

18 An uneasy relationship: the history of teacher education in the university

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For better and for worse, teacher education in the United States has come to be offered primarily within the institutional setting of the university. In many ways, this came about by historical accident. In the nineteenth century, teacher education, if it took place at all, occurred in a variety of organizational settings, until the state normal school emerged in the last quarter of the century as the emergent (if not yet predominant) model. In the early twentieth century, however, this model went through a rapid evolution, from normal school to state teachers college to general-purpose state college to regional state university. Since the 1970s, teacher education has been a wholly owned subsidiary of the university.

Ironically, although teacher education was a latecomer to the university in the U.S., it was at the core of the original form of the university that emerged in medieval Europe. Early in this institution's history, an advanced liberal arts education was primarily intended to prepare teachers. The university was then constituted as a craft guild for teachers, whose highest degrees (the master's and doctorate) were badges of admission to the status of master teacher and whose oral examinations were tests of the candidate's teaching ability (Shulman, 1986; Durkheim, 1938/1969). But over the years teacher education was gradually pushed from the center to the periphery of higher education, which is where it was found in the early nineteenth century when American teacher education started its long march back.

In this chapter I examine the history of teacher education in the U.S. for insight into the situation facing teacher education today. As it turns out, the relationship between the university and teacher education has been an uneasy one for both parties. There has been persistent ambivalence on both sides. Each needs the other in significant ways, but each risks something important by being tied to the other. The university offers status and academic credibility, and teacher education offers students and social utility. But in maintaining this marriage of convenience, the university risks undermining its academic standing, and teacher education risks undermining its professional mission. I explore some of the central issues that surround this awkward relationship: the centrality of teacher education's status problem in shaping its relationship with the university; the roots of this problem, both in the market pressures that shaped teacher education's history and in the problems of practice that shaped its professional role; the status politics that shaped the situation of teacher education within the university; and the differences in the relationship between TE and university that come with the latter's location in the university status order.

THE HISTORY

Teaching existed long before teacher education.¹ In the years preceding the emergence of the normal school in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing afterward, prospective teachers in the U.S. followed many routes into the classroom. In general, the assumption was that anyone who had completed a given level of education could turn around and teach it. Teachers needed no special preparation in the art of teaching; they just needed modest familiarity with the subject matter they would teach. This lack of formal training in pedagogy was not unique to teaching. Before the twentieth century, most professionals did not learn their craft by enrolling in a program of professional education but rather by pursuing an apprenticeship with an experienced practitioner. What was distinctive about the preparation of teachers, however, was that it involved neither formal instruction nor informal apprenticeship. Instead, the rule was simply: take the class, teach the class.

EARLY FORMS OF TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION

In early nineteenth century America, education took place in a wide variety of settings: home, where children acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills; church, where children learned via sermons, study groups, and Sunday schools; a variety of lyceums and public lectures; apprenticeships, which required the master artisan to provide some general education as well as trade craft; dame schools, in which students learned elementary skills in the home of a neighbor; private tutors; private schools relying on tuition; free schools for paupers operated by the local municipality; public schools in New England towns; academies, providing secondary education; and colleges, operating preparatory departments. The setting determined the identity of the teacher, who could be any of a number of persons: a parent, a preacher, a master craftsman, an association leader, an adult in the neighborhood, an itinerant tutor, a private contractor, a town official, a corporate employee, or a college professor.

The arrival of the common school in the 1830s initiated a process of simplifying this complex structure of education and making it look more like the system we have today. The emerging model was the community elementary school, operated by local public officials and supplemented over time by a grammar school and a high school. In this new structure, teachers were public employees, appointed by a school board acting as the agent for the community. The criteria for hiring teachers varied. Perhaps the most important characteristic was the ability to maintain order among the students (Sedlak, 1989). It also helped if the candidate was local and needed the work. As for educational qualifications: at the very least, you needed to have completed the level at which you would be teaching. As standards increased over time, the educational requirement became completion of the level above that. Grammar school graduates thus were viewed as prospective elementary teachers, and high school graduates as grammar school teachers. College students often taught in the summer, and college graduates frequently taught for a while until something better came along.

With the development of the common school system, however, came the first effort to establish a system of formal preparation of teachers for these schools. Leaders of the common school movements, like James Carter, Horace Mann, and Henry Barnard, were also strong advocates for teacher education. One innovation that became prominent during the middle of the century was the summer teacher institute, which was a set of lectures and classes aimed at developing the skills of teachers in both pedagogy and subject matter. These institutes constituted a form of on-the-job training for teachers, the

first formal effort to provide teachers with professional development opportunities. They typically took place during the summer, over a period ranging from one to eight weeks, usually organized by the county school superintendent or a group of school districts (Mattingly, 1975).

