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DEBATING TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR CRITICS

La formación del profesorado en Estados Unidos. Debates y críticas

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INTRODUCTION. Teacher education in the United States has experienced several transitions: Before the 1830s, people who were considered smart were able to teach. After the 1830s until the late 1950s a wide range of approaches to teaching were developed. From the 1960s until 1990, the way to become a teacher became clear through a state approved university program. Since 1990, teacher education in the United States has experienced a major transition, which brings into question the future of teacher education within universities, considering the amount of alternative providers that train teachers. **METHOD.** An overview of teacher education in the United States will be presented through a historical review, focusing on the North American context, the schools of education and the impact of the alternative providers within the education system. **RESULTS.** Several agendas have been competing, but none of them are dominant and they are often seen as conflicting and contradictory. At the same time, national government does not have a strong role in education policy and private organizations set a lot of policy. The alternative providers prepare teachers in many ways, but they also face some difficulties. The result is that teacher education programs and education schools keep being marginalized. **DISCUSSION.** Twenty five years ago, the vast majority of aspiring teachers attended a university-based school of education. Today perhaps one-third of new teachers are products of programs that offer alternatives to university preparation and alternative routes are growing. University-based teacher preparation programs are suffering a period of crisis and it is time to find new ways to face this challenge in the United States.

Keywords: *American teacher education, University programs, Alternative routes, Critics.*

Where we are today

As recently as 1990, if a person wanted to become a public school teacher in most parts of the United States, she or he assumed that they needed to attend a university, either in an undergraduate education program or, if they already had a college degree, in a stand-alone graduate program in a university education school. But the university-based teacher preparation program was *the* route to a teaching career. There were exceptions, individuals who were hired on temporary licenses or had the regular requirements waived, but they were the relatively-rare exception. From about 1960 until 1990 the route into teaching was clear; and it was through a state approved university program (Fraser: 195-207).

Today, less than two decades later the variety of routes into teaching is staggering. Since 1986, while some schools of education and states implemented some of these commendations of the plethora of reform reports that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, other reformers implemented an extraordinary range of new alternative programs; most of which involved moving teacher education out of universities altogether. Few people can keep track of the range and variety of alternative providers in teacher education today. And these alternative providers not only seek market share, they debate intensely among themselves about the best way to prepare teachers—through short-term summer preparation followed by a deep-dive into the profession, through on line programs, through school-based year-long residency arrangements, through courses offered outside of traditional universities. In 2015 educators in the United States are as far as they have ever been from a consensus about what constitutes good teacher preparation.

In the midst of these debates many different programs have arisen often claiming to be the best route into teaching. For teacher educators, for funders, for public officials charged with

monitoring the quality of teacher education, for those gathered at an international conference seeking a new definition of excellence in teacher preparation, perhaps most of all for principals and superintendents who hire teachers and those who seek to enter the profession, what was once a simple straight line has become a confusing range of often mutually-hostile options.

Kenneth Zeichner, who has probably spent more time than any other contemporary scholar studying American teacher education, has described three, perhaps four, competing reform agendas that often collide but consistently critique today's university-based teacher education programs. There is what he calls the "professionalism agenda" that seeks to improve the quality of teacher preparation by creating tough and enforceable national standards enforced by strong accreditation systems like the new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). There is the "deregulation agenda" that is espoused by some who are highly skeptical of any national standards and who seek to support multiple avenues into teaching—outside as well as inside universities—leaving those who hire teachers responsible for the quality of those placed in the classroom. There is a "social justice agenda"—one that is subject to intense debate even among its adherents—that seeks to transform public schools by transforming teaching education so that a new generation of teachers can help level the playing field in the United States. And finally Zeichner notes the some are seeing what Marilyn Cochran-Smith calls an "overregulation agenda" as in some states officials seek to micromanage every aspect of teacher education even as they foster alternative routes (Zeichner, 2009: 1, 2).

No one of these agendas is dominant and directives from state agencies, accrediting bodies, and critical evaluators often reflect conflicting and contradictory directives. No wonder teacher educators feel buffeted. Some of this criticism and some of these demands on are reasonable. Some are not. Many contradict each other.

