

RESEARCH  
PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE  
GRADUATE  
PREPARATION  
OF TEACHERS

ANITA E. WOOLFOLK, EDITOR

# RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES ON THE GRADUATE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS

Anita E. Woolfolk, *Editor*  
*Rutgers University*



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To Liz

RUTGERS SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATION

Louise Cherry Wilkinson, Series Editor

## SERIES FOREWORD

Within the past several years, the profession of education has been shaken to its roots as national attention focused on education and on educators. Critics and friends have raised basic questions about the profession, including whether educational professionals have successfully met the challenges that the students and the schools present and even more fundamentally, if they are able to meet those challenges. Beginning with the highly publicized *A Nation at Risk*, seemingly endless and often contradictory criticisms, analyses, and recommendations have appeared from virtually every segment of contemporary American society.

The profession has not been silent. One highly acclaimed and somewhat controversial response is the Holmes Group, a consortium of leading American research universities who are committed to upgrading the profession of Teaching. Another major event has been the publication of the report on schools and education by the prestigious Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. Recently, we have seen the American Association of Higher Education take leadership in the issues of teaching and schooling with the well-known and well circulated "Kennedy Letter," in which Stanford University President Donald Kennedy calls for colleges and universities to take a major role in the advancement and improvement of pre-collegiate education.

In this recent explosion of concern for educational reform, we see a need for a general and national forum in which the problems of education can be examined in light of research from a range of relevant disciplines. Too often, analyses of very com-

plex issues and problems occur within a single discipline. Aspects of a problem that are unfamiliar to those members of the discipline are ignored, and the resulting analysis is limited in scope and unsatisfactory for that reason. Furthermore, when educational issues are investigated by members of one discipline, there is seldom an attempt to examine related issues from other fields or to apply methods developed in other fields that might prove illuminating.

The national debate on educational reform has suffered from this myopia, as problems and issues are identified and analyses and solutions often are proposed within the limited confines of a single disciplinary boundary. In the past, national discussions have been ill-informed or uninformed by current research partly because there are far too few mechanisms for interdisciplinary analyses of significant issues.

The present series of volumes, the *Rutgers Symposium on Education*, attempts to address this gap. The series will focus on timely issues and problems in education, taking an interdisciplinary perspective. The focus of each volume will be a particular problem, such as a potential teacher shortage, the structure of schools, the effects of cognitive psychology on how to teach mathematics. There is an accumulating corpus of high quality educational research on topics of interest to practitioners and policy makers. Each volume in the series will provide an interdisciplinary forum through which scholars can disseminate their original research and extend their work to potential applications for practice, including guides for teaching, learning, assessment, intervention, and policy formulation. We believe that this work will increase the potential for significant analysis as well as the potential for positive impact in the domains of both practice and theory.

The initial volume in the series, *Research Perspectives on the Graduate Preparation of Teachers*, is a logical choice. The preparation of teachers is a national concern. Enrollments in schools of education are rising; more college students are electing to prepare themselves to be teachers. The question under consideration in the first volume is: Are graduate programs for teacher preparation more likely than undergraduate programs to prepare highly qualified, competent, reflective professionals? A significant effort has already now begun to identify the central issues and variables that will determine our ability to answer the question posed. The authors of the chapters in the first volume provide a complex, yet inconclusive answer. The evidence reviewed and presented in this volume leads us to some conclusions and many issues yet to be resolved by future research. The first volume will catalyze debate about the issue and help to clarify what the next steps for both research and training must be.

It is with great pleasure that we initiate this series of volumes on contemporary educational issues, the *Rutgers Symposium on Education*. Our expectation is that this series will serve as a seminal contribution to the literature in educational theory and practice.

Louise Cherry Wilkinson  
*Professor of Educational Psychology and  
 Dean of the Rutgers Graduate School of Education*



# PREFACE

The authors in this volume are concerned about the quality of teaching in our schools. They are researchers studying teacher preparation, classroom instruction, educational policy, the development of teaching expertise, student thinking, the philosophy of education, instructional psychology, and educational administration. Each agreed to look at the question of graduate teacher preparation from the perspective of his or her research area.