THE NORMAL SCHOOL

The major teacher education initiative that came out of the common school movement, however, was the state normal school. One reason for this was the sharp increase in the demand for teachers that arose with the adoption of the common school model. In place of the vast array of mechanisms for providing instruction that marked education at the start of the nineteenth century, the common school system established a single standard model, the publicly operated community school. The process of creating these schools all over the country produced an enormous and continuing shortage of teachers who could be employed to occupy the new classrooms. The normal school was to be the primary means of providing these teachers. However, the common school movement generated not only a demand for teachers but also a demand for higher teacher qualifications. When education shifted from an *ad hoc* and voluntaristic mode of delivery to a systematic and publicly sponsored form, teaching became a kind of public trust, which required systematic training and professional certification for teachers in order to insure that they were capable of meeting their new public responsibility for educating the nation's children. As their name suggested, normal schools were expected to set the standard—the norm—for good teaching.

Normal schools took a variety of forms. Major cities set up their own normal schools, or normal departments within the high school, in order to train teachers for the local system. Often counties established normal schools to feed into their own school districts. But the most prominent and ultimately most influential form was the state normal school, the first of which opened in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839. The state normal school, which started out at the level of a high school, was a single-purpose professional school for future teachers. In order to accomplish this end, the curriculum had to be a mix of liberal arts courses, to give prospective teachers the grounding in subject matter they had not received in their earlier education, and professional courses, to give them a grounding in the arts of teaching. Initially the course of study lasted for one or two years.

In the eyes of reformers like Mann, the primary aim of the state normal school was to prepare a group of well educated and professionally skilled teachers who could serve as the model for public school teachers throughout the country. Here is the way Cyrus Pierce, the founder of the Lexington normal school, put it in a letter to Henry Barnard:

I answer briefly, that it was my aim, and it would be my aim again, to make better teachers, and especially, better teachers for our common schools; so that those primary seminaries, on which so many depend for their education, might answer, in a higher degree, the end of their institution. Yes, to make better teachers; teachers who would understand, and do their business better; teachers who should know more of the nature of children, of youthful developments, more of the subject to be taught, and more of the true methods of teaching; who would teach more philosophically, more in harmony with the natural development of the young mind, with a truer regard to the order and connection in which the different branches of knowledge should be presented to it, and, of course, more successfully.

(Borrowman, 1965, p. 65)

This was a noble professional mission for the normal school; one can hear echoes of it in the debates about today's university-based schools of education. But it directly conflicted with the other main purpose of the normal school, which was to fill empty classrooms with much-needed teachers. It is hard to see how the normal school could have satisfied both of these aims at the same time. From the very beginning, it was caught in a classic bind between quality and quantity. It could provide a few model teachers with a high degree of professional training; or it could provide the large number of teachers needed for the expanding common school system by skimping on professional preparation. It could be professionally strong but functionally marginal, leaving the vast majority of teachers to reach the classroom with less rigorous training; or it could be professionally weak and functionally central, turning out large numbers of graduates with minimal preparation.

It should surprise no one that normal school leaders ended up choosing relevance over rigor. Doing otherwise would have been difficult. To preserve academic rigor would have meant opting for professional purism over social need; it would have meant leaving mass teacher preparation to less qualified providers; and it would have meant depriving their institutions of the funding, power, and opportunities for expansion that would come with making themselves useful. As I examine in more detail later, this same debate about the role of teacher education continues today. Schools of education at elite universities generally have opted for rigor over relevance, with boutique teacher education programs that provide academically credible preparation for a small and highly selective group of students. But schools of education at regional state universities—the heirs of the normal schools, which reside at the bottom of the university status order—have opted for programs that mass produce teachers to fill the continuing demand in schools. This tension between rigor and relevance, it seems, is endemic to teacher education, and criticisms customarily descend on the heads of education schools for erring in both directions. A recent report by Arthur Levine (2006), *Educating School Teachers*, is only the latest in a long line of polemics that lambaste the university school of education for being both academically weak and professionally irrelevant.²

Under these conditions, the number of state normal schools grew rapidly. After their start in 1839, they grew to 39 in 1870, 103 in 1890, and 180 in 1910 (Ogren, 2005, pp. 1–2). Enrollments at public normal schools (which included a few city and county normals) grew from about 26,000 in 1879–80 to 68,000 in 1899–1900 and 111,000 in 1909–10 (Ogren, 2005, Table 2.1, p. 58). This rapid increase had the effect of dramatically lowering both the status of these institutions and the quality of their programs, a point I develop later. Even though they were running hard to catch up with the demand for teachers, by the end of the century normal schools still had not been able to do so. As David Tyack has pointed out, “By 1898 the number of public normal schools had reached 127, with about the same number of private ones. But all the normal schools together graduated no more than one-quarter of the new teachers” (Tyack, 1967, p. 415).

THE EVOLUTION OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL INTO THE REGIONAL STATE UNIVERSITY

At the same time that normal schools were under pressure to meet the demand from school districts for more teachers, they were also experiencing another kind of demand, this coming from their own students. If the first kind of pressure sought to turn normal schools into teacher factories, the second sought to turn them into people's colleges.

From the perspective of their students, normal schools were more than just a way to

become a teacher. They were also a way to acquire a local, affordable, and accessible form of higher education. Private colleges were expensive. State universities were almost as expensive, they were usually far away, and gaining admission was not easy. But normal schools were less expensive; they were located at geographically accessible points around the state, allowing students to commute and thus keep down living costs; and admission was easy. The only problem was that normal schools focused entirely on preparing students for a single occupation, teaching. But on this point, it turns out, the normal school was prepared to be flexible. It really had no choice.

Like American higher education in general, both then and now, state normal schools were dependent on student tuition. They received appropriations from state government, but these funds were only adequate to support a portion of the costs of educating students. The rest had to come from tuition. With money comes power. In order to survive and prosper, normal schools needed to keep attracting student tuition dollars, which meant competing with other higher education providers in their market area to offer students the kinds of educational services they wanted. What these consumers wanted was not a single, narrowly-defined program for preparing teachers, but instead an array of programs that offered broad access to a variety of possible jobs. They did not want a normal school; they wanted an open-access liberal arts college. Adapting to this consumer demand was mandatory for the normal schools; if they failed to do so, students would go to competitor institutions that had already made the adjustment. And adapting to this demand was also relatively easy. In order to provide prospective teachers with the subject matter knowledge they needed, normal schools already had a group of professors who were teaching history, English, math, science, and the rest of the core liberal arts curriculum, in addition to courses in pedagogy. It was thus a simple matter for normal schools to supplement their core teacher education program with a series of programs of study that drew on these liberal arts courses. And that is what they did.

In his book *And Sadly Teach*, Jurgen Herbst (1989) describes in detail the process by which normal schools gradually abandoned their commitment to professional education and allowed themselves to be lured into mimicking the liberal arts college. For proponents of high quality professional education for teachers, this is not a pretty story. But for those who see education as an important way to allow individuals to get ahead in society, it is a heartening tale of expanding educational opportunity and social mobility.³ As was the case when normal schools expanded to meet the demand from school districts for more teachers, they were just doing what people wanted them to do. The market spoke—first employers, then consumers—and normal schools responded. Depending on one's point of view, this response may or may not be admirable, but it is certainly understandable.

The evolution of the normal school into a people's college helps explain the rapid expansion and proliferation of these institutions in the late nineteenth century. It also helps explain why this expansion was insufficient to meet the demand for teachers, since an increasing share of the normal school student body was there to pursue other professional goals. But the process by which the normal school adapted to consumer pressure from students did not stop with the development of a multipurpose institution. If students wanted the normal school to be a local, inexpensive, and accessible form of a liberal arts college, then it made no sense to stop with the addition of a few new programs. After all, the normal school was still more high school than college, so it could not provide the kind of social mobility opportunities that a real college could. Students wanted college status for the normal school, and so did its faculty members and administrators, all of whom would benefit from being able to ride this institution to a higher level in the educational system. The same was true of members of the community surrounding the

normal school, local legislators, and also communities that were hoping to open new such institutions in their own areas.

Given the array of constituencies supporting this elevation, it was inevitable that by the start of the twentieth century state legislatures would begin transforming normal schools into teachers colleges, and between 1911 and 1930 there were 88 such conversions (Tyack, 1967, p. 417). With this change, the former normal schools could grant bachelor's degrees, giving heft and credibility to all their programs. But the process did not end there. These teachers colleges had already diversified their programs, turning themselves into de facto liberal arts colleges, with teacher education playing a smaller role in the curriculum every year. So it made sense to recognize this fact, remove the word "teachers" from their letterhead, and change to a more generally recognized and marketable label, "state college." This started happening in the 1920s, and by the 1950s the last of the normal schools were formally disappearing from the scene. Finally, this process of institutional evolution reached its culmination in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, when one after another of these former normal schools took the last step by seeking and winning the title "university." In the century-long race to adopt the most attractive institutional identity, being a college was no longer good enough; only becoming a university would do. The large majority of the old normal schools followed this route—from normal school to teachers college to state college to state university—with only minor variations in labeling and timing. For example:

State Normal School, Albany, NY, 1844; State Normal College, 1890; State College for Teachers, 1914; State University College of Education, 1959; State University College, 1961; State University of New York at Albany, 1962.

State Normal School, Millersville, PA, 1859; State Teachers College, 1927; State College, 1959; Millersville University of Pennsylvania, 1983.

State Normal School, Mankato, MN, 1868; State Teachers College, 1921; State College, 1957; State University, 1975; now Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Northern State Normal School, De Kalb, IL, 1899; Northern State Teachers College, 1921; Northern State College, 1955; Northern State University, 1957.

State Normal School, Montclair, NJ, 1908; State Teachers College, 1929; State College, 1958; Montclair State University, 1994 (Ogren, 2005, appendix).

An alternate route: education in elite universities

There was another route that brought teacher education into the university, this one much more direct though much less common. In the late nineteenth century, universities started adding chairs in pedagogy or education. These were flagship state universities and private universities, which were destined to occupy the top tier in the emerging hierarchy of higher education in the twentieth century (with the former normal schools, now regional state universities, occupying the lower tier). Historians generally give University of Iowa credit for establishing the first permanent professorship in pedagogy in 1873 (Tyack, 1967, p. 415; Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, p. 62), but University of Michigan claims this honor for itself with a chair established in 1879 (University of Michigan, 2005). Others quickly followed: Columbia (Teachers College) in 1887; Chicago, Stanford, and Harvard in 1891; Berkeley in 1892; and Ohio State in 1895 (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, pp. 62–63). Education began at these institutions as individual professorships and then quickly evolved into departments and finally schools or colleges of education. The latter stage arrived at Ohio State and Iowa in 1907, Berkeley in 1913, Stanford in 1917, Harvard in 1920, and Michigan in 1921 (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, p. 64).

These education schools saw themselves playing a markedly different role from the one

assumed by normal schools (Powell, 1976). Whereas the latter focused on meeting the central needs of an expanding education system, by preparing a large number of teachers for the elementary schools, university education professors focused on the preparation of a much smaller number of high school teachers and school administrators and on the production of educational research. Not by accident, the large majority of these university education students were men, whereas most normal school students were women. This sharp divergence in mission laid the groundwork for the continuing dichotomy in education roles that characterizes the contemporary university, with education schools at former normal schools going one way and those at elite universities going another. I will have more to say about that issue later in the chapter.

Converging on a canonical model

By the 1960s, through the diverse processes I have outlined here, teacher education in United States had stumbled upon a model of organization that quickly became canonical. Teacher education, it turned out, was going to be carried out within a university, under the leadership of professors in a school or college of education located there. By this time, the former normal schools had evolved into universities, and once they achieved this status they naturally imitated the structure of existing universities by setting up education schools and then assigning them the work that had once constituted the normal school's entire mission, preparing teachers.

In allowing itself to become incorporated within the university, teacher education was just following in the path of the other more prestigious professions. As I noted earlier, until the late nineteenth century the primary route into all of the professions was apprenticeship (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). A prospect would work out an arrangement with an experienced practitioner: to learn by doing, in the manner of an apprentice carpenter or shoemaker; and to study the books in the practitioner's library. The traditional high professions—clergy, law, and medicine—have had a place in university faculties from medieval times to the present, but only the pinnacle of the practitioners in these professions studied there; the large majority had always followed the route of apprenticeship. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, colleges and universities were providing the liberal component of the education of the high professions, but apprenticeship was still the means of acquiring the skills of professional practice. Gradually, individual practitioners started specializing in professional preparation, gathering groups of apprentices together into what amounted to proprietary professional schools. Then, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, universities started establishing formal professional schools that incorporated both academic study and guided practice, and this spelled the beginning of the end of independent professional preparation.

The university was emerging as a powerful new form of American higher education during this period (Veysey, 1965). As Clark Kerr (2001) has noted, it combined the British college, which focused on undergraduate education, with the German graduate school, which focused on advanced studies and research, and then added the American land grant college, which focused on practical-vocational education. In this setting, professional schools were a natural addition, drawing on the German and American elements to produce a graduate school for practice. And the growing prestige of the new university made it attractive for prospective practitioners to start seeking professional education there instead of through apprenticeship. By 1900, more than 10 percent of doctors, lawyers, clergymen, and college professors had received training at a university professional school (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 383). Abraham Flexner's 1910 report on medical education set off a cascade of demands for reform of professional education

more generally, seeking to improve the quality of this preparation by reinforcing the connection with the research university. Soon it became difficult and eventually unthinkable for professional schools in any major field to exist on their own. Only schools for training practitioners of the lesser trades—like cosmetology and truck driving—could survive independently. For teacher education, as with other programs of professional preparation, there was really nowhere else to go but the university.

Teacher education and the university: the nature of the relationship

This is how teacher education ended up in the university. Now we need to explore the kind of home it found there: the nature of the relationship between the education school and the larger institution, and the consequences of this arrangement for both parties. In particular, I focus on the kind of exchange that has been involved in maintaining this relationship. As I suggested at the beginning, the university provides status and academic credibility for its part of the bargain, and in return teacher education provides students and social utility. Below I explore the terms of this exchange: the roots of teacher education's status problem, the programmatic and professional consequences of using university status to remedy this problem, and the significant differences in the nature of the bargain with education at elite universities vs. regional state universities (the former normal schools).

Education's status problem

Teacher education has long suffered from low status.⁴ Everyone picks on it: professors, reformers, policymakers, and teachers; right wing think tanks and left wing think tanks; even the professors, students, and graduates of teacher education programs themselves. In part this status problem is a legacy of the market pressures that shaped the history of the normal school; in part it is a side effect of the bad company that teacher education is seen as keeping; and in part it is a result of the kind of work that teachers and teacher educators do. Let us consider each of these in turn.

Legacy of market pressures

At the core of teacher education's status problem are the market pressures that shaped the history of the normal school. One kind of market pressure came from employer demand. There was a seemingly endless call for warm bodies to fill the ever expanding number of classrooms in a school system that was increasing in size both horizontally (incorporating the entire age cohort) and vertically (extending the school career from elementary school to grammar school to high school). Normal schools expanded to meet this demand, and in doing so they necessarily relaxed professional standards for teacher preparation. This meant making teacher education easy to enter, short in duration, modest in academic rigor, and inexpensive to maintain. The normals were being asked to turn out large numbers of teachers at low cost and with minimal qualifications, and they did so. But, of course, being accommodating in this manner sharply lowered their institutional status. And this stigma has stuck with teacher education as it migrated into the university, where it has retained the reputation for being an academically weak program produced on the cheap for students of modest intellect.

Another kind of market pressure on teacher education came from consumer demand. Students entering the normal school wanted a credential that would open a much wider

array of occupational doors than a simple teaching degree, and the normal school obliged by expanding programs and evolving into a college and then university. In the process of doing so, however, the normal school had to abandon its focus on the professional preparation of teachers. Teacher preparation became increasingly marginal within the expanding college and university context. No longer the centerpiece of the institution as it was in the normal school, education was now just one school among many; and the responsibility for teacher education itself became diffused across the entire university. Prospective teachers acquired general education and knowledge of the school subjects they would teach in departments elsewhere on campus, leaving the education school with responsibility only for courses in pedagogy. Thus the evolution into a university meant that the normal school lost both its professional mission and its control over the education of teachers. This left the university education school with a function that seemed vestigial. It looked like the “real” education of teachers in academic subject matter took place elsewhere, whereas the education school seemed responsible only for the vocational side of things—teaching lesson planning and classroom management, and supervising student teachers. In the status hierarchy of the university, which values the academic over the vocational and the theoretical over the practical, this put education on the lowest tier.

Bad company

Another source of teacher education’s low esteem is the apparently bad company it keeps. Teacher education serves stigmatized populations, as defined by gender, class, and age. This is a problem, since professions derive much of their esteem from the quality of their associations. For one thing, the emergence of the common school movement quickly turned teaching from men’s work into women’s work. In part this change was ideological, grounded in a vision that nurturing the young was best handled by women. In part it was practical, grounded in the need for vast numbers of teachers, and the understanding that women were willing to work at half the pay demanded by men. Becoming defined as women’s work has never helped the status of an occupation.

In addition, teaching was not an exclusive profession but more like a mass occupation. As such it drew a large number of practitioners from the working class and lower middle class, whereas the more esteemed professions drew aspirants from the higher classes. At the same time—unlike the prestigious professions, whose clients were among the more elevated members of society—public school teaching expended its efforts on behalf of a clientele of students who were concentrated at the lower parts of the social spectrum. As the most accessible of the professions serving the least advantaged members of society, teachers—and the programs for preparing them—carry a stigma of class.

Finally, there is the issue of age. If professionals earn part of their status from the status of their clients, then teaching’s focus on children works against it since adult clients carry more cachet. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, and architects deal primarily with adults; even if a doctor has a child as a patient, the clients are the parents. The rungs in the status ladder of teaching correspond to the age of the student, with professors in graduate programs at the top and early childhood educators at the bottom. Elementary teachers are just a rung above the latter and high school teachers a rung above that.

The nature of the work

A third factor in the low status of teacher education is the nature of the work that teachers do. Teaching is an extraordinarily difficult job that looks easy, which is a devastating combination for its professional standing and for the standing of its professional

educators. Why is teaching so difficult? One reason is that teaching cannot succeed without the compliance of the student. Most professions can carry out their work independent of the client; surgeons operate on the anesthetized and lawyers defend the mute. But teachers can only accomplish their goals if students are willing to learn. They exert their efforts to motivate student compliance in the task of learning, but they cannot on their own make learning happen.

Compounding this problem is the fact that students are generally in the classroom under duress. Pressure from parents, truancy laws, and the job market bring them and keep them there. But unlike the clients of most professionals, they are not contracting with the teacher to deliver services that they themselves want. Add to this another complication, which is that teachers usually carry out their practice under conditions of isolation, in a self-contained classroom where they are the only professional and only adult in the room. Finally, teachers have to function in a situation in which they lack a proven technology that works, a clear definition of success, or even a definite fix on the identity of the client (who can be construed simultaneously as the student, the parent, and the community).

Teaching is therefore a very difficult form of professional practice, which makes teacher preparation equally difficult. Complicating this challenge, however, is the general perception that teaching is actually easy. As Dan Lortie (1975) has explained and generations of teacher educators continually rediscover, one reason for this perception is that teaching is extraordinarily visible. We all undergo a 12-year apprenticeship of observation in the elementary and secondary classroom, watching teachers on the job. Compared to our knowledge about other professions, whose work we encounter only occasionally and whose workings we see only obliquely, we think we really know what teaching is all about: maintaining order, asking questions, grading tests, assigning work. As a result, prospective teachers think they know how to teach before entering teacher education programs, which allows little authority or esteem for these programs. In addition, teaching appears to be a natural skill rather than one that one needs to learn through a rigorous program of professional education. We think of it as something that individuals either have or they do not have: a way with kids, a confident and forceful personality. Whatever it is, no one can really learn it in a teacher education program. Finally, teaching is a rare profession in which practitioners succeed by making themselves dispensable. Most professions rent their expertise, which requires clients to return every time they need help. But teachers give away their expertise, by showing children how to learn on their own. This makes the skills of the teacher seem transparent and ordinary, whereas the skills of other professionals seem obscure and remote. If teaching is this difficult and if it appears this easy and commonplace, there is really little need for, and no special esteem associated with, the work of preparing teachers.

