

## **Professionalizing Teacher Education Accountability**

### **Summary**

This article examines teacher education accountability and argues for new emphases in accreditation and beginning teacher certification designed to professionalize teacher education. A brief overview of the history of teacher education policy is presented as a background framing for exploring the current policy moment positioning teacher education as a problem that needs to be fixed. Government responses discussed are mainly those in the Anglophone areas of Australia, North America, and the United Kingdom. These involve tighter regulation while at the same time opening up a deregulated teacher education environment as well as an increasing focus on measuring the contribution that teacher preparation makes to student learning. The article suggests ways of professionalizing teacher education accountability which go beyond the “partnerships,” “classroom-ready,” and “value-added” mantras of current debates and policies and considers (1) teacher education in a new hybrid space, (2) authentic graduate assessments, and (3) rigorous research evidence as the cornerstones of a refreshed and more professionalised approach to teacher education accountability.

### **Keywords**

teacher education, policy, professional accountability, hybrid space, graduate teacher assessment, research evidence

### **Introduction**

In this article I examine the political landscape and accountability systems that seek to assure the public of the quality of its teaching workforce, particularly the quality of those entering the profession. First, I provide a brief overview of the history of teacher education policy during the past 50 years. Then, I examine the current policy moment which is positioning teacher education as a problem that needs to be fixed and explore government responses (mainly in the Anglophone areas of Australia, North America, and the United Kingdom), which include tighter regulation with more standards and standardization while at the same time opening up a deregulated teacher education environment and much attention to measuring the contribution that teacher preparation makes to measured student learning. I acknowledge that developing economies (e.g., India, Africa, Latin America, the Pacific Islands) are grappling with other fundamental issues in building teacher education and capacity, but they are not included in this article. Finally, I suggest ways for professionalizing teacher education accountability that go beyond the “partnerships,” “classroom-ready,” and “value-added” mantras of current debates and policies and propose thinking about (1) teacher education in a new hybrid space, (2) authentic graduate assessments, and (3) rigorous research evidence as the cornerstones of a refreshed and more professionalized approach to teacher education accountability. In this article the term “teacher education” refers to pre-service or initial teacher education—that is, teacher preparation.

### **A Historical Overview**

In the past 50 years or so, teacher education policy can be categorized in three phases: first, teacher education as training under somewhat benign government control; then, teacher education as learning to teach under institutional governance; and more recently, teacher

education as policy in a governance context of accountability and regulation (Cochran-Smith & Fries, [2005](#); Grimmett, [2009](#); Mayer & Reid, [2016](#)). While this approach could imply more coherence within each period and tighter coupling between research and practice than is probably the case, I use this framing to provide a brief background for the current policy moment.

First, in the 1960s and 1970s, teacher preparation consisted of training in acquiring specific skills for teaching that had been identified by the so-called “process-product” research of the time which examined the relationships between measures of teacher behavior (process) and measures of student learning (product) (Good & Brophy, [1973](#)). Teacher training involved focusing on the component subskills of teaching, learning about these subskills, observing them, and then practicing them, first in demonstration schools or normal schools and then later in microteaching classes in teacher preparation institutions as new videotaping technologies made it possible to capture teaching moments for close and collective interrogation post-lesson (Allen & Ryan, [1969](#)). State, provincial, or local area governments, as the major employers of teachers, usually confined their control to issues of supply by regulating intakes into teacher preparation programs to only the number and type of teachers they needed.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the focus changed to preparing a professional teaching workforce, and teacher education came to be understood as a matter of professional learning rather than skills training. Teaching came to be seen as intellectual practice, and therefore teacher education focused on teachers learning how to draw on their professional knowledge base to make informed decisions about strategies for different situations and to reflect on their work. The so-called “teacher thinking” research dominated the early part of this phase (Clark, [1988](#)) along with research that sought to distinguish what it was that expert teachers knew that differentiated them from novice teachers (Carter, Sabers, Cushing, Pinnegar, & Berliner, [1987](#)). However, this research came to be criticized as being much like the earlier process-product research in that it focused on a few characteristics of teacher thinking and searched for predictors of teaching effectiveness (Shulman, [1987](#)). As a result, a new research trajectory emerged focusing on the nature of teachers’ knowledge and how it is acquired, held, and used (Grossman, [1994](#); Shulman, [1987](#); Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, [1987](#)). This work introduced the particularly influential notion of pedagogical content knowledge as a “particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability” (Shulman, [1986](#), p. 9). At about the same time, research on teachers’ personal practical knowledge emerged, a kind of working knowledge permeated by the personal and professional experiences of the teachers’ lives (Clandinin & Connelly, [1987](#)). In addition, growing interest in, and attention to, the meaning and practice of teaching as a reflective activity (Schon, [1983](#)) resulted in reflective practice becoming a major focus in teacher education programs (Schon, [1987](#); Zeichner & Liston, [1987](#)). During this time, the institutions responsible for the delivery of teacher preparation programs operated to a large extent in self-governing ways with high levels of programmatic control over the way they prepared teachers. Teacher preparation was carried out in teachers’ colleges and then, over time, in universities, a move that brought with it a new set of challenges linked to the lowly status often ascribed to teacher education inside universities (Labaree, [2008](#)) and the implications for staff moving from their teaching-only

