

Editor's Introduction: From Preservice Admission to the First Year of Teaching

To say these are interesting times in schooling, education, and in the preparation of teachers may be a considerable understatement. Perceptions about failing schools and unqualified teachers, about illiterate students graduating from high schools, have headlined news reports and have led to a call for an examination of the purposes and practices of schools, colleges, and departments of education, and specifically, of teacher preparation programs. One resulting policy direction has been to hold teachers accountable for students' academic achievement. Schools, colleges, and departments of education are being asked to take a more systemic approach toward their responsibilities in preparing teachers from the time of program admission through the first years of teaching.

The preparation of our nations teachers is perhaps the most visible and important issue in education today. National and state debates on improving student achievement are focused on efforts to insure teacher quality. Colleges and universities seeking National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) approval beginning this fall will be required to provide performance evidence of candidate competence. These performance-based teacher preparation standards are linked directly to the contemporary educational reform issue of identifying and verifying learning outcomes. How can we determine the quality of the teachers working with our nations students without a clear assessment of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions? What evidence best suggests that teachers are becoming competent in their practice as a result of their preservice teacher preparation programs? And, most importantly, how is the performance of the teacher

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directly related to student learning outcomes? Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2000) argues that “the outcomes question in teacher education is currently driving the field and, to a great extent, determining policy and practice,” and ultimately will serve to define teaching as a profession.

This Fall 2001 issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly*, entitled *From Preservice Admission to the First Year of Teaching*, is a rich collection of articles organized around the continuum of learning to teach from admission criteria to teacher credentialing programs through the first year of teaching. In preparing this issue, I was challenged to think of the various restructuring efforts described in each article and the results of the accompanying research studies in the context of the new NCATE standards. I encourage our readers to examine the content of this issue in the light of each of our institutions' commitment to improve and professionalize the preparation of teachers for our nations schools.

In “Complex Admission Selection Procedures for a Graduate Preservice Teacher Education Program,” Micki M. Caskey, Kenneth D. Peterson, and Jacqueline B. Temple from Portland State University review the research on the multiple criteria used in selecting preservice candidates and provide the results of their own study which focuses on the analysis of relationships among selection variables.

Myron H. Dembo, from the University of Southern California, follows with “Learning To Teach Is Not Enough — Future Teachers Also Need To Learn How To Learn.” In this article, Dembo offers a reconceptualized alternative to the traditional course work in human learning and educational psychology found in most preservice programs. He argues that emphasis on learning how to learn will positively influence the process of learning to teach.

Next, M. Arthur Garmon, from Western Michigan University, gives us “The Benefits of Dialogue Journals: What Prospective Teachers Say.” Garmon tackles a void in the research literature on the effectiveness of student journal writing in learning to teach, and offers the analysis and results of a study of his own students' use of dialogue journals.

In “!What Deliches Tortillas! Preparing Teachers for Literacy Instruction in Linguistically Diverse Classrooms,” Jill Kerper Mora and Dana L. Grisham from San Diego State University address the challenges inherent in preparing teachers to work with English language learners. The authors present the results of their research study investigating the effects of a newly restructured literacy methods course for preservice teachers.

Gassia Gerges, from the University of Memphis, presents “Factors Influencing Preservice Teachers' Variation in Use of Instructional Methods: Why Is Teacher Efficacy Not a Significant Contributor?” In this article, Gerges presents the results of her research study focusing on the relationship between preservice teacher efficacy and the varied use of instructional strategies.

Jeanne B. Cobb, from the University of North Texas, follows with “Graduates of Professional Development School Programs: Perceptions of the Teacher as

Change Agent.” In this article, the author looks at what effects professional development schools have on teachers’ perceptions of themselves as change agents. This article should further stimulate discussion about the value of tracking the outcomes of teacher education programs, as recommended by NCATE.

In “The Bridge from Student to Teacher: What Principals, Teacher Education Faculty, and Students Value in a Teaching Applicant,” Tammy V. Abernathy, from University of Nevada, Reno, and Al Forsyth and Judith Mitchell from Weber State University address the oftentimes incongruity between teacher education program standards and school district expectations of teacher applicants. The authors present the results of their research study examining the different perceptions about what variables constitute a qualified teacher candidate.

In closing this issue, Amy Gratch, from the University of South Carolina, Aiken, gives us “The Culture of Teaching and Beginning Teacher Development.” Gratch focuses her study on the socialization experiences of beginning teachers through a case study of three beginning teachers. She suggests that teacher education programs need to provide in-depth fieldwork opportunities for preservice teachers to help them begin developing relationships with school district and school site personnel.

The articles in this issue are the result of thoughtful and critical reviews from members of our Panel of Readers, their suggestions for revisions and refinement, and the subsequent editorial attention from associate editor Jerry Brunetti and me. We believe that this collection represents *Teacher Education Quarterly’s* commitment to publishing the highest quality scholarly work in teacher education research.

The articles that appear in this issue were originally submitted through our normal submission process. Guidelines can be found in both the journal (see next page) and on our website: <<http://www.teqjournal.org>>. Please visit our site for submission guidelines and additional information that may be useful to prospective authors.

— Thomas Nelson
Editor

Reference

Cochran-Smith, M. (2000). Constructing outcomes in teacher education: Policy, practice, and pitfalls. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, [on line website] <<http://olam.ed.asu.edu/epaa/v9n11.html>>.