

We Need More Than a Redesign

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I applaud John Goodlad's efforts to create a coalition to reform teacher education. The school-university partnerships established by his Center for Educational Renewal are an exciting venture. His argument that we must require teachers to receive their clinical preparation in professional development schools that include teachers and university faculty is a major step forward for teacher education. The Center, by providing technical assistance and developing state support of the system, developing school-university partnerships, and creating and refining centers of pedagogy, is moving education toward three goals: improving practice, informing the knowledge base, and helping to professionalize teaching.

Yet we must go further. We must initiate policies that support the professionalization of teaching. If we want to increase the accountability of teachers, we must demand more of them than we have in the past. Professional schools of education will not have the necessary impact if teachers who have not had the kind of training and education Goodlad advocates are teaching in classrooms next to those who have received full preparation. Sixty percent of our current secondary school mathematics teachers did not major in and are not certified to teach math. Statistics are similar in other critical subjects, including science and English (*Schools and Staffing Survey, 1987-88*. National Center for Education Statistics, U. S. Department of Education).

In other professions, unqualified individuals are not allowed to practice. These professions have set standards for preparation that individuals must meet, or the state will not issue them a license. Standards, once set, are enforced. But in teaching, that is not always the case. Indeed, the emergency, temporary, and "alternate" licensing and certification programs

hinder the development of strong teacher education programs and hamper the development of teaching as a profession.

Creating Quality Control

When international comparative data are published, we complain that our students are not measuring up to international standards, yet we have not demanded competence from our nation's teaching force. In fact, much of the American public is still trapped in the belief that "anyone can be a teacher." This perception has contributed to our lackadaisical attitude toward the preparation of teachers, which, in turn, has fostered the common hiring practice of assigning teachers to content areas out of their primary field of study. The states say they do this because there is a "teacher shortage." But what have other professions done when faced with shortages? They have increased the incentives to enter the profession and eased the path to entry by providing financial aid. Sometimes, as in the medical field, para-professional personnel are created. But standards for entry to the medical profession have not been degraded.

To achieve the goals of professionalization and accountability, we must develop a national system of accreditation and a strong state licensing system. Right now, only 503 schools of education are independently accredited through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Yet there are 1,200 schools which purport to prepare teachers. States do not require their teachers to graduate from independently accredited schools. In fact, some states are implementing alternate certification programs designed to waive even the minimal requirements they now have in place.

State licensing agencies in the established professions play powerful roles in shaping education in their fields. Standards boards, made up primarily of members of the profession, establish

and enforce educational, testing, and internship requirements. Always, they require that candidates be graduates of accredited professional schools. Thus the state licensing authorities legally reinforce the voluntary system of professional accreditation.

Professionalizing Teaching

Goodlad found "chronic prestige deprivation" among teachers. Our profession will continue to be held in low esteem until we demand more of our teachers, from grade point averages to elimination of those candidates who show no indication that they should be admitted to the practice of teaching. Until we have quality control mechanisms that work, we will continue down the same path toward low test scores and performance, both on the part of teachers and students.

Creative teachers are frustrated by the bureaucratic regulations that govern schools. But until the profession regulates itself more thoroughly, politicians and legislators will step in to try to do the job. Without profession-based quality control, well-meaning legislators in certain instances are actually reducing the quality of our nation's teachers by implementing "alternate certification" laws. In some cases, these laws allow individuals with no preparation except a college degree to become teachers.

There can never be a profession of teaching until the public has a reason to trust teachers. And that trust will not develop until all teachers are well educated and carefully licensed. Until that occurs, the current wave of education reform will not succeed. As Goodlad has urged, teacher education and school reform must be linked through working partnerships. □

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