positions in teacher training institutions into the university domain with its expectations about research and scholarship (Hulme & Sangster, [2013](#); Menter & Hulme, [2008](#)).

### **Increasing Scrutiny**

The last 25 years have differed with respect to growing scrutiny and a stronger state presence in education policy. Increasingly, governments have begun to ask questions about the quality of education and schooling, as well as teacher quality, in the context of concerns about global economic competitiveness. This involved searching for international comparators like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and other OECD country comparison reports and indicators, as well as multinational companies like McKinsey and Co. conducting cross-country analyses (Barber & Mourshed, [2007](#)). These comparative reports and international test results have been used by many governments as the rationale for large scale reform agendas.

In the United States, for example, reports such as “A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform” (Gardner, 1983) began to promote a view that American schools were failing particularly in addressing the economic and social needs of the country. Soon the quality of teacher education also came under scrutiny (Carnegie Taskforce on Teaching as a Profession, [1986](#); Goodlad, [1990](#); Holmes Group, [1986](#)). Many reports in the 1980s were “consistently overestimating the power of schooling to fix things and ignoring that education primarily is a long-term investment in human capital” (Bullough, [2014](#), p. 479). In 1996, the report from the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) made bold recommendations for increased scrutiny of teacher education programs:

1. Get serious about standards, for both students and teachers.
2. Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development.
3. Fix teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom.
4. Encourage and reward teacher knowledge and skill.
5. Create schools that are organized for student and teacher success

The federal government in the United States had historically shown minimal interest in teacher education and teacher quality, and when they did, it was usually in relation to areas of teacher shortage. However, the Reagan administration’s A Nation at Risk was the start of a distinct federal policy and agenda with respect to teacher education. The Bush administration’s No Child Left Behind policy in 2002 put further emphasis on teacher quality and accountability through punitive sanctions related to test scores and adequate yearly progress (AYP). Increasingly, government reports began to question the value of teacher education offered in colleges and schools of education. For example, the 2003 U.S. Secretary of Education’s Annual Report argued for reducing the barriers to becoming a teacher among “otherwise highly qualified individuals” (U.S. Department of Education, [2003](#)). In this context, “highly qualified” meant having subject content knowledge with the assumption that curriculum and pedagogical knowledge could be learned on the job. “Federal invasion” (Bullough, [2014](#)) has continued. More recently, the Obama administration’s Race to the Top strategy has focused attention on teacher quality and accountability by stressing outcomes, particularly in teacher preparation program accountability (Lewis & Young, [2013](#)).

In this context, advocacy groups like the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) have emerged. While not an official regulator, NCTQ has been influential in public perceptions of teacher education quality as a result of its evaluations of teacher education programs and its work with *U.S. News & World Report* to rank U.S. schools of education offering those programs (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, [2015](#)). NCTQ has generally concluded that a majority of teacher education programs are inadequate in preparing the country's teachers even though their evaluation method and approach has been critiqued (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, [2013](#); Fuller, [2014](#); Zeichner, [2011](#)).