Ironically while state agencies are busy opening the doors to more alternative programs they are often engaged in implementing an “overregulation agenda” when it comes to university-based programs whose faculty often legitimately complain that they do not have much room to maneuver, to innovate, and to engage in creative new approaches to the preparation of teachers rather than offer mere compliance with rules and policies set by others. And they do this while, at the same time, watching the same agencies that add new rules for the universities diverting funds to non-traditional programs that operate outside of the universities and are only very lightly regulated.

A word —or two— of clarification on the North American Context

In many parts of Europe the preparation of primary (or what the U.S. calls elementary) teachers can be very different—in structure as well as in content—from the preparation of secondary (or middle and high school) teachers. Primary teachers in Europe also have fewer years of preparation, less prestigious degrees, and far more emphasis on pedagogy in their program than secondary teachers. That is not true in the United States and has not been true since the 1930s. While the content of courses may differ—pedagogy for early children vs. pedagogy for adolescents—and the location of field placements will certainly differ, the length of programs and the general number of required courses is usually quite similar across the grades. Thus, for better or worse, when this article describes teacher preparation in the U.S., it is describing the preparation of both primary and secondary teachers.

A second word on education policy in the United States: Unlike much of Europe, the national government in the United States has a relatively limited role in education policy. The federal role has been growing of late, but it is still far less than in many other industrialized

countries and always subject to challenge. As a result, each of the 50 states sets its own education policies and these can be very different from state to state. For one example: the state of Massachusetts requires all teachers to have a college major in an arts and sciences discipline. Massachusetts' western neighbor, New York, state encourages a college major in education. And beyond the state/federal divide, much policy is set by private organizations. Colleges and universities are accredited by private associations—made up of colleges and universities—and professional schools have their own accrediting bodies—made up of professional schools—be it the American Medical Association and the organization of Medical Colleges for medical schools or the new CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) for education schools. In the field of teacher education, the accrediting body tries to attend to state rules, but there can be conflict there also.

Finally it is important to note that undergraduate university programs in the U.S. differ from many in Europe. While an English college student who is studying history or chemistry, for example, will spend nearly all of the time in classes and individual recitation sessions focused on that topic, an undergraduate program in the U.S. has a greater variety of courses including a major focus of study in one discipline—usually a third but up to a half of the course work—some general education courses that stress the breadth of knowledge, and enough time left to complete a “minor” of perhaps half as many courses as the major or many elective courses. Thus the student who wants to major in an academic discipline—Mathematics or English Literature, etc.—and also complete a “minor” or even a second major in education can usually do so.

Schools of Education are in a bind

On October 20, 2013, *New York Times* columnist Bill Keller published a piece with the

title, “An Industry of Mediocrity”. It did not take a reader long to learn the industry in question. Keller noted that he had borrowed his title from the recent report on university teacher education programs in the United States by Kate Walsh and the National Council on Teacher Quality (Walsh, 2013). The Keller article and the NCTQ report are only the latest in a long chain of articles, reports, and commentaries to make the same point. In the opinion of many Americans—educators, policy leaders, and average citizens—teacher education in the United States is not just in a state of crisis. It is a disaster, these reports say, and a disaster that is responsible for many other national problems from the poor rankings of American students on international tests to declines in American competitiveness in international economic competition.

Alternative providers do not fit a single model

Alternative providers also face their own problems. Not long ago, the front page of the *New York Times* carried an article with a headline: “Fewer Top Graduates Want to Join Teach for America”. Several reasons were given for the 10% decline in applicants that TFA experienced for the second year in a row after a decade of extraordinary growth. TFA staff said it was because the rebounding American economy offered better alternatives, but critics saw the decline as a sign that on many college campuses the word was getting around that a quick summer of preparation might not be sufficient time to be ready for the rigors of successful teaching and that something better was needed. The debate is sure to go on for some time.

The *Times* article on TFA also discussed another reality faced by defenders of alternative providers of future teachers—there are many different alternative providers, they prepare teachers in many different ways, and any effort to judge them gets incredibly complicated. Among the options are:

- Teacher for America is certainly the best known of the new alternative providers of teacher education. TFA recruits top flight college graduates and offers them a free summer preparation program in return for a promise to go where they are needed and teach in a high need school—perhaps in rural Georgia or Mississippi or perhaps in the poorest of urban neighborhoods in Washington, DC or Los Angeles. It has no university connection with its basic program although TFA has many university partnerships in different regions of the country that allow TFA fellows to pursue a master's degree while fulfilling their two-year commitment to teaching.
- Many school districts and especially many Charter Schools have their own internal teacher preparation programs that may begin with an internship of several months before one becomes a full teacher or may move one into full classroom responsibilities much more quickly. Some of these programs involve universities. Some do not.
- There is also the Teacher Residency model, first developed in Boston and now also available in Philadelphia, Denver, Seattle and other places, in which aspiring teachers participate in a program that is either completely independent of or only vaguely affiliated with a university and in which they intern for a full year in a classroom and take courses on Fridays or in the evening prior to being licensed and assuming full classroom responsibilities.
- Finally the for-profit University of Phoenix, but also other schools including the prestigious University of Southern California have pioneered on-line teacher preparation programs that do not require attendance at a college campus course and serve students with on-line courses and supervision through strategically placed classroom cameras. These

programs are especially popular in more remote areas. While some argue that these programs are but a pale imitation of a campus-based course, others insist that on line courses offer at least as much personalized attention while film clips of actual teaching can allow novice teacher and mentor much more specific opportunities to review classroom practice.

The fact that all of these options very different programs and more are called “alternative providers” means that any generalizations about them are almost surely bound to be off the mark in some way.

How we got here

A Long Standing Critique of Education Schools

While the critique of alternative providers of teacher education is relatively new —because the alternative providers themselves are new, the critique of education schools is long standing. In 1953 Arthur Bestor published *Educational Wastelands: the Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools*. And —surprise— he blamed education schools for becoming detached from the academy, turning into mere vocational training enterprises. Thus Bestor wrote of what constituted reform in the schools of education of the 1950s:

Instead of a new and genuinely professional approach to education there was a mere upgrading in the numbering of the old courses in pedagogical method. For most students these courses were apt to be piled, layers thick, upon an undergraduate major in pedagogy, not upon a major in one of the liberal arts.

Bestor blamed the education faculty for creating an unholy alliance with school administrators and state agencies, which guaranteed “substantial course work in pedagogy”. Thus Bestor

charged, “Protected behind state requirements which no department but itself can satisfy, the department is able to defy, or even to wage aggressive warfare against, the academic standards of the university” (Bestor, 1953: 104-121).

A decade later, other critics —James D. Koerner and former Harvard president James Bryant Conant among them— said essentially the same thing. Koerner was as harsh as Bestor. Though Conant used more gentle language both he and Koerner added the newly organized accrediting agency, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), to their list of those standing in the way of meaningful reform in teacher preparation. Conant also included the Arts & Sciences faculty in his critique noting that all too often, “the faculties of arts and sciences had shown little interest in school problems...With few exceptions, college professors turned their backs on the problems of mass secondary education”. And this former Harvard president made it clear that he was not happy with what he considered irresponsible behavior across the campus (Koerner, 1963: 109-110; Conant, 1963: 1-8, 209-218).

So from the 1950s until the present, we have a critique that often has similar elements. Why so much unhappiness for education schools for so long? Part of the answer lies in the fact that it was in the 1950s that university-based teacher education came to dominate the preparation of all teachers in a way it had not previously done. If university-based programs were the route into teaching, and if many Americans were not happy with the quality of teachers in the nation's schools, then it must be because of something that was wrong with the university programs. It was not always so.

A bit of history —diversity was the norm 1830-1960

One of the great overlooked realities in teacher preparation in the United States is that while

the route to teaching through a university based program was the norm, indeed virtually the exclusive route to teaching in 1990, it had not been the only route for all that long. The university dominance of teacher education really lasted for thirty years, from 1960 to 1990. During a much longer time period —from the beginnings of what historians call “the common school era” in the 1830s to the late 1950s, a wide range of approaches to teaching flourished in the United States. The problem is that most of those who are active in today’s dates do not remember much of what happened prior to 1960. And thus, with a kind of generational amnesia, too many act as if the 1960-1990 norm was “the way things have always been” since some sort of time immemorial (Fraser, 3-7).

But let’s do a quick visit

Prior to the 1830s, the basic approach to teaching was “any smart person can teach” .

Before the United States became independent and for decades after that, many men taught school and nearly all of those who did so taught for a very short period of time before going on to a “real profession”. If one had successfully been to school, it was argued, one had sufficient preparation to teach school.

Then in the 1830s several things happened at once:

- Schooling expanded rapidly. In an era of immigration and rapid industrialization, many reformers found ways to get more children to attend school and keep them there for more years.
- With the rapid growth of schooling, the teaching profession was also pried open by a generation of women who insisted that women were at least as well suited to teaching as men.
- And some of the same reformers argued for expanding teacher preparation.

- They created what they called Normal Schools; state schools that started out offering a few months of preparation for graduates of common [or elementary] schools and eventually expanded into mini-colleges.
- They offered short term Teacher’s Institutes by which teachers could take short summer or winter courses to improve their skills.
- They created the high school “normal program” by which high schools prepared the majority of elementary teachers which were, in fact, the main way elementary teachers were prepared in the 19th century.
- And late in the 19th century they created university teacher preparation programs; although it was well into the 20th century before a majority of teachers took advantage of them.
- The reformers also started state exams and, in fact, for much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, anyone who passed the-relatively easy-state exam could teach whatever other preparation they had or didn’t have.
- And individuals mixed and matched/ did a little of this and a little of that, and school boards hired whomever they could find.
- And in the mid-20th century other developments led to increased standards for teachers.
- The Great Depression of the 1930s allowed school boards to be much more selective than they had been in the past and hire “only the best”. This was the era in which schools began to demand a college degree of anyone entering teaching.
- In the 1940s, World War II and immediate post-war developments in the U.S. made it a national goal that more and more citizens, including aspiring teachers, attend college.
- And the Cold War led to great fears about undereducated citizens.

As a result, by the 1950s, state after state began requiring a college degree —often with an education major— to be a teacher. Old Normal schools were transformed first into state Teachers Colleges who awarded a degree after four years of post-secondary study and then into branch campuses of the state university —and by 1960 every state in the Union required a B.A. for primary and for secondary teaching. And that, with rare exceptions, was that ... for 30 years.

And many colleges and universities welcomed the challenge of educating teachers. While there were often some faculty members —larger numbers on some campuses, smaller numbers on others— who thought preparing people for such a low-status profession as teaching was beneath them, university administrators, and many faculty welcomed the teacher preparation enterprise. As Elizabeth Green has said in a recently popular book, *Building A Better Teacher*, “the subject [of education] had to be offered; simple economics demanded it” (Green, 2014). After all, universities always need more revenue and as Green points out:

In 1890 total enrollment in US elementary and secondary schools stood at just under thirteen million. By 1920, the number was more than twenty million... By...1948, the number of teachers alone was nearing one million. For a university the calculation was clear; training teachers made financial sense whether there was something to teach them or not (p. 27).

So universities welcomed teacher education. The actual education that aspiring teachers needed was something that many thought they could figure out later.

The system was never without its critics

But universities were slow to figure out what constituted good teacher preparation, though

they certainly knew how to organize courses. And in every decade since, some version of the same criticism has emerged: the curriculum of education schools has too many methods courses and too little rigorous study of the basic arts and sciences disciplines that teachers actually teach, but also too little time actually spent in “the field” in school classrooms where novice teachers can observe, test their wings under careful supervision with ample feedback, learn not only the “tricks of the trade” but the actual work of excellent master teachers. Surprisingly little has changed in the general critique of education schools from Bestor’s complaint of the 1950s to the reformers in state legislatures and major foundations in 2015.

Teacher Education Has Never Really Found a Home in Multipurpose Universities, Especially Research Universities

It is important to remember that prior to about 1960, teacher preparation in the United States —for both primary and secondary teachers— was conducted in separate Normal Schools or State Teachers Colleges that were dedicated more-or-less exclusively to the preparation of teachers. It is important not to romanticize these teachers colleges. Their curriculum was often dreadful, their standards low, and their programs ineffective. But they had some things going for them:

- They had a clear focus on preparing people for success in the profession of teaching.
- And in the service of that goal they blended theory and practice, content and pedagogy.
- Most Normal Schools had what they called a Lab School attached to the campus; a primary or secondary school whose teachers were also part of the faculty of the Normal School and in which the aspiring teachers could test their wings, get regular feedback, and in which the

Normal School faculty could test theory to see how it worked in practice.

- It is especially important to note that in the Normal Schools, the norm was for the same professor to teach History and how to teach History or for a professor to teach Math and what today are called the Math Methods courses.

When teacher preparation moved into multi-purpose universities, several things happened.

- The universities already had History and Math and other subject matter departments.
- The former Ed School faculty had to create a new and separate field if they wanted to survive. And so they developed methods courses; lots of methods courses. Courses on how to teach History and Math and other subjects, detached from the content itself. The student was supposed to do a kind of shuttle diplomacy —taking Chemistry and the Chemistry Department and Science Methods in the Ed School and then figuring out, on their own, how to take the content to the pedagogy and create a solid lesson.
- At the same time, if the education department wanted to grow, given the way most universities handle their budgets, it needed to “capture” as many credits as possible. Another methods course taught by an education professor meant more money and prestige for the department. Another content course, taught by an arts and sciences professor, meant less money and prestige for the education department. No wonder the growth of the methods courses “piled, layers thick” that Bestor decried.
- The pressures of the university also meant that faculty who wanted to be successful needed to spend less time “in the field” and more time on their own research. Where Normal Schools

happily had their so-called Lab Schools, K-12 schools where students did their practice teaching under the supervision of the faculty, Universities did not want these appendages and University education programs needed to find schools across their region where students could “student teach” usually under the supervision of clinical faculty who were of significantly lower status than the “real professors” and who far too often had little interaction with the clinical faculty or the schools where they supervised.

- And so, again, the students had to do a kind of shuttle diplomacy —this time moving between methods courses taught by one professor and a student teaching experience supervised by a different clinical professor or a practicing teacher... and one who often said “forget all that theory stuff, this is how it really works”.

It was —and is— a crazy box and one that to this day is hard for university based teacher education programs to get out of. One could argue that teacher educators have never really solved this problem and as a result teacher education has never really found its place in the university (Good, 2008: 58-67).

Geraldine Joncich Clifford and James W. Guthrie’s 1988 book *Ed School* (1988) described the problem that education schools and professors face in the modern research university:

Our thesis is that schools of education, particularly those located on the campuses of prestigious research universities, have become ensnared improvidently in the academic and political cultures of their institutions and have neglected their professional allegiances... They have seldom succeeded in satisfying the scholarly norms of their campus letters and science colleagues, and they are simultaneously estranged from their practicing professional peers (1988: 3).

Two years later, in 1990 John Goodlad wrote in a similar vein about the turn away from an emphasis on teacher preparation within universities and even within schools of education. Looking at changes in university priorities in the 1980s, Goodland concluded, “As universities advance in status, we conclude the status of teacher education declines not only within the institution as a whole but also within the school or college of education, which is, in turn, of rather lowly status on most campuses” (Goodlad, 1990: 22).

Even within Education Schools, teacher education has often found itself as the least respected of activities. The “serious scholars” engage in research on public policy or on child development and learning theories. They may study teachers but don’t often work directly on their preparation. Only less “serious”, and certainly less respected faculty—many of them clinical professors and adjuncts—find themselves in a department of teacher education. Judith Lanier, who founded what became the Holmes Group, said it most succinctly, “there is an inverse relationship between professorial prestige and the intensity of involvement with the formal education of teachers” (Lanier and Little, 1986: 530). But while Lanier, Goodlad, Clifford, and Guthrie are respected voices, few have paid any heed to their warnings.

The result is that education schools continue to be marginalized within universities, and teacher education programs continue to be marginalized within education schools. Professors who commit a portion of our professional lives to the teaching of teachers are often seen as “lightweights” by academic peers no matter how serious and scholarly our research. And all of this is happening in a national context in which university-based teacher education receives all too little respect from those outside of the university in the world of government, teacher organizations, schools, or the foundations that fund much of the current experimentation in education (Labaree, 2004).

Holmes and Carnegie —Getting Serious About Reform in the 1980s

In the 1980s a new generation of critics of university-based teacher preparation, many of them this time within the very university-based education schools, appeared on the scene. In the spring of 1986 two highly regarded reports focused specifically on improving the way teachers were prepared in the United States. *A Nation Prepared*, the report the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986), and *Tomorrow's Teachers* (1986), which turned out to be the first of three reports from the Holmes Group of Education Deans [leaders of some of the nation’s most prestigious education schools] both appeared almost simultaneously. Many, but certainly not all, faculty and administrators in schools of education got serious about reform or at least acknowledged that they needed to pay attention to issues including raising admission standard, providing much more school-based “clinical” time for students, and fundamentally rethinking what was taught and how it was taught to their students.

These reports, when taken together —as they almost always were— sought to redefine teacher education in the United States. The reports had surprisingly similar recommendations. They included:

- Create a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [from the Carnegie Report] to establish high standards for what the best teachers needed to know and be able to do.
- Restructure schools to provide a professional environment for teaching.
- Restructure the teaching force and introduce a new category of lead teacher, followed by a large number of “professional teachers,” who in turn would be supported by aides and interns.
- Require a bachelor’s degree in the arts and sciences so that all teachers would have solid content knowledge.

- Develop a new professional curriculum in graduate schools of education leading to a Master in Teaching degree based on systematic knowledge of teaching and including internships and residencies in schools.
- Mobilize the nation's resources to prepare minority youngsters for teaching careers.
- Relate incentives for teachers to school-wide performance.
- Make teacher's salaries and career opportunities comparable with those in other professions.

These reports and the national dialogue and debate that they inspired did change the landscape in teacher education. The Carnegie Corporation of New York launched the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards which has now granted "professional certification" to thousands of teachers who represent a kind of elite in the profession. Some states have increased admission standards for teacher education and some have begun requiring an arts and sciences degree. And many schools of education launched top-to-bottom rethinking of their curriculum.

On the other hand, there was also widespread resistance to these recommendations. School districts and superintendents have remained remarkably uninterested in taking on any role in teacher preparation. And many in education schools also resisted. On many campuses there were significant voices within the education faculty who saw the Carnegie and Holmes reports, and the dialogue they generated, as simply one more attack on their enterprise; one to be resisted as strongly as possible. While there was growth in graduate programs; the undergraduate teacher preparation program remained—and remains—strong in most places and the complaint about "too many methods courses" remains strong thirty years after the reports. Far too many education faculty members took an attitude of "this too shall pass" and simply ignored the whole reform enterprise.

A decade after the reports were issued, Oxford University Professor Harry Judge looked back at the work of the Homes Group, to which he had been a consultant, and wrote, "The effort stalled (which is not to say terminated) when the colleges and schools of education had to think seriously about reforming themselves. They will change only when they really wish to, and not enough yet do" (Judge, 1998: xiii).

"I give up" —The birth of alternative routes

At the same time other reformers responded to the problem—and especially to the hostility to change that they saw on many campuses in the late 1980s—and essentially said "it is time to give up on education schools...they can't be reformed".

- In 1990 a Princeton Senior Wendy Koop, wrote a senior thesis suggesting a new organization —Teach for America—that would enlist top flight seniors in a two-year commitment to teaching after a summer of preparation. Today TFA is one of the largest preparers of teachers in the U.S.... and remains so in spite of a recent drop-off in its numbers.
- At about the same time, authorities in New Jersey created what they called an "alternative route".
- And a private philanthropic foundation in Boston working closely with the then superintendent of the public schools created the Boston Teacher Residency program; with nominal ties to a local university but in reality a school-district managed teacher preparation program.
- And all of these ideas spread. While TFA is one of the largest providers of teachers in the nation today, there are also other programs that are modeled on TFA with perhaps lower standards; districts all over the country have their alternative routes and teacher fellows programs; and at least half a dozen cities have teacher residency programs.

- Others have gotten into the act with on line teacher education —like the University of Phoenix.

One wonders if it is possible to have consistent standards for both on-campus programs and the alternative providers so that excellence in outcomes will matter more than the structure of programs. Certainly such standards do not exist today in spite of the valiant efforts of some to create them.

If one follows the money —from the federal government, state legislatures, and some of the nation's most prestigious foundations— the track is to the alternative routes into teaching —be they TFA, Residency Programs, or new providers such as the rapidly growing Relay School of Education. Whether one looks to the U.S. Department of Education, the Congress, or the Gates Foundation, it is not easy to find a program funding university-based teacher preparation.