In light of all these factors, teacher education's status problem is understandable. It bears the legacy of a historical evolution that undermined its commitment to professionalism and marginalized it within a university setting where it is given little respect; it lacks the high status associations that enhance the prestige of the major professions; and it is stuck with problems of professional practice that are overwhelmingly difficult but that earn it little public credit. Under these circumstances, the advantages for teacher education in migrating from the normal school to the university seem compelling, as compelling as the advantages that lured European peasants to Ellis Island. In status terms, there seemed to be everything to gain and nothing to lose.

The exchange: its costs and benefits

Benefits to education

Teacher education desperately needed a status boost, and the university had status to spare. So to incorporate the former into the latter seemed to provide the answer to teacher education's big problem. By making this move, normal school teachers became university professors, teacher candidates became university students, and education schools assumed a proud place alongside law schools and medical schools. Teachers would now enter the profession with the blessing of the most potent credentialing institution of the modern era.

Not only would this connection with the university grant teacher education the status it craved; it would also imbue this program of professional preparation with the academic credibility it had so sorely lacked in the days of the normal school and teachers college. By the twentieth century, the university had a monopoly on the highest levels of learning. It was the place that brought together the top experts in their fields, who generated the most important forms of new knowledge, and who taught this knowledge to the leaders of the next generation. Being there meant that education school faculty members were now anointed the experts in their domain, who could be trusted to develop the knowledge base for the whole field of education and then imbue this knowledge into the newly emerging members of the teaching profession.

Benefits to the university

Bringing teacher education into the university offered great benefits to the education, but what was in it for the university? One benefit was that teacher education brought with it a large number of students. Like the rest of American higher education, the university has long been heavily dependent on tuition to pay the bills. This is most obviously the case with private institutions, but it holds for public institutions as well. State appropriations pay only part of the cost of running a public university, so student tuition is crucial for its ability to maintain itself and to expand. And state appropriations themselves are usually prorated according to the number of students. So no university can afford to ignore a large pool of potential students who could contribute to the institution's greater welfare. Teacher education offers such a pool. Teaching is by far the largest of the professions, so the demand for teachers, and thus for teacher education programs, is substantial and enduring. Even today, after a long period during which the number of students enrolling in higher education has expanded much faster than the number of openings for new teachers, teaching still employs about 15 percent of all college graduates every year. That is a market that is too big to pass up.

What makes teacher education so attractive to universities, however, is not only the numbers of students it brings but their low cost. Universities have long treated teacher education as what has come to be known as a "cash cow." In these programs, if one is not too punctilious about maintaining high professional standards, an education school can generate a nice profit for the rest of the university. This is possible if the school keeps class sizes large and faculty salaries low, and if it dispenses with the need for the kinds of expensive laboratories and extensive libraries and intimate seminars that drive up the costs in more prestigious programs.

Of course greater numbers of students, by themselves, are not necessarily beneficial for a university, even if the costs are low. Elite universities are careful to limit access in order to maintain exclusivity and thus drive up the exchange value of their credentials.

Opening the doors to a flood of education students, especially if this means lowering academic standards, would be counterproductive to this strategy. But even in this elite sector of higher education, teacher education has its advantages. For one thing, it provides support for a number of large academic departments, whose graduate programs offer prestige to the university but whose undergraduate programs are often unattractive to potential majors. Programs in English and history and music and art, for example, benefit greatly by being able to offer potential majors the possibility that they could actually make a living in this field by teaching the subject at the secondary level. For these departments, it is critical to have a viable and sizeable teacher education program on campus.

For the university more generally, teacher education helps out with another related problem: relevance. Prestige accrues to a university for having the most advanced graduate programs and generating the most esoteric research. But public support for the university depends on being able to make a claim for its public usefulness. Legislators and voters want to know what benefits the state gains through its support of the university. One of these benefits is providing access to higher education for the state's young people, which means that the university cannot take the pursuit of exclusivity too far. It pays to have some open access programs for ordinary folk, programs like teacher education that have traditionally provided easy entry into higher education. Another public benefit the university can claim is that through education it makes a contribution to solve pressing social problems in the state. The work of education school faculty members can support this claim, both as researchers exploring educational problems and as teacher educators preparing teachers for the state's schools.