While Australian state and territories have dominated schooling and teacher education for much of the history of this work in Australia, the first nation-wide review of teacher education in 1980 highlighted a growing concern about its quality (Auchmuty, [1980](#)). It was followed by a succession of reviews of teaching and teacher education over a more than 40-year period (Louden, [2008](#); Mayer, [2014](#)), with the most recent review delivering its report at the end of 2014 (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, [2014](#)) prompting a clear and largely uncontested national reform agenda (Australian Government, [2015](#)). The role of schooling in economic reform was first raised in the 1988 federal government report "Strengthening Australia's Schools" (Department of Employment Education and Training, [1988](#)), and the recent TEMAG Report (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, [2014](#)) continues this theme, drawing attention to international indicators like PISA as a way of determining how Australia "measures up" (Thomson, De Bortoli, & Buckley, [2013](#)) to build a case for teacher education reform:

Results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 show that, although Australian students perform significantly above the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average in all three core domains (reading, mathematics and scientific literacy), our performance has declined in both absolute terms and relative to other countries since PISA began in 2000. Between 2009 and 2012, Australia slipped from 15th to 19th in mathematical literacy, 9th to 14th in reading literacy and 10th to 16th in scientific literacy. (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, [2014](#), p. 2)

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Department of Education's 2010 White Paper positioned global competitiveness as part of the rationale for reform in the profession and teacher preparation,

In the most recent OECD PISA survey in 2006 we fell from 4th in the world in the 2000 survey to 14th in science, 7th to 17th in literacy, and 8th to 24th in mathematics. The only way we can catch up, and have the world-class schools our children deserve, is by learning the lessons of other countries' success. (Department of Education (DfE), 2010b, p. 3)

At that time, the Secretary of State for Education announced his intention to move pre-service teacher education out of higher education and back into schools because of his belief that "Teaching is a craft and it is best learnt as an apprentice, observing a master craftsman or woman. Watching others, and being rigorously observed yourself as you develop, is the best route to acquiring mastery in the classroom." (Department of Education (DfE), [2010a](#)). Interestingly, Scotland has rejected England's policies, and as teacher education has been moving out of universities in England, Scotland has successfully moved

teacher education into universities (Gray & Weir, [2014](#); Menter & Hulme, [2008](#)). Scotland's General Teaching Council does "not allow those holding teacher qualifications earned on at least four of the school-based routes in England to be recognised and thus employed as teachers in Scotland" (Gilroy, [2014](#), p.629). There appears to be a relatively high degree of public and political trust in teacher education in Scotland (Menter & Hulme, [2011](#)). For example, a 2010 review of Scottish teacher education (Donaldson, [2010](#)) was entrusted to professional educators and was accepted in full by the government.

In these ways, growing criticism of teacher education amidst concerns for the country's globalization and economic competitiveness are visible features of the current policy moment.

### **Global Reform Agendas Aimed at "Fixing" the Problem of Teacher Education**

In these ways, teacher education has been, and is being, positioned as a "policy problem" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, [2005](#)) with an accompanying crisis discourse claiming that teacher education is broken but can be fixed by government intervention and national solutions (Cochran-Smith et al., [2013](#)). In the pursuit of higher rankings, governments almost universally adopt neoliberal policies to shape their education reform agendas (Furlong, [2013](#)). Moreover, they are looking to more successful others, examining their reform agendas, and as a result there is much policy borrowing (Philips & Ochs, [2004](#)). Consequently, the approaches to "fixing" the problems of teacher education look remarkably similar across a range of countries, including (1) tighter regulation, (2) deregulation, and (3) measuring the value added by teacher education.

I examine each of these in turn and then suggest an alternative approach that considers teacher education in a new hybrid space, authentic graduate assessments, and rigorous research evidence as significant components of a professional and professionalizing approach to teacher education accountability.

#### ***Tighter Regulation***

Teacher regulatory authorities have been established over the past few decades with responsibilities for regulating entry into the profession by evaluating and accrediting teacher education programs, provisionally certifying graduates from those programs as beginning teachers, and then monitoring ongoing certification of teachers throughout their careers sometimes with opportunities for higher levels of certification such as "advanced" or "lead" categories. The political context outlined earlier, which is positioning teacher education as a problem that needs to be fixed, has resulted in tighter regulation, giving these teacher regulatory authorities greater control over the content of teacher education programs, who is eligible to enter the profession, and increasingly who qualifies as an entrant to teacher education programs.

#### ***Increasing Regulation of Teacher Education in England, the United States, and Australia***

The case for teacher education reform in England began under the Thatcher and Major administrations (Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting, & Whitty, [2000](#)). The Thatcher era saw a strengthening accountability culture with a national curriculum, league tables, and national tests. This also meant increasing regulation of the teaching profession and teacher education. In 1984, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) was set up to approve or accredit teacher education programs, a process different from academic

validation which was still to be the responsibility of the universities (Taylor, [1987](#)). CATE's role in inspecting teacher education programs and reporting to the Secretary of State for Education signaled "a move towards central, top-down, political control of teacher education" (Gilroy, