

Diversity in Educator Preparation Providers: Implications for Standards Setting

By Deborah Eldridge, CAEP, Senior Vice President for Accreditation and Administration

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The last 10 years have seen exponential growth in the number and types of educator preparation providers. Graduates of alternative route programs increased from 12,000 in 1998 to 59,000 in 2008. In states such as Texas and California nearly one-third of their new teachers and in New Jersey over 40% of new teachers are prepared in alternative route programs (NCEI, 2009). Online preparation programs have grown as well with over 6,000 new educators graduating from online programs each year (*USA Today*, August 8, 2012). Currently, there are new providers of teacher licensure programs that we could not have envisioned even five years ago. For example, the American Museum of Natural History in New York City was authorized in 2010 by the NY State Board of Regents to offer a licensure program for middle and high school level Earth Science teachers. Additionally, NCATE and TEAC are accepting preliminary accreditation documents from teacher preparation providers located in the Middle East and Malaysia. These new contexts, delivery models, and global venues push against the boundaries of the existing standards and offer opportunities for the new standards to increase inclusiveness and level the playing field for all providers.

This paper provides an overview of these alternative and innovative providers of teacher preparation, outlines the challenges to existing standards that these varied approaches present, and highlights the implications for CAEP standards within each of the five areas of the Commission's working groups.

Overview of Multiple Pathways

The interest of the CAEP Commission in setting standards that would include multiple providers originates in Jim Cibulka's call, in his presidential address in 2008, for greater inclusivity of providers in the accreditation process. Greater inclusivity allows, though does not guarantee:

1. A broader and deeper voice of the profession,
2. A shared vision of quality in educator preparation that transcends political exigencies or provider diversities,
3. An increased potential for communication amongst providers about "what works" and "what is," such that innovations can be widely disseminated and replicated, and
4. A common repository for evidence of quality across all types of providers that can be analyzed for the benefit of the profession.

This section explores the profiles of five types of teacher preparation providers that are not brick and mortar, institutions of higher education (IHE) with traditional degree-based preparation programs. The five types of providers described in this section include alternate route, online, for-profit, multiple site, and international contexts. Some of these new models of teacher preparation span one or more of these five profiles. However, each type presents particular challenges to the interpretation and application of existing standards and offers unique implications for setting the new CAEP standards.

Alternate Route Providers

There are approximately 600 alternate route teacher preparation programs in 48 states and the District of Columbia. Over 500,000 teachers have graduated from alternate route programs since 1980 (NCAC, 2010, accessed on 9/22/12 from <http://www.teach-now.org/intro.cfm>). The

National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC) defines alternate route programs as follows:

Alternative routes to teacher certification are state-defined routes through which an individual who already has at least a bachelor's degree can obtain certification to teach without necessarily having to go back to college and complete a college, campus-based teacher education program (NCAC, accessed on 9/22/12 from <http://www.teach-now.org/intro.cfm>)

Most individuals in alternate route programs are employed as teachers-of-record in P-12 classrooms while completing their preparation programs for licensure.

Teach for America is one of the most prominent examples of an alternate route program. Aggressive in recruiting and highly selective in admissions, Teach for America initially provided its diverse corps of teacher candidates with a 4 to 6 week summer boot camp before placement in P-12 classrooms as teachers of record. A two year commitment to teach in at-risk schools is required while obtaining the preparation needed for state licensure. Teach for America provides the preparation programs on its own or in partnership with IHEs. As an example of program development meeting expressed needs, newer models of support for TFA corps members include a year-long mentoring program.

Online Providers

An article in *USA Today*, entitled *Web-based teaching degrees skyrocket: 1 in 16 education awards from 1 of 4 online providers* (Toppo & Schnaars, August 8, 2012) noted that the size of the teacher preparation programs from four online providers now entitled them to be counted as the largest education schools in the country. The four largest online providers of

teacher preparation are the University of Phoenix, Walden University, Grand Canyon University, and Nova Southeastern University. All of these online universities are also for-profit entities.

Currently the more traditional IHE teacher preparation programs are turning to online delivery models to reach an increasing number of candidates who prefer to learn online and on their own time. To underscore the increase in online teacher preparation, teachers with 20 to 24 years of experience acquired only 5% of their teacher preparation program online. Teachers with 1 to 5 years of experience acquired nearly 48% of their teacher preparation programs in an online format (Feistritz, 2012).

For-Profit Providers

The for-profit providers of teacher licensure programs are among the largest education schools in the United States, as noted above. Grounded in a business model of education delivery, for-profit providers generally offer teacher preparation in both online and face-to-face formats across state lines. The University of Phoenix and Walden University are two well-known examples. These for-profit entities generally develop their preparation programs in response to a high-need area or a strategic direction. For example, popular offerings include education administration and supervision programs or secondary education programs where the applicants are already certified or already possess a content area degree.

Increased criticism and scrutiny has plagued for-profit entities in recent years. Questions abound regarding high percentages of defaults on student loans, high costs, low numbers of on-time program completers for fast track programs, and high numbers of dropouts. Although the teacher preparation programs are not singled out in such criticisms, for-profit providers are criticized for possibly “pushing these things out in order to generate dollars...” (Robert Pianta in *USA Today*, 2012).

Multiple Site and Blended Providers

No longer are teacher education programs in the traditional IHE configuration operating in single sites. As an example, Troy University (TU), formerly Troy State University, in Troy, Alabama has a large, division I physical site that prepares approximately 500 Alabama certified teachers annually in multiple licensure areas. Institutionally, TU also offers programs at military bases around the world. Its teacher preparation programs span state lines and are offered in satellite centers throughout the state of Alabama as well. In addition, Troy University offers three alternate route programs. This multiple site, blended provider profile is not unique. As traditional programs seek to expand their programs, this kind of complex teacher preparation profile is gaining traction.

The complexity of new forms of teacher preparation caused NCATE and TEAC to adopt policies regarding distance education, branch campuses, and multiple sites. Furthermore, in 2011, NCATE appointed a task force on multiple pathways to explore the accreditation issues and challenges presented by multi-state programs. At the same time, the US Department of Education (USDE) was struggling with regulating online and for-profit institutions. Therefore, in 2012, the USDE appointed a committee to grapple with the issue of teacher preparation programs that were operating across multiple state lines and to propose a set of regulations to guide and resolve state licensure issues and approval authority for these programs. The committee report is due out in February, 2013.

International Providers, including US and non-US Based

Partially because internationally accepted standards in teacher or educator preparation are not on the horizon, institutions outside the United States are requesting NCATE or TEAC accreditation for a number of reasons. In private conversations with Deans of colleges and

schools of education outside the continental United States, the author has been told that NCATE (US) accreditation:

1. attracts a higher-level of faculty to their programs to teach,
2. distinguishes their programs from the "fly by night" university programs that are emerging unregulated in their countries,
3. provides a "global" perspective on their programs that attracts students,
4. lends "leverage" to deans, particularly those educated in the United States, to make programmatic and college/school level improvements,
5. establishes programs/schools/colleges as leaders in quality assurance efforts that are new to their own countries, and
6. grants distinction to teacher preparation programs when no national specialty professional accreditation currently exists.

The expansion of CAEP's mission to include the accreditation of teacher preparation programs internationally is reason alone for the Commission to take a more global approach to standards setting. Additionally, numerous NCATE/TEAC-accredited colleges and universities are expanding internationally by offering teacher preparation programs outside of the United States, and a number of US-based teacher preparation programs utilize international placements for student teaching in order to offer a global perspective and an international internship opportunity to their graduates. Peter Ewell, in a paper commissioned by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), noted that "increased globalization may require accreditors to explicitly require institutions and programs to establish learning outcomes and curricula that reflect global competencies..." (2008, p. 11). Ewell also noted that programmatic accrediting

organizations in areas such as engineering and business, for example, are already operating globally by applying internationally accepted standards.

Challenges to address

Each of the five preparation providers described above and illustrated below presents particular challenges to the existing standards with unique implications for setting the new CAEP standards. The accreditation challenges for each type of provider are described in this section, although no single set of challenges applies to a single type of provider.