This analysis points back to Clark Kerr's insight about the kind of balance that is so critical to the American university. This institution needs to combine the British focus on the undergraduate college (providing a basic college education for a large number of tuition paying students), the German focus on research and advanced graduate study (providing the advanced knowledge and highly selective graduate programs that are so critical to university status), and the American focus on vocational-professional education and practical problem solving. Teacher education thus helps the university with the first and third components of this triad, by providing a large number of undergraduates and a strong practical-vocational rationale, both which serve to support (both financially and politically) the other component, those prestigious and costly graduate programs. What makes the university work is striking the right balance between the elite on the one hand and the populist and the practical on the other, and teacher education is key to achieving this balance.

Costs to education

The primary price that teacher education pays for its affiliation with the university is the potential loss of its professional mission. This is the Faustian bargain identified by critics of the university school of education like Herbst (1989) and Clifford and Guthrie (1988), in which the education school accepts university status in exchange for its professional soul. As we have seen, this bargain took form early in the history of the normal school—when normal schools agreed to expand beyond their ability to preserve high quality professional programs, and when they adapted to consumer pressure by increasing academic programs and marginalizing teacher education. By the time normal schools became universities in the mid-twentieth century, the terms of the deal were already in place. The last stage in this evolutionary path simply formalized the situation, making education just one school among many and assigning it a supporting role in the larger university enterprise (to provide low cost students and a practical rationale).

Costs to the university

The most significant potential cost of this bargain for the university is that incorporating teacher education can undercut its own academic credibility and thus institutional status. The university in general has unassailable standing in the American educational scene. But individual universities operate in an extraordinarily competitive environment, in which they must constantly attend to the possible loss of their position in the academic hierarchy. This is a main theme of Jerome Karabel's book on the history of admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton in the twentieth century (Karabel, 2005). All three institutions were running scared during this entire period. They were afraid of being pushed aside by one of their longstanding competitors (like the other ivies) or by an upstart (like Stanford or NYU). Universities look like they have status to burn, but the market in higher education means that they have to worry constantly about losing position to their peers. This means that they cannot afford to preserve academically weak programs, even if these programs offer great ancillary benefits. Therefore teacher education is on the radar of every university administrator. As a weak program with benefits, it is useful to have around as long as it is not embarrassing; but its position in the university is never completely secure. As we will see next, however, this is particularly the case with universities at the top of the pecking order.

Different bargains at the top and bottom of the university status order

As we have seen, university schools of education came about through two different mechanisms—evolution into a university, from normal school to teachers college to state college to state university (the route followed by Millersville, Mankato, and Montclair), and evolution within a university, from chair to department to school of education (the route followed by Harvard, Michigan, and Berkeley). These differences in origin have carried over to the present as differences in orientation.⁵

Education schools at regional state universities, many of which evolved from normal schools, focus primarily on the preparation of future teachers and the professional development of current teachers, and they maintain close connections with the profession and the schools; they devote little time to doctoral study or research. Their identity is clear: they are professional schools. As a result, in general they tend to be professionally strong but academically weak. On the other hand, education schools at top-ranked universities focus primarily on doctoral programs and research; they spend relatively little time preparing teachers or maintaining ties to the profession and the schools. Their identity is more academic than professional, since they construct themselves more as graduate schools of educational studies than schools of teacher education. As a result, in general they tend to be academically strong but professionally weak. Overall, education schools tend toward one pole or the other in these terms, with relatively few occupying the middle ground.

These two types of education schools present strengths and weaknesses that are mirror images of each other. In theory, therefore, both would seem to be at risk of appearing misplaced at the university, each in its own way. Education schools at the regional state universities make a clear case for their inclusion in the university on professional grounds (they are unquestionably professional schools of education), but their weakness in research and advanced degree programs calls into question their suitability on academic grounds. Conversely, those at elite universities make a clear case for their inclusion in the university on academic grounds (they devote nearly all their energies to enhancing their

scholarly credibility); but their weakness in teacher education and in connections with schools calls into question their suitability on professional grounds.

In practice, however, only one of these types of education schools is truly at risk of being drummed out of the university, and that, ironically, is the education school at the pinnacle. Consider recent history. Education schools were eliminated at Yale and Johns Hopkins in the 1950s, Duke in the 1980s, and Chicago in the 1990s. This almost happened at Berkeley in the 1980s, at the same time that there were scares at Michigan and Stanford. Meanwhile education schools at regional state universities have remained unthreatened.

The reason for this striking difference in viability is in the differences in the bargain struck between the education school and the university at the opposite ends of the status ladder. At the low end, education schools bring the expected benefits to the university: a large number of low-cost students (regional state universities produce the large majority of the country's teachers) and a strong reputation for relevance to community concerns. The modest academic reputation of these schools is not a problem, since universities at this level have only a modest academic reputation themselves. These universities therefore have less status to lose by including education; like education, they justify their programs more on practical than academic grounds. At the same time, these education schools have less status to gain from the exchange. This means that, unlike their counterparts at the other end of the scale, they are not under compulsion to emphasize the academic at the expense of the professional. They do not feel the same need to sell out their professional mission in order to maintain academic credibility.

At the high end of the spectrum, education schools occupy shakier ground. Such a conclusion seems odd, at first glance, since these are the education schools with the strongest publication records, the biggest research grants, the most successful doctoral programs (measured by size, selectivity of admissions, and placement of graduates), and the top rankings in *U.S. News and World Report*. Life is good at such institutions—until the ax falls. The problem is that, compared with their counterparts at the former normal schools, they are in a situation where the university has more status to lose from its association with education and the education school has more status to gain from this arrangement. This means that these education schools have a very powerful incentive to abandon their professional mission in order to establish the highest possible level of academic credibility.

Consider the situation of today's elite education schools in the years after World War II, when established research universities were desperately seeking to distinguish themselves from the lower tier of colleges and universities, which were rapidly expanding in response to the G.I. Bill. They did so by visibly increasing academic standards. In part this meant identifying weak programs and telling them to become more academic or risk elimination, which made both education and business schools obvious targets on these campuses. Both types of schools ended up adopting the same basic strategy for responding to this pressure: they abandoned undergraduate programs of professional preparation, refocused their instructional efforts at the graduate level, drew heavily on academic disciplines, and started churning out a lot of research. This strategy was markedly successful for both: the universities found these reconstructed schools worthy of inclusion academically, and most of these education and business schools are now at the top of their respective fields.

But this strategy had its down side. Education schools on these elite campuses had established strong academic credibility, as requested, but they had done so at the expense of their identities as professional schools. Business schools managed to avoid this problem through the invention of the Masters in Business Administration, which they turned into a high status program for the professional preparation of business leaders and made

the keystone of the new business school, thereby reinforcing its connection with the profession. There has been no parallel program in elite education schools, which have focused instructionally on a variety of doctoral programs while maintaining boutique programs in teacher education. As a result, these schools have come to face another threat from the university. They may be academically strong, but they can also appear professionally irrelevant. They do serious research on education, applying the disciplines of sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, history, philosophy, statistics, linguistics, and so on. But research universities already have separate departments in each of these areas, where scholars have the high academic standing that comes with full disciplinary credibility. So administrators can easily ask: why do we have an education school to carry out disciplinary work in education, when we have the real thing elsewhere on campus? If the school of education is not a professional school, then why do we need one? If it is neither disciplinary nor professional, it has no rationale for existence as a separate school in a research university.

Therefore, a number of these elite education schools disappeared in the last 50 years, and others escaped after a close call. Many of the survivors have learned a lesson from this experience, which is that life at the top of the rankings requires a delicate balance between the academic and professional. These education schools need to be academically strong, while at the same time maintaining a modest but credible professional profile. Watching what happened to institutions that failed to heed this lesson, deans at many top education schools have worked carefully in the last 20 years to move their institutions one or two steps in the direction of the professional without threatening their academic credibility. This has meant shoring up connections with local schools, modestly increasing the education of teachers and administrators, and augmenting master's programs for practitioners.

Conclusions

Starting in independent professional schools 150 years ago, teacher education in the United States ended up in universities. This was not the result of a plan to enhance the quality of professional education for teachers. Instead, it was a side effect of the growing dominance of the university over all matters educational, which meant that teacher education, like other professional domains, had no other place to go. Education gained access to the inner sanctum of higher learning on terms that were not of its own making and that have been often problematic for its professional mission. In the terms of this bargain between the two parties, teacher education has ceded control over its professional programs, cooperated in undermining the professional quality of these programs, and allowed these programs to become marginalized within a university setting that grants them little respect. In return it has been allowed to bask in the glow of the university's high status.

The effects on professional education, however, have varied according to the university's location in the academic hierarchy. At the low end, the modest status benefits of affiliation with regional state universities have permitted education schools to maintain a relatively strong professional identity, although often at the expense of both academic and professional quality. The resulting accommodation has shown remarkable stability over time. But the same cannot be said about the situation of teacher education at the high end. Leading research universities have exerted strong pressures on education schools to pursue academic credibility at the expense of professional mission, while at the same time requiring them to maintain sufficient professional identity to differentiate themselves from the disciplines. This accommodation has been more unstable. Education

schools at these institutions find it difficult to strike the right balance of the academic and professional, since the terms of that balance vary according to time and place, and the consequences of erring too far in either direction can be fatal.

NOTES

- 1 This section draws from Labaree, 2004, Chapter 2.
- 2 Chapter headings in the report tell the story of an institution failing in both dimensions: The Pursuit of Irrelevance; Inadequate Preparation; A Curriculum in Disarray; A Disconnected Faculty; Low Admission Standards; Insufficient Quality Control; Disparities in Institutional Quality (Levine, 2004). Earlier attacks in this genre include: *The Miseducation of American Teachers* (Koerner, 1963); *Ed School Follies* (Kramer, 1991); and *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* (Holmes Group, 1995).
- 3 For other accounts of this process, see Altenbaugh and Underwood, 1990; Eisenmann, 1990; and Labaree 2004.
- 4 This section draws from Labaree, 2004, Chapters 2 and 3.
- 5 This section draws from Labaree, 2004, Chapter 6.

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