The project was launched with a set of key questions: What can we learn from the results of previous graduate preparation programs? What models of graduate preparation are currently in use and what are the direct and indirect effects of implementing these models? What are the possible implications for the profession and the society of a move to graduate teacher preparation? Are the research bases for graduate preparation different from those for undergraduate preparation? What can we learn from research in such areas as instructional psychology, teaching effectiveness, and teacher thinking? How do teachers' conceptualizations of the subjects being taught influence teaching and learning in their classrooms? What kind of academic preparation is necessary for teaching and how does the answer to this question affect student selection and program design in teacher education? What do teachers actually learn during each phase of their preparation (initial training, student teaching, first years of teaching) and who are the "teacher educators" during those times? How do

novices become experts and what characterizes expertise in teaching? How and when do we evaluate teachers' competence?

The chapters in this book began as tentative answers to these questions circulated among the volume contributors. Then the contributors made presentations based on their analyses at a conference, the first Rutgers Invitational Symposium on Education. Finally, after much discussion and revision, the upcoming chapters were completed.

Even though this book was conceived as a collection about the graduate preparation of teachers, it grew into a larger project. As the authors wrote and discussed, we found that much of what we said applied equally to undergraduate preparation. In fact, the ideas and analyses in the following pages should be of interest to anyone who believes that the education of teachers should be informed by our best knowledge about teaching and learning.

Many people worked to make this project possible. Dean Louise Cherry Wilkinson established the Rutgers Invitational Symposium on Education and supported this first effort from inception to end. Judy Lanier, Virginia Richardson-Koehler, David Berliner, and Tom Good made valuable suggestions during the project's early planning stages. The conference was funded in part by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Higher Education. Carol Weinstein served as co-director of the conference. Jane Sherwood and C. J. Tarter worked diligently to organize the conference. Alison Gooding and Louise Cherry Wilkinson read every chapter along with me and helped to guide the authors in their revisions. Denise (Campbell) Crisci coordinated the entire project from the collection of drafts through the typing and revising of manuscripts, to the last detail of the book. Mary Araneo was the production editor at Prentice Hall. Susan Willig, editor-in-chief at Prentice Hall, encouraged us throughout our writing. To all these friends and colleagues, thank you.

Anita E. Woolfolk  
*Princeton, New Jersey*

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# 1

## GRADUATE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS: THE DEBATE AND BEYOND

*Anita E. Woolfolk*

For several years educators and politicians have been debating how best to educate teachers. Plans for improving teacher preparation programs are included in the reports of the Carnegie Commission Task Force (1986) and the Holmes Group (1986). While the two reports reach different conclusions on some questions, they agree that professional education for teachers should be moved to the graduate level. Similar recommendations have been made by the Task Force on Extended Programs, established by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE, 1983). Since these reports appeared, the debate has raged about the value of graduate preparation for teachers (see, for example, Howey & Zimpher, 1986; Soltis, 1987; Tom, 1986).

The authors of this book gathered for a conference to examine the idea of graduate preparation for teachers. In bringing this group together at Rutgers University, our goal was to consider such preparation from the perspective of research on teaching and teachers. We were less interested in debating policy and program design and more interested in stepping back from the debate to see if something important was being overlooked. The authors brought to this analysis their understanding of research on past and present graduate preparation programs, the development of expertise in teaching, classroom instruction, learning to teach, supervision of student teachers, and teacher assessment. Other conference participants pressed us to care-

I would like to thank Carol Weinstein for her many helpful comments on this chapter.

fully consider the implications of graduate teacher preparation for the profession and the larger society.

In this introductory chapter, I hope to provide a context for the analyses to come. Since many authors in this volume assume the reader has a general understanding of various models of graduate preparation and the arguments for them, the first section briefly describes these models and arguments for readers less familiar with the area. Next we turn to the central purpose of the book—looking beyond program configuration to issues and information that have been overlooked in the debate about graduate preparation. Thus, the last four sections of the chapter raise questions, some old, some new, about teacher preparation.