Alternate Route: Clinical Preparation and Content Knowledge

The challenges presented by alternate route programs are particularly salient in the areas of clinical preparation and content knowledge. As noted earlier alternate route programs often provide a “boot camp” style pre-service preparation and then place candidates as P-12 classroom teachers while they complete the requirements necessary for state licensure. NCATE’s current Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Preparation sets up potential barriers to accreditation for many alternate route providers. For example, NCATE’s expectation that there is collaboration with school partners in the design, implementation and placement of teacher candidates is challenging for alternate route providers when their candidates find their own jobs as teachers of record. Additional expectations related to opportunities in field placements to interact with a broad range of diverse students is also challenging for alternate route programs to ensure when candidates are employed in schools of their own choosing.

NCATE’s Standard 1 and TEAC’s Quality Principle 1 highlight the importance of content knowledge. However, content knowledge is not included as part of the professional preparation program in many alternate route programs. Rather, content knowledge is part of the admissions requirements at entry and the licensure preparation is based on a candidate’s major

from his/her Bachelor's degree. This is not a new problem since many institutions offer MAT programs in which content knowledge is presumed. However, although state licensure examinations assess whether or not candidates have the content knowledge required for a particular licensure area, evidence of the content knowledge of candidates at admission to alternate route programs is an issue that is not required by current standards.

Online: Admissions Policies/Practices, Faculty Qualifications, and Candidate Performance

Online programs are uniquely challenged, under NCATE's current Standard 6, by an expectation for transparency and accuracy of admissions policies and student advising practices. Online programs must provide candidates with information at the point of admission about the applicability of their online preparation program to their home state's particular licensure requirements. Currently there are federal investigations of online programs that allegedly failed to provide candidates with this information until program completion. In these cases, newly prepared teachers were not made aware that their programs would not be eligible for state licensure in their home states or that additional coursework or experiences would be required prior to eligibility. The challenge is that traditional brick and mortar institutions offered programs that were state approved for licensure in a particular state. With the increase in online programs the conventional relationship between preparation programs and state program approvals is no longer assured.

Faculty qualifications, as in NCATE's current Standard 5 and TEAC's Quality Principle III, are another area of challenge for online providers. Instructors in these programs are typically not tenured, may not have terminal degrees, are often part-time, and do not engage in the traditional academic expectation for faculty productivity in scholarship, service, and teaching. The challenge, then, for accreditation is to determine the criteria for faculty selection, the

provisions for ongoing professional development, and the on-going evaluation of faculty quality (Cook, 2012). Furthermore, the quality of faculty for teaching online using effective and varied instructional strategies becomes a further challenge for which current standards are not necessarily explicit (Young, 2012).

Another area of challenge for online providers is to assure that candidates who are admitted to the preparation program are also the individuals who complete the assignments, assessments, and experiences. This is not currently an explicit part of NCATE standards. However, TEAC has added a policy requiring programs to do this and for TEAC auditors to check compliance. Many other accreditors are adding language into existing standards or adding a standard that addresses this issue (ASPA survey, Spring 2012). Ewell, in his paper for the Commission, noted that sound evidence of student learning outcomes is even more important measure of quality because varied delivery models for teacher preparation push the limits of defining the resources and processes of quality programs.

For-Profit: Governance and Program Development

In for-profit institutions the traditional model of faculty governance and input into program development is challenged. In contrast to IHE models, for-profit institutional decisions are often made by teams of specialists from vice presidents, to deans, to instructional developers, and program managers, rather than faculty. The challenge is that it may not be critical “who” makes decisions, but rather that quality programs depend on professional standards as well as aggregated and disaggregated data to inform their development.

Relatedly, program development in a traditional IHE model, is usually guided by the interests and expertise of particular faculty members. In a for-profit institution program development is more likely to be guided by strategic plans and market needs. In this case the

NCATE standards that presuppose collaboration with school partners and faculty engagement in program development are further challenged.

