine, 2011). Reformers used neoliberal policies to promote competition between and among providers and relied on standardized test scores to measure and compare (Bullough, 2016). They used both “sticks” and “carrots” to promote that agenda with the threat of ranking and ordering programs across four levels of performance and limiting access to federal grant programs to only those in the upper tiers (Office of the Federal Register, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Federal legislation since the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act has promoted various forms of *value-added models* to determine the quality of teacher preparation programs. A series of statistical calculations intended to determine the effects of individual teachers on student academic achievement, value-added models are now used to *backward map* to preparation programs and to assign responsibility to those programs for the success of their graduates in K-12 school settings (Noell & Burns, 2006; Subotnik, 2014). A number of states used Race-to-the-Top monies to build large longitudinal databases to determine the proficiency of graduates of teacher preparation programs.

The success of program graduates in raising the scores of their K-12 students as a means for assessing the quality of a preparation program is hotly contested. Calling for peer evaluations and principal assessments of beginning teacher readiness, the candidate’s own perception of readiness, success in getting a job upon completion of the program, and staying in teaching beyond the average length of service are measures to be used to judge the quality of a preparation program, with the U.S. Department of Education prepared to punish those who do not comply by excluding them from federal grant competitions. The enormous costs of implementing such an effort are to be borne by the preparation program and rewards and sanctions are to accompany the scores assigned to programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Alignment of these expectations with the standards of the new accrediting agency for teacher education, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), created an exceptional “outcry” from faculty and college and universities about the new federal mandates.¹ If the Trump administration pursues forms of deregulation that sharply limit teacher and principal certification requirements and/or reshape hiring policies and practices (to permit more “alternatively prepared” school personnel), this could dramatically change educator personnel preparation. Taking the federal government out of rule-making for teacher education is seen by some as a potential benefit that could allow greater flexibility in program design and conduct. Increased federalism might result in reassigning limited oversight and standards setting to the states, but states are already enacting new laws and regulations at the state level that would expand the array of providers and privilege entrepreneurs in the remaking of the enterprise (Zeichner, 2014). Conjecture at this time would suggest that a Trump administration will have interest in promoting the privatization of public schools and the expansion of parochial education using charter school designs. With private schools usually deferring on hiring graduates of teacher preparation programs and charter schools often allowed to by-pass traditional

certification requirements, there is the need for education schools to carefully consider their own destinies.

Over the course of the past 20 years, teacher education programs have responded to the increasingly aggressive policy environment by focusing more resources on accountability than ever before. Accountability in teacher education has moved from being a soft-form of on-campus administrative and faculty oversight to a hard accountability performed by an array of external agencies and actors that have come to dominate the enterprise. Demands on teacher education now emanate from an array of entities and organizations, with sanctions to recast programs and rewards to serve as incentives for program change (Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky, & Ahn, 2013; National Research Council, 2010). Events that have created unprecedented demands on faculty include:

- The merger of NCATE and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) into a new and more challenging Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).
- The so-called “Title II” program reporting requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.
- The emergence of not-for-profit entities such as the NCTQ that review and rank teacher preparation programs.
- The import of a British system of inspection (TPI-US) used by states and institutions.
- The efforts of various reform groups advancing standards for assessing programs (Deans for Impact).
- A data-analytic approach to assessing high quality (DA) and the development of a performance-based assessment system by SCALE at Stanford and AACTE (edTPA), which is used by several hundred colleges and universities, have created unprecedented demands on faculty.

These external agencies and organizations, all with information requests for faculty and programs, tax the capacities of programs to respond. With the Gates Foundation award of some \$35 million to five Teacher Transformation Centers in 2015, we are likely to see additional efforts to promote and change teacher education from external agencies (i.e., those outside the university or traditional boundary for teacher education) with added expectations and new forms of regulation and accountability (Sawchuk, 2015).

In addition, faculty are confronted with multiple data requests and course outcome reports, the queries of external reviewers and the requests of state program approval agents, requests for information from “inspectors” and “auditors” as well as the incidental requests of governmental agencies, the public, and the press. These requests for data and information regarding teacher preparation add to the accountability demands and further diminish the opportunity to transform teacher education.

1.2.1 Demands of Accountability

Debates regarding accreditation standards and performance expectations are intense. Remaking the teacher workforce to better reflect the student population in America's schools (younger, more diverse, less White, and less female) has consequences for those

not admitted to programs and for the recruitment of nontraditional populations. Using test scores and grade point averages to screen out the “bottom third” of candidates and to set ambitious outcomes or performance standards for those admitted add to the controversies. Attempting to assess candidate proficiencies and dispositions, values, and ethical behaviors creates even more complexity. Managing teacher education enrollments to meet school needs (with fewer elementary candidates and more prospective secondary teachers) is driven by demands to be more cost conscious and efficient (Allen, Coble, & Crowe, 2014). All of these changes are demanded by one or more external accountability agencies (Feuer et al., 2013; Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014). Teacher educators are the focal point for efforts to influence the way that students are taught to read, to do mathematics, or to engage in the social studies. Particularly challenging is the advocacy by special education groups for particular forms of reading instruction or ways of teaching English language learners (ELL) to comprehend and use English. Instructing future teachers in particular ways to teach diverse or special needs or “regular” students is certain to draw a reaction from other groups and further demands for alternative instructional practices.

1.2.2 What’s Next?

In December 2015, President Obama signed into law legislation that replaced the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Praised for its repeal of many parts of the original law that mandated high-stakes testing with significant consequences for schools that failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 attempts to reallocate responsibility for teacher education to states and end the intrusive regulatory burden placed on teacher preparation programs (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2016). Ironically, in the Every Student Succeeds Act, Congress and the White House project a new direction for teacher education calling for recentering the enterprise away from universities and colleges to local school districts where Academies would be established to prepare teachers and principals for local schools. The rejection of university preparation, described as “the dominant view ... among many policy makers and the public” by Zeichner (2014), insisting “that the US needs to reduce greatly the role of universities in teacher education” with the Academy movement as the best way of doing so. Prohibitions on faculty research and limitations on faculty tenure for teacher educators in the Academies are included in the new law. The new law would also prohibit the use of professional accreditation to measure program accomplishments at these Academies and require the Academies to issue certificates equal to the degrees awarded by traditional providers. These Academies are to be accorded the status of academic post-baccalaureate degree-granting institutions—permitting but not requiring university engagement. While they remain a “discretionary activity” for states to consider, their existence signals a profound disdain for traditional teacher preparation programs by policymakers. It also indicates that the federal government and states will continue to use accountability tools to shape and change teacher preparation.

Somehow, teacher education programs have to find ways to demonstrate excellence in a policy environment that increasingly wants to measure their success solely on the basis of graduates’ performance in schools. Rather than rejecting such demands, teacher preparation programs have to both improve the technology of *value-added measures* and find an array of other indicators of high quality acceptable to policymakers and the

public. Stakeholders must be engaged in these efforts and transparency and cost efficiency and responsiveness have to be considerations. Recentering the enterprise to the needs of local schools and determining the success of graduates in those schools using multiple measures is the only way that traditional programs can sustain their prominence. Accountability demands will dominate the discourse for the foreseeable future.

1.3 Deprofessionalization of Teachers

A second condition that has confronted teacher education in recent decades is the *deprofessionalization* of teaching. A broad range of policy efforts and messaging, supposedly intended to improve schools, combined to exclude teachers from decision-making processes at both the policy and classroom levels. In a context of teacher deprofessionalization, the appeal of teacher professionalism is diminished, teaching degrees are increasingly passé, there is a resurgence of effort to promote *teacher-centered instruction*, and an emphasis on the content to be “delivered” with scripted teaching the result. This characterizes the teacher as a technician, with narrow and test-driven goals (Dowling & Kwok-Wing, 2003). Many newly formed teacher education programs that attract new investment place an emphasis on the preparation of these teacher technicians.

Curricula requirements and mandated forms of instruction, assessment-driven instruction, and a focus on standards for both students and teachers have limited teacher autonomy in schools and constrained teacher preparation programs in a variety of ways. Teachers have less autonomy in utilizing “professional judgment” and making professional decisions in the classroom (Boser & Hanna, 2014). As a result, teacher dissatisfaction is on the rise with measures of satisfaction declining 23 percentage points since 2008, from 62% to 39% of teachers being very satisfied, to the lowest level in 25 years (Markow, Marcia, & Lee, 2013). The same survey found that mid-career teachers are more dissatisfied than beginning teachers. The reformer’s reliance on teacher technicians seems also to be affecting prospective teachers with college students increasingly more reluctant to pursue careers in teaching or to stay in teaching very long. Teacher attrition rates are unacceptably high—particularly among beginning teachers—and enrollment declines in teacher education programs are precipitous—down 36% in the past five years (including enrollments in alternative programs) (Sawchuk, 2014). In the most striking deprofessionalization move, states are responding to shortages of available beginning teachers by reducing the requirements for teaching and allowing more candidates to enter teaching without formal preparation.