One need not quarrel with TFA, Residency programs, or Relay to worry about a world in which education schools do not continue to play a central role in both the preparation of teachers and in providing research about the structure of teaching and learning and, indeed the historical and cultural forces that have shaped the society in which schools operate as well as schools themselves. Doesn't the research that is taking place within universities —not only research about how the brain actually works but also research about the social and economic impact of schooling on communities or indeed about the meaning and historical purposes of education—have a place in the preparation of teachers? Don't the arguments about the fundamental goals and purposes of education that can take place within a top flight education faculty help an aspiring teacher develop his or her own informed professional judgment? Do we want teachers who will lead the schools of the future to be prepared only by learning the tricks of the trade but not engaging

in the intense academic arguments about what constitutes effective teaching and, indeed, the ethical questions of the nature and purposes of learning? While making the case for attention to technology and on-line instruction in even the best of universities, William Bowen warned against overdoing it. He insisted on the “need to emphasize —and, if need be, to re-emphasize— the great value of ‘minds rubbing against minds’” (Bowen, 2013: 67). Don't future teachers need to be part of such communities where students argue with and learn from each other; argue with and learn from a diverse array of wise teachers? Not every university-based teacher preparation program manages to create the kind of rich intellectual dialogue that future teachers should be part of, but all too few alternative providers, with a relentless focus on “what works” manage to do so.

And doesn't the day-to-day work of helping a novice become a professional educator help university researchers hone their own work? Won't those who write about the history of schooling be better historians if we spend some time engaged with the current issues of schooling and learning to teach in schools? Finally, of course, there is the practical issue raised even by critics like Bill Keller, “There are 3.3 million public school teachers in America, and they probably can't all be trained by start-ups. Raising up the standards of university programs should be an urgent priority”.

But in spite of any defense of university teacher preparation, the complaints about universities have become especially severe in the last decade. Most of the complaints are not new. But those voicing them are especially vocal and they are being heard.

- Many superintendents and classroom teachers are angry at a system that they describe as “long on theory and short on practice”.
- And many add that the theory does not work well in day to day classrooms.

- Education school faculty, like all university faculty, are judged more on their research than their effective teaching... and certainly if effective teaching demands time spent visiting schools — who can afford to do it?

Reform, I would argue, needs to happen across the board, within the alternative providers which need to develop a much richer intellectual foundation for their programs and within universities that simultaneously need to raise academic standards and create much stronger field-based experiences for their students. And the effort to create a clear and consistent means of holding all programs to a single standard of excellence must be completed —without piling never ending compliance regulations on them.

A look toward the future

So what is going to happen to teacher education in the United States in the next few years? Historians make very poor prophets. But it seems obvious from any look at the current situation that university-based teacher preparation programs are facing a moment of crisis. In twenty five years, they have seem a drop from a time in which university programs prepared over 90% of all new teachers to a day in which perhaps one-third of all new teachers skip university programs. If this trend continues in the next twenty-five years, universities will simply be one among the many alternative routes to teaching.

University faculty members and administrators face a choice. Certainly the time is ripe to attend seriously to the kinds of reforms of university programs that have been advocated since the 1980s. If Harry Judge argued that schools of education will change, “only when they really wish to”, perhaps now is the moment when they will wish to do so with sufficient vigor to make things happen. Perhaps some universities will find new ways to build partnerships

with alternative providers —to create a serious role for research faculty and university courses in the next generation of school-based residency programs or even Teach for America. On the other hand, there is a very real possibility that universities will do “too little, too late”, or that the words of those who argue “this too will pass”, will dominate the decision making process. In that case, there is every reason to believe that teacher education will migrate further and further from the university and that the next generation of teachers will be weaker as a result while university faculty will have lost a wonderful opportunity to help make schools better places led by better prepared and informed individuals.

In the twenty-first century some universities are developing radically new teacher education programs that, as hybrid programs, borrow some of the best from the alternative providers yet anchor the teacher education program in the academic mission of the university. Perhaps the most striking example of the sort of rethinking that is happening on a few campuses is at the University of Chicago which closed its traditional education school in the late 1990s. Soon thereafter Chicago launched the Urban Education Institute to bring together expertise across the university in the direct service of the Chicago Public Schools and then launched the University of Chicago Urban Teacher Partnership (UTEP), a two year graduate program that built extensively on the residency model first developed in Boston but with a much stronger link to the core academic work of the university. Today UTEP has an impressive track record of preparing teachers for the hard to staff Chicago Public Schools. Other universities are developing their own hybrid models. Whether enough will to make a significant impact across the United States is yet to be seen.

While this article addresses teacher education in the context of the United States, the same challenges can be found in many places. Certainly

university-based teacher preparation in England is facing a very similar challenge. Elsewhere in Europe and Asia there are voices asking “why do we need universities to educate teachers”. This is a moment of change; whatever the outcome.