Multiple Sites and Blended Providers: Program Coherence

Underlying NCATE's standards is an expectation that a teacher preparation provider has a coherent logic and shared understanding about the candidates that it is preparing. NCATE calls this aspect of its expectations the institutional Conceptual Framework. Although TEAC quality principles do not call for a conceptual framework, there is a requirement that institution's program faculty agree upon broad claims about what their candidates know and are able to do as a result of their unique preparation programs. Providers who have multiple sites and offer a blend of preparation programs, then, are particularly challenged to provide evidence that their programs are coherent across all sites and models of delivery.

International: Linguistic Nuances and Paradigm Shifts

Prior to 2012, NCATE referred all inquiries from international universities to the US-based Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) which conducted its reviews under a specialized process, called the International Recognition of Teacher Education (IRTE). Throughout the period from 2005 to July 1, 2012 CQAIE used the NCATE standards and processes in its IRTE reviews to award "international recognition," not accreditation, to teacher education programs outside of the United States. There are currently three IRTE-recognized teacher education programs in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates that may now seek NCATE/CAEP accreditation as their next step in quality assurance and program improvement. Beginning on July 1, 2012, the recognition process through the Center for Quality Assurance of International Education ceased to exist and NCATE/CAEP inherited its

roster of seven institutions to shepherd through the recognition process necessary to establish candidacy for accreditation of their teacher education programs by NCATE/CAEP.

Linguistic and cultural nuances as well as differences in the paradigms for accreditation and assessment complicate the expectations for what is achieved when teacher education programs outside the United States seek US accreditation. In Arabic, for example, accreditation and recognition carry the same meaning. Therefore, when the Center for Quality Assurance of International Education offered the international “recognition” of teacher education programs in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, there was confusion about why the recognition, using NCATE’s standards and processes, was not a defacto “accreditation” by NCATE.

In many countries, outside of the United States, for whom quality assurance is a new initiative, the compliance-driven approach to quality assurance is common practice. For example, Ewell (2008) notes that quality assurance in Russia is largely focused on audits of adherence to regulations. If accreditation is viewed as an evaluation tool of compliance, then the continuous improvement approach taken by American specialty professional accreditors, such as NCATE or TEAC, is likely to require a paradigm shift that may not be so easily understood or achieved.

This point was underscored in a recent paper on best practices in quality assurance from Nepal (INQAHE, 2012). The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Nepal in shifting to a formative approach in its quality assurance efforts identified numerous challenges, including a lack of institutional infrastructure and information systems to be able to complete a successful self-assessment. Often, the criteria and indicators for quality assurance were such that the

institutions needed to implement widespread reforms and programmatic restructuring to meet the requirements of a more formative, rather than summative, process.

Implications for CAEP standards

Early in his tenure as NCATE President, Jim Cibulka called for a transformation in teacher preparation and accreditation. He called for greater rigor; fewer, higher and clearer standards; increased inclusivity such that all manner of teacher preparation providers could seek accreditation; and greater innovation across the field and within accreditation processes and procedures. This section of the paper outlines the implications for standards setting in light of these four goals, most particularly greater inclusivity.

Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

The content and pedagogical knowledge to ensure an effective educator can vary, as we know, by licensure area or by the local knowledge of a particular community, setting, or nation. Thus, we need to think broadly and deeply about what all educator preparation programs should entail, no matter how they are delivered or where they are located. In the words of a director of an alternate route program, “Define what a successful teacher is at exit” Although defining candidate outcomes does not require CAEP to be entirely agnostic about what should be included in a program, there can still be great flexibility in structures and processes. One approach is to require any EPP to use appropriate candidate assessments to measure these attributes and to do so in a developmental way.

Clinical Practice and Partnerships

An overview of state requirements for licensure, including field and clinical expectations, indicates significant differences state to state. And yet, as noted in the Blue Ribbon Panel report (2010) and recommendations, clinical practice needs to be at the heart of our work to “turn teacher education upside down.” Can the standards be written in such a way as to provide

guidance in the outcomes that are expected before, during, and after clinical preparation, rather than the context or features of the way those outcomes are met? Perhaps there is some distinction that can be made on timing of clinical requirements depending on the pathway, but a common set of expectations at the end. Since this is a program standard, not a candidate standard, one approach is to specify the typical components CAEP would expect in a strong clinically rich, partnership-based program, but allow programs to make the case for an alternative approach. This type of approach to the standard has its own complications but it does specify some baseline expectations with boundaries that can be adapted with justifiable reasons/quality evidence.