The development and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was perhaps this generation’s greatest opportunity to support a teacher professionalism agenda. Teachers and teacher educators, however, were largely excluded from the writing teams for the CCSS, which were composed of representatives of test-makers, publishers (Pearson), and quasi-government agencies (Achieve, Inc.). Professional teacher organizations such as the National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and National Council of Teachers of English helped with organizing teacher feedback, and teacher educators participated in work groups *after* the standards were drafted. Essentially, classroom

teachers and teacher educators were largely marginalized and only involved in the review stage (National Governors Association, 2010).

Endacott et al. (2015) found that teachers felt they were, again, marginalized in the implementation process of the CCSS. Many schools “robbed teachers of their professional agency” by having paid internal and external consultants in schools during the CCSS implementation and failing to provide appropriate materials that would help teachers and students meet the standards laid out in the CCSS. Schools also scripted curriculum, thus further watering down teachers’ professionalism. These factors and “the forced subordination” to paid external consultants contributed to many teachers feeling as though they were merely “robots teaching other little robots” (Endacott et al., 2015, p. 433). The tests developed to parallel the new standards were then used to measure teacher performance and to determine teacher compensation, creating further alienation on the part of many teachers. These factors prompted the teacher organizations to be increasingly skeptical and then outright hostile to the new standards.

The promulgation of the Race to the Top regulations in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008, mandating that states incorporate CCSS standards in their school reform proposals and teacher evaluation protocols, seemed to confirm that CCSS was now a federal and not a national reform effort (Grunwald, 2012; Superfine, 2011). Opponents argued that non-core school subjects were being further marginalized and that students were being subjected to far too many tests. Reformers continued to support CCSS while opponents, including the teacher organizations (who saw it as a platform for more scrutiny of classroom teaching performance), decried its intrusive nature. In the lead-up to the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, “Common Core” became the centerpiece for the continuing debate on “national vis-à-vis local control of schooling” in the United States. Soon after the election, President Trump stated that “Common Core is a total disaster. We can’t let it continue.” How or whether CCSS will be pursued by the Trump administration is yet to be seen but individual states retain the right to use Common Core.

With many states having adopted the CCSS, most teacher educators embraced Common Core (and modified preparation programs to accommodate the needs of local schools to have teachers ready to teach to the new standards) at a time when such practices situated teacher education in the middle of what became heated political debates over matters of local control and the right of the federal government to set curriculum standards. When it became unpalatable for policymakers and politicians to continue to support Common Core, in the run-up to the presidential elections of 2016, teacher educators were left among a dwindling array of supporters for this national school standards’ effort.

Compounding the challenges of CCSS were the constraints placed on teaching by state legislators and local school boards. Legal challenges to traditional teacher tenure practices and “last-in first-out” hiring policies diminished the role of self-governance—a hallmark of teacher professionalism—and made teaching as a career more unattractive. Added to this was the realization that American teachers have more instructional hours and more hours spent in school than teachers in any other OECD country and they have starting salaries lower than the salaries of starting teachers in other OECD countries (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2010). However, in an environment where the benefits, entitlements, compensation, and legal standing of teachers are undergoing change (with efforts to deny teachers collective bargaining rights and access to tenure in some states) and where two-year graduates of community

colleges and college graduates without training are now welcomed as fully certified teachers in communities experiencing teacher shortages across America, the concept of teacher professionalism is rapidly losing ground. High teacher attrition rates (nearly 50% in the first five years of teaching) are, in part, the result of evaluation protocols that put a premium on student score gains on standardized tests and onerous teaching assignments. While much of the developed world is focused on *professionalizing teaching*, in the United States there is debate about professionalism as an occupational goal or a form of managerialism, a means to strengthen democratic or community participation in schools or an antiquated and hegemonic device to be abandoned (Whitty, 2008). There are appeals to resist further deprofessionalization efforts and to recapture conditions that promise better teachers and teaching.

Partly as a result of these many deprofessionalization moves and conditions, the ability to attract sufficient numbers of candidates to teaching and get them “profession ready” is now a tremendous challenge for teacher preparation programs. State agencies and university systems, teacher organizations and schools of education are responding with schemes to attract more candidates to teaching, to provide greater rigor (and relevance) to programs, to assign more responsibilities to local schools and systems, to strengthen the clinical aspects of initial preparation, to make the transition from teacher candidate to professional practitioner as seamless as possible, and to put a premium on practice.

Professionalists, or activists on behalf of good teaching, are pressing an agenda that challenges these deprofessional tendencies. Teacher educators press for more preparation, more discipline-based learning, more collegial engagement with school faculties, a greater investment in clinical preparation, and more understanding of ways to influence the social and emotional development of their eventual students. Professionalists reject standardized teaching and call for compelling ethical and moral standards of practice. They focus on *all* students and seek to improve the conditions for learning by students regardless of background and social condition. They call for social services to be incorporated into school settings to meet the needs of the *whole child*. They insist that teachers have but a small influence on the overall learning of children and seek greater parent and community engagement in schooling. These advocates would gladly revise every aspect of teaching—from instructional practices to the venues in which teaching takes place, from the conditions of practice to the career paths they pursue—but are often thwarted in their efforts (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Noguera & Wells, 2011).

1.3.1 What’s Next?

With the standards for professional accreditation subverted to (and entwined with) federal government regulations, teacher’s professional development is maligned by teachers and found to be unsuccessful in promoting school change. Further, professional learning communities are overwhelmed by resource and time constraints and incentives for professional certification are diminished in state-budget deliberations (and through legal actions). Schools of education fail to seek professional school status on campus (and have little outreach to professional teaching organizations in districts and states) and the reality of deprofessionalism continues. The Academy movement and diminished requirements for teaching demand a concerted response from teacher educators. Teacher educators (and their deans and chairs) have to move to form

powerful new alliances with state teacher organizations and advocate for a professional agenda—particularly at a time when boundary crossing (and partnership building) between preparation programs and elementary and secondary schools is required and genuine professional development is demanded by teachers and their organizations.

1.4 Changes in Pedagogy

A third condition that is facing teacher education has been pressure to change pedagogies used to prepare teachers. As research on adult learning and professional preparation in other fields has demonstrated an array of developments, teacher education pedagogy has responded with both continuity and change.

In a comprehensive review of research on pedagogy in teacher education, Grossman (2005) demonstrated that preparation for teaching has long included a broad range of instructional approaches. Grossman organized these pedagogies into six categories comprising micro-teaching and lab experiences, computer simulation, video technology and hypermedia, case methods, portfolios, and practitioner research. Although no one has undertaken a comprehensive study or review in the intervening decade, indications suggest that most of the pedagogies above remain in widespread use in colleges of education. Calls from both the scholarly and policy communities during this time, however, have invited “practice-based” changes in the ways that personnel in colleges of education deliver instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Levine, 2006; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010).

Education researchers, teacher educators, and programs on the whole have since wrestled with the difficulties of defining target practices of teaching and designing “pedagogies of enactment” (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009, p. 273) to develop such target teaching practices in candidates. The resulting instructional practices in teacher education programs depend, in part, on how key stakeholders have answered a number of key questions.

First teacher educators that take practice-based teacher education seriously have been forced to decide practices to prioritize. The assertion that teacher education should be practice-based suggests that a consensus exists regarding the teaching practices that programs should prioritize, when no such consensus exists (Lampert, 2009). For example, some have argued for fundamental practices of teaching that cross subject areas and are associated primarily with teachers’ classroom management moves (Lemov, 2011; Sawchuck, 2013). Others argue that complex, interpersonal, and often subject-specific teaching practices should take priority in teacher preparation (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Levin, Hammer, & Coffey, 2009; McDonald et al., 2014). Teacher educators’ choices in which teaching practices to articulate and prioritize suggest inherent commitments about the nature of teaching, learning, and learning to teach (Grossman, 2005; Zeichner, 2012). These choices naturally impact not only what practices are prioritized but also how these practices are taught in preparation programs.

How do we provide safe but complex space to practice the practices? In 2009, Grossman, Compton et al. suggested that teacher education had not yet developed the equivalent of “learning to kayak on calm waters” (p. 2076). Decades of research suggested that most iterations of micro-teaching—a long preferred pedagogy in the

field—did not sufficiently mirror the challenges of classroom practice (Clift & Brady, 2005; Grossman, 2005). On the other hand, approaches to teacher preparation that allow amateurs to practice on children were neither advantageous nor ethical (Feimennemser, 2001).

In recent years, many programs have experimented with various forms of simulations and rehearsals that are designed for increasing levels of complexity in a context that is safe for mistakes and risk. Some examples are not entirely dissimilar from micro-teaching but include multiple cycles of enactment and feedback (e.g., Lampert et al., 2013). Others, however, demonstrate how simulation technologies have evolved dramatically since Grossman cited their potential in 2005. Interactive computer simulations now allow teacher candidates to step into a virtual world to practice classroom management (Dieker, Rodriguez, Lignugaris, Hynes, & Hughes, 2013). Other computer simulation models focus on subject-specific instructional interactions and attending to student reasoning (Herbst & Chazan, 2011). Lower-tech simulations have used a medical model that allows teacher candidates to practice high-stakes scenarios with a trained actor (Dotger, Harris, Maher, & Hansel, 2011; Self, 2016).

Second, teacher educators have grappled with how to support candidate enactments with real students. For many programs, practice-based has at least meant increasing the field experience opportunities for teacher candidates. Yet, programs rely on mechanisms originally designed for periodic field support rather than in-time coaching and on-the-spot feedback. Some programs are experimenting with the development of mentor teachers as teacher educators, inclusions of multiple candidates in each classroom, instructional rounds, and regular video coaching (e.g., Hoffman et al., 2015; Hostetler, 2016; Reagan, Chen, Roegman, & Zuckerman, 2015). Such efforts are designed, in part, to facilitate pedagogies of teacher education that promote learning during teaching practice, from teaching practice, and for teaching practice (Lampert, 2009).

Third, teacher educators have had to decide how to promote reflection and adaptation. Whether increased field experiences promote candidate learning likely depends on opportunities for principled reflection and adaptation (Lampert, 2009; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). Like simulations, innovation in reflective pedagogies has included both low- and high-tech experiences. Advancements in recording, playback, and data transfer have created new opportunities since Grossman (2005) described the use of video-related pedagogies in teacher education. Teacher candidates can now review videos of themselves and their colleagues, tag video with specific notes, and easily edit and embed portions of their teaching to share with instructors or video clubs (Johnson & Cotterman, 2015; Van Es, Tunney, Goldsmith, & Seago, 2014).

Although not a pedagogy in the singular sense, one type of approach to practice-based teacher education emphasizes *core practices of teaching* and cycles of enactment and investigation (Forzani, 2014; Kazemi & Waage, 2015; McDonald, Kazemi, & Kavanaugh, 2013). Rather than focusing on a primary pedagogy, core practice approaches fold many types of teacher education pedagogies into cycles of teacher learning that allow candidates to investigate specific teaching practices, practice those practices, and analyze their own attempts, along with the attempts of their peers. Advocates distinguish core practice approaches from other practice-based pedagogies by pointing to underlying goals for teaching, learning, and learning to teach. That is, advocates emphasize that core practice approaches frame *teaching* as a profession that

requires improvisational interaction with student ideas, *learning* as the development of high-level reasoning in specific subject matter, and *learning to teach* as a complex and iterative process (Forzani, 2014).

1.4.1 What's Next?

In summarizing pedagogies for teacher education, Grossman (2005) suggested that “no single pedagogical approach is ever likely to suffice” (p. 452) given the complexity of teaching practice. Although the same can be said today, recent innovations in teacher education have provided new pedagogies, new twists on long-standing pedagogies, and perhaps most importantly, new approaches to using pedagogies in comprehensive ways. Innovation, however, does not equal improvement. If teacher education is to find a path toward systematic improvement, it will require large-scale commitments to research and development across programs. Absent comprehensive efforts, pedagogy in the field will remain siloed, with pockets of innovation that lack sufficient evidence to support improvement at scale.

1.5 Demographic Changes

A fourth condition that demanded attention from teacher education in recent decades is the significant demographic shifts in America’s school-aged population. As K-12 schools have become more diverse with greater racial, linguistic, economic, and cultural differences, long-standing calls to make changes in classrooms have become urgent (Putnam, 2015).

In 2014, America’s schools reached a demographic milestone for the first time with the majority of students in K-12 schools being Latino, African American, and Asian students (Maxwell, 2014). This collective majority of schoolchildren of color was realized as a result of both “the dramatic growth in the Latino population and a decline in the white population” (Maxwell, 2014). Trend lines project even greater diversity in the future. As the number of African Americans, Hispanic, and Asian populations increased, teacher educators recognized that dramatic changes had to occur in both the preparation of teachers and the diversity of the teaching force. There were more students requiring English language instruction, more students with disabilities, more students living in poverty, and more students “whose life experiences ... differed from those of their teachers.”

Educators also acknowledged a substantial achievement gap between White–Black students and White–Hispanic students in fourth and eighth grade. Despite substantial policy efforts in recent decades, in 2015, a gap of more than 20 points for both reading and mathematics remained between White and Black students and White and Hispanic students for both fourth and eighth graders (U.S. Department of Education, NAEP, 2015). There is both the recognition that there has been no significant change in this achievement gap since 1992 and a determination by teacher educators to find new ways of overcoming these disparities.

Until recently, policymakers and many teacher education programs have sought to address these disparities with context-blind solutions. Programs were initiated that focused on reducing the achievement gap between White students and students of

color with strategies or practices the same for all students. That is, interventions focused on a non-differentiated curriculum, based on the language, worldview, and experiences of White English speakers who comprised the majority of both teachers and teacher educators (Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002).

In the last decade or so, many teacher educators have embraced culturally responsive teaching as an effective way of meeting the academic and social needs of the diverse student population (Gay, 2010; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994) and sought to prepare culturally responsive teachers who are cognizant of the critical role that race and culture play in the way that students learn (Howard, 2003). Culturally responsive teaching is premised on a belief that schools and teachers who have adopted a culturally responsive pedagogy have the ability to act as change agents in their schools to help bridge the divide and encourage more equitable schooling experiences for racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students.

Many teacher educators have embraced culturally responsive pedagogy as teaching “to and through [students’] personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments” (Gay, 2010, p. 26). Ladson-Billings (1995) helped to frame the conversation by arguing that culturally responsive teachers develop student learning that is intellectual, social, emotional, and political and prompted a commitment to a teacher education that prepared teachers to have high academic expectations for all students, to reshape school curricula, to build on students’ funds of knowledge, to establish relationships with students and their homes, and to cultivate students’ critical consciousness to challenge the classed, raced, and gendered power structures of schools and communities.

Most teacher preparation programs now attempt to emphasize culturally responsive teaching, as reflected in (1) the professional accreditation standards of the former teacher education accreditor, NCATE’s Standard IV that emphasized the building of capacity to guide the learning of students from diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, and (2) the certification standards of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) in which Standard No. 2 emphasizes a teacher’s understanding of “*individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.*” For the most part, faculties have argued over the semantics but not the purposes of using culturally responsive teaching to build the capacities of prospective teachers to foster relationships with students, their families, and communities. They based their efforts on studies that seemed to confirm that students of teachers who learn to build relationships with students and their families tend to be more effective in raising student achievement than students of teachers who do not do so (e.g., Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Hawkins, Guo, Hill, Battin-Pearson, & Abbott, 2001). Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010) found that culturally responsive teachers are an important part of urban school reform. Teachers’ cultural competency was essential in their abilities to engage with parents and the communities, in accessing students’ prior knowledge and using their funds of knowledge in their lessons and classrooms (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), and in engaging students intellectually while tapping into students’ interests.

Evidence suggests that teacher educators have increasingly focused on teacher candidates’ attitudes, beliefs, predispositions and dispositions, and prior experiences as they sought to develop greater capacity for candidates to teach diverse students (Hollins &

Guzman, 2005). Programs added new courses built on sociocultural knowledge, and researchers turned attention to preservice teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and levels of cultural awareness, and interventions intended to improve their cultural competence.

Many programs accelerated placements in more diverse school settings and clinical experiences in high-needs schools with accompanying efforts to admit and prepare a more diverse candidate pool. Partners worked together to recruit and produce more African American, Asian American, and Hispanic teachers. Many teacher educators also focused efforts on supporting White preservice teachers in understandings of institutionalized racism and how the U.S. education system has perpetuated inequalities (Sleeter, 2008a). Such efforts led to the development of new courses to help preservice teachers examine their own tacit assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes to learn ways to identify injustices in schools and the wider society, and to build understanding of diverse cultural practices and perspectives (Villegas, 2007). In practice, the efforts of teacher education programs described above took the form of autobiographic writing, reflective journals, post-experience essays, and the preparation of individualized action plans for implementing multicultural education in specific classrooms (Sleeter & Owuor, 2011).