## THE MODELS AND THE ARGUMENTS

Over the years and recently, many models have been developed for graduate teacher preparation (see AACTE, 1983 and Scannell, 1987 for a complete discussion of these models). As a brief introduction, let us consider two major categories of programs: integrated and postbaccalaureate.

In integrated programs, students begin their preparation gradually as undergraduates with a few courses in education. Often these courses include some field experiences to acquaint students with the profession. But the bulk of the undergraduate time is devoted to the academic disciplines, and students pursue a major, usually in some field other than education. Integrated programs may or may not include a full-fledged student teaching experience at the undergraduate level, though many do. During a fifth (and sometimes a sixth) year students concentrate on professional teacher education courses. These postbaccalaureate years usually include at least one internship experience. Even within this integrated model, many variations are possible. Internships may be paid or unpaid. The postbaccalaureate study may include additional courses in academic disciplines as well as professional education courses. Students may receive a bachelor's degree after four years and a master's (M.Ed. or M.A.T.) after the fifth or sixth year. Alternatively, students may receive both the bachelor's and the master's at the end of the entire program. In some programs, the postbaccalaureate work does not culminate in a graduate degree at all, but only in some limited number of graduate credits (for example, 15) or merely in eligibility for certification.

A second general category of models involves concentrating all the professional preparation at the graduate level. Thus students come with a bachelor's degree and spend one to several years preparing to teach. Again, there are many variations. Students may receive a master's degree (M.Ed. or M.A.T.) upon completion of the program, may receive no graduate degree but accrue a number of graduate credits, or may simply be eligible for certification. Additional course work in the academic disciplines may be part of the program, but often there is little time for such study. The program may be field-based with much of the time devoted to supervised internships and "hands-on" learning. Generally, these postbaccalaureate programs are offered by



a college or university, but in some states "alternate routes" to certification make it possible for individuals with appropriate undergraduate degrees to attain certification without enrolling in a college program. These alternate routes usually involve some didactic preparation, but most of the training comes in the form of internships supervised by public school personnel.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. In integrated programs there can be more time to study and consider teaching. But it is difficult to transfer into these programs at the graduate level. Some schools insist that transfer students take the undergraduate courses they have missed, often for no credit, before they are allowed to begin the graduate section of the program. Postbaccalaureate programs simplify the problem of transfer students and allow individuals who had not considered teaching during their undergraduate years to enter the profession after graduation.

The chapters in this volume by Richardson-Koehler and Fenstermacher, Wise, Weinstein, and Zeichner include discussions of the arguments for and against extended preparation. Briefly, individuals favoring a move to graduate preparation suggest that such programs will allow more time for prospective teachers to master both the academic and the professional material necessary to teach well. Also, graduate preparation, it is argued, will help elevate the status of teaching and make it more akin to other professions, such as law and medicine. More academically talented students will consider teaching, since such a decision will not require them to take time away from a full undergraduate major in an academic discipline and, in many programs, will allow them to earn an advanced degree.

On the other side of the debate are educators who suggest that the content, not the timing, of teacher preparation is the real issue. Many critics believe that a move to graduate preparation will be expensive, discourage economically disadvantaged students from entering the profession, and actually narrow the pool of talented individuals who consider teaching.

## **BEYOND THE ARGUMENTS: QUESTIONS FOR ALL TEACHER EDUCATORS**

Many different questions are raised by the authors of the upcoming chapters. The first question I will consider is "What are we trying to accomplish in initial teacher preparation?" In one sense, all of the researchers in this volume have something to say about the goals of teacher education. A number of chapters contain direct assertions about the characteristics of good teaching and the sort of teacher our preparation programs ought to produce. In other chapters an ideal is implied or assumed. The second question is "In what contexts should individuals learn to teach?" Again, many authors recognize and discuss the power of contextual influences on the neophyte teacher. The final question is "What do we know about graduate teacher preparation?" Authors examine historical precedent and contemporary practice. Each of these questions deserves a closer look.