Quality/ Selectivity of Candidates

The variety of teacher preparation pathways described in this paper provide access to individuals who might not otherwise have the opportunity to enter teaching, including working mothers, stay-at-home moms, career changers, veterans and military personnel serving overseas. It may be true that some programs require a unique set of skills, characteristics, or dispositions to be successful at the mode of delivery. Related to quality and selectivity of candidates, the question we need to ask ourselves is: what standards for entrance into educator preparation programs will ensure an effective teacher/educator at exit no matter the model, global venue, or mode of delivery?

Capacity, Quality and Continuous Improvement

A Washington DC-based alternate route program, the Center for Inspired Teaching, began the NCATE accreditation process by submitting its pre-conditions to establish candidacy but soon dropped out. In an interview with its Director a number of capacity barriers were identified:

1. This is a non-profit entity that is funder-based with only one teacher preparation program. The language of the current NCATE standard 6, particularly related to budget and resources, was in contrast to how the program was structured.
2. Faculty workload was hard to define in keeping with NCATE's Standard 6 that highlights course hours as a unit of measurement.
3. Faculty didn't have terminal degrees and were not research-based, but they had extensive school experiences. NCATE's current Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications privileged a particular definition of faculty.

Thus, related to capacity, quality and continuous improvement, the question we need to ask ourselves is: what capacity features undergird all manner of educator preparation providers to ensure an effective teacher/educator is the result?

Accreditation, Public Accountability and Transparency

The task before this particular working group transcends the particulars of context, model of educator preparation, or mode of delivery. The only implication of multiple pathways to educator preparation is the need to ensure the inclusion of all the voices that are making up the field of educator preparation today. To be truly transparent and accountable to the public, the composition of accreditation decision-making bodies, visiting teams, and governance committees need to be representative of all providers no matter how they are configured.

A Suggestion for Consideration

As the Commission sets its standards and begins the work of refining and further defining the scope and context of its work, it may be helpful to consider developing an overarching statement of or framework for its approach to standards setting. This statement or framework

could serve as an introduction to the standards themselves as a way for the public to understand the work and/or as a self-check guide when and while the draft standards are further refined.

In any case, the statement/framework would help the profession and the Commissioners understand the “bottom line” beneath which CAEP would not accredit any institution, no matter the approach or perspective.

Given the challenges outlined in this paper and the implications for the standards, a bottom line framework might state:

In setting standards that are broadly articulated and rigorous without being prescriptive or prohibitive for educator preparation, the CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting was additionally guided by an intention to recognize the diversity of approaches by which educators are prepared. Key points can be abstracted from the proposed standards that establish a baseline of expectations for the accreditation of all providers. No matter the provider, the approach to preparation, or the perspective on educator preparation, all providers assure or provide evidence that candidates:

- *Acquire a deep level of content knowledge and content/pedagogical skills that permits them to teach effectively.*
- *Understand and apply knowledge of children/adolescents’ development and their needs to enhance student learning.*
- *Have opportunities to experience diverse instructional situations under mentored conditions to improve their teaching.*
- *Use assessment effectively to enhance and motivate student learning.*

In addition, no matter the provider, the approach to preparation, or the perspective on educator preparation, all providers assure or provide evidence that their preparation programs:

- *Recruit and select candidates with attributes that they find important for effective teaching and appropriate for the teaching market they are addressing.*
- *Use assessment and other data to monitor the quality and progress of their programs and make improvements as indicated.*
- *Provide the resources and faculty that support the desired outcomes in candidate performance.*

As noted in the introduction, the last 10 years have seen exponential growth in the number and types of educator preparation providers. In addition there are new providers of teacher licensure programs that we could not have envisioned even five years ago. As this trend toward diversity in models of, contexts for, and approaches to educator preparation continues, the CAEP standards for accreditation and performance reporting can meet unforeseen challenges with language that is open to innovation while maintaining rigor.

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