Scholars and advocates debated the adequacy of such efforts and some studies found that preservice teachers who were only minimally engaged in classroom teaching during short-duration field experiences did not benefit (Sleeter, 2008b). Findings such as these moved teacher preparation programs to increase time spent in schools as well as the types of schools in which teacher candidates observed and practiced.

Teacher education faculties invested extraordinary amounts of time in fashioning new diversity courses, enriching the experiences of teacher candidates, and revisioning programs. Most education schools launched "minority and urban teacher education" programs. Teacher educators used research evidence to build new multicultural teacher education courses that adopted a self-reflective approach and relied on structured field experiences with the expectation that self-reflection would enable preservice teachers to examine their beliefs and enhance their understanding of diverse students (Barnes, 2006; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006). Although designers recognized that cultural competence did not equate to culturally responsive teaching, they expected teacher self-efficacy in diverse cultural understandings could improve abilities to develop relationships with parents and students, and design productive learning environments (Siwatu, Polydore, & Starker, 2009).

Increasingly, beginning teachers from traditional programs had experienced multicultural preparation courses but alternatively prepared teachers and many senior teachers lacked preparation that emphasized cultural competence. This problematic reality offered opportunities for school districts and teacher preparation programs to cooperate on culturally responsive teaching professional development.

1.5.1 What's Next?

Of the conditions examined in the present article, the challenge of student diversity may provide university-based teacher education the greatest opportunity to influence the future of teacher education. As alternative providers, such as Teach for America, have recently discovered, ignoring issues of race, poverty, and privilege can significantly debilitate novice teachers. At present, universities have the potential to offer expertise

and direction on these matters that until recently were the domain of consultants and professional development experts. Teacher educators have to embrace this agenda fully and help to guide the framing of a more ambitious agenda for the future.

1.6 A Proliferation of Providers

The fifth, and perhaps most dramatic, condition that traditional teacher education has faced in recent decades has been the loss of its teacher education franchise. Since the late 1980s, states increasingly allowed changes in teacher certification and licensing that invited new providers into the teacher education business (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002).

As recently as a decade ago, the major producers of beginning teachers were traditional university-based programs; today no higher education institution is among the top ten producers of new teachers (Sawchuk, 2014). Universities are increasingly challenged today to make the case for higher education-based teacher education on grounds other than high quality. While preparation for most other professions continues to take place in university-based preparation programs, preparation for teaching takes place in a variety of public and private entities. Today there are many different pathways into teaching that offer a dizzying array of program options. Many of these take teacher preparation out of the university and center it in new venues and under different conditions.

The great challenge for university-situated programs is to identify the essential contribution the university can make, which cannot be undertaken by other providers (Imig, Wiseman, & Imig, 2012). Engagement with local schools, reliance on evidence-based practices, a commitment to continuing preparation during the early years of practice, collaboration with local schools and systems in the continuing education of teachers and other school professionals, a focus on improvement, and a greater commitment to a scholarship of practice are necessary steps. These are only the beginning steps. Partnership arrangements between schools and universities that are meaningful and rewarding and professional learning communities that include disciplinary-based academics and teacher educators, school practitioners, and educational researchers are important. Doing so at a time when policymakers are seeking to constrain university costs, reduce college student debt, and provide greater opportunity for more students taxes the capacity of universities to experiment and respond. The challenge for universities is to find new ways of doing so despite these constraints because the failure to do so will allow online and for-profit entities to claim a larger and larger share of the market with their voices shaping public policy regarding teacher education (Imig, Wiseman, Wiseman, & Imig, 2016).

At a time when student enrollments in schools are increasing and teacher retirements are rising, enrollments in teacher education are declining (Sawchuk, 2014). This decline has provided opportunities for a host of new providers to increase their “footprint” in teacher preparation. Private for-profit providers appear eager to gain access to a market that has been constrained in many states by regulations. Those constraints are now challenged by new providers who see the low costs of preparing teachers and the high-volume needs for more teachers attractive. The possibility of high returns on investment is attracting a host of venture capitalists to teacher

education (Levine, 2006; Picciano & Spring, 2013; Zeichner, 2014) with the promise that they will have a major voice in the future of the enterprise.

Competition among the array of providers now seems certain to affect all of teacher education as for-profit and not-for-profit entities compete for “market share” and debate cost efficiencies and “marketizing” the ways of preparing high-quality teachers. Whether such approaches to reframing teacher education and competition between and among different providers will lead to higher quality is widely debated, but little evidence is available to support the validity of such assertions.

1.6.1 What’s Next?

What is certain is that the reformers have the upper hand in the current debate and it seems certain that we will not return to an era when traditional or university-based teacher education dominated the endeavor. The impact of this shift will not be clear for years to come. It is now clear, however, that competition between an ever-increasing pool of providers obstructs collaboration and broad improvement. At a time when we most need one another the field is more divided than ever.

1.7 Conclusion

As this survey demonstrates, recent decades have certainly provided an astonishing array of challenges and activity related to teacher education. The aggressive policy quest for teacher quality, the struggle for teacher professionalization, an emphasis on practice-based pedagogies, the pressures of changing student demographics, and the proliferation of teacher education providers are certain to continue in the coming years. Whether the frenetic activity described here results in improvements that positively impact teachers and teaching remains unclear.

If successive waves of K-12 school reform in the United States have a lesson for teacher education reform, it is that structural changes are much easier to accomplish than fundamental improvements (Cuban, 1990). To accomplish actual improvement in teachers and teaching, stakeholders must stop the incessant chatter around changing teacher education and must instead focus on systematic improvement of teacher education. Such a paradigm will refocus the field on collective efforts to define exceptional teaching and teacher education rather than splintered attempts to tinker on the edges through modifications in courses, program types, internship hours, and entry requirements.

Teacher educators need the space, opportunity, and resources to experiment with new pedagogies and the use of information technologies. They need extended “life space” in which to work with novices and the opportunities to interact or “network” with faculty and master teachers, clinicians and research scholars, colleagues and stakeholders to identify promising practices. Above all, teacher educators need expansive research and development opportunities to direct and inform their work. They must be optimistic in overcoming what they see as inane and detrimental in the nation’s focus on accountability, standardized testing, competition, deprofessionalization, and teacher evaluation but they also have to be realists that see the sociopolitical system as something that exists—but something that can be changed. They have to enlist others to join them in their quest for change but also acknowledge that change

is challenging and difficult. The five conditions are real and will continue to be real. Teacher educators have to address each of them with determination.

- **Accountability**—teacher educators have to take the lead in framing a new accountability “mechanism” that enables all programs to demonstrate excellence in their offerings, enables graduates to make a positive difference in the lives and learning of all students, creates expectations that are both transparent and cost-effective, and is embraced by the public and the profession.
- **Professionalism**—preparation programs have to recenter the enterprise on the basic tenets of democratic professionalism with greater community involvement in program design, a reconsideration of professional ethics, and more ambitious thinking of teaching roles, career paths, and access to the profession.
- **Diversity**—teacher educators must continue to press for culturally responsive teaching to prepare teachers able to guide the learning of all children and youth. They must also address the need to recruit and prepare a more diverse teacher workforce that better represents the demographic composition of America.
- **Experimentation**—teacher educators must engage in careful study of new forms of pedagogy and share widely effective ways of preparing teachers and sustaining teacher learning. One of the roles for university-situated providers is to carefully assess all preparation models to identify promising practices and take the lead in building networked improvement communities that address perplexing problems confronting teacher education.
- **Provider proliferation**—teacher educators in university-situated programs should recognize that there will be many forms of preparation conducted by an increasing array of providers. Competition among and between providers is a reality that is unlikely to disappear. The special role universities can play is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to teacher preparation and to guide the conversation about high-quality teacher education.

Four decades ago, the teacher education community took on the responsibility of “educating a profession” by laying out an agenda for the professionalization of teaching based on core values and a common set of principles shared by teachers and teacher educators (Howsam, Corrigan, Denemark, & Nash, 1976). An ambitious agenda was described and work was undertaken on a number of fronts to realize a profession of teaching. While great efforts were made to realize that agenda, much work remains unrealized. Today, it seems important that a similar effort be undertaken to address ways of professionalizing teaching and to build a commitment for collaboration and partnership across all facets of teaching—from preschool providers to higher education faculties, from research scholars to practicing professionals—to realize a twenty-first-century vision for teaching and learning (MacBeath, 2012). That is the agenda we propose.

Note

- 1 In contrast, faculties largely acquiesced to the new accreditation standards of CAEP, despite their potential disruption of existing policies and practices. The different reactions by faculty to federal mandates vis-à-vis professional accreditation standards drew both praise and consternation.

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