Hopefully those in positions to do so will make the best possible efforts to ensure that the changes are such that ensure a better education for the next generation of children based on a better education of their teachers.

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Resumen

La formación del profesorado en Estados Unidos. Debates y críticas

INTRODUCCIÓN. La formación del profesorado en los Estados Unidos ha experimentado varias transiciones: antes de 1830, quienes eran considerados inteligentes eran quienes podían enseñar. Entre 1830 y 1950 se desarrollaron muchas perspectivas de aprendizaje. Desde los sesenta hasta los noventa, convertirse en maestro seguía unas directrices claras a través de un programa universitario aprobado por el Estado. A partir de 1990, la formación del profesorado en los Estados Unidos experimentó grandes cambios, que llevan a cuestionarse el futuro de la formación de maestros en las universidades, teniendo en cuenta la cantidad de proveedores alternativos que preparan al profesorado. **MÉTODO.** Se presenta una visión general de la formación del profes-

rado a través de un repaso histórico, centrando la atención en el contexto norteamericano, las escuelas de formación y el impacto de los proveedores alternativos dentro del sistema educativo. **RESULTADOS.** Diferentes propuestas han estado compitiendo entre sí, pero ninguna de ellas es la dominante y a menudo se ven como conflictivas y contradictorias. A su vez, el gobierno nacional no tiene un papel importante respecto a las políticas educativas y las organizaciones privadas pueden establecer bastantes de ellas. Los proveedores alternativos preparan al profesorado de muchas formas, pero también afrontan algunas dificultades. El resultado es que los programas de formación del profesorado y las escuelas de formación continúan marginadas. **DISCUSIÓN.** Hace veinticinco años, la gran mayoría de los aspirantes a maestro estudiaron en una escuela de formación universitaria. Hoy quizá un tercio del nuevo profesorado es producto de programas que ofrecen alternativas a la preparación universitaria y las rutas alternativas están creciendo. Los programas de preparación de maestros universitarios están pasando por un periodo de crisis y es necesario encontrar nuevas formas de afrontar este reto en los Estados Unidos.

Palabras clave: *Formación del profesorado americano, Programas universitarios, rutas alternativas, Críticas.*

Résumé

La formation des enseignants aux États Unis. Débats et critiques

INTRODUCTION. La formation des enseignants aux États-Unis a vécu plusieurs transitions: avant 1830, ceux considérés intelligents étaient ceux doués pour l'enseignement. Entre 1830 et 1950, des nombreuses perspectives d'apprentissage ont été développées. Depuis les années soixante et jusqu'aux années quatre-vingt-dix, devenir enseignant avait des règles claires grâce à un programme universitaire adopté par l'État. À partir de 1990, la formation des enseignants aux États-Unis a éprouvé des grands changements qui font remettre en question l'avenir de la formation des enseignants aux universités, étant donné qu'aujourd'hui il existe une grande quantité de fournisseurs alternatifs qui préparent les enseignants. **MÉTHODE.** D'abord, à travers d'une révision historique, une vision générale de la formation des enseignants est présentée. Le contexte Nord-Américain, les écoles de formation et l'impact des fournisseurs alternatifs sur le système éducatif méritent une attention spéciale. **RÉSULTATS.** Différentes propositions de formation ont été en concurrence, mais aucune n'est la dominante. Elles sont souvent perçues comme conflictuelles et contradictoires. À son tour, le gouvernement national n'a pas un rôle important en ce qui concerne les politiques éducatives et les organisations privées peuvent établir beaucoup d'entre elles. Les fournisseurs alternatifs préparent les enseignants de plusieurs manières, mais ils rencontrent aussi quelques difficultés. De ce fait, les programmes de formation des enseignants et les écoles de formation restent marginalisés. **DISCUSSION.** Il y a vingt-cinq ans, une grande majorité des candidats à enseignant venaient d'une école de formation universitaire. Aujourd'hui, un tiers des nouveaux enseignants sont issus de programmes qui offrent des alternatives à la préparation universitaire. En effet, aujourd'hui, aux États-Unis les programmes de formation des enseignants sont dans un période de crise et il est nécessaire de trouver des nouvelles manières d'en affronter.

Mots clés: *Formation des enseignants aux États-Unis, Programmes universitaires, Parcours alternatifs, Critiques.*

Perfil profesional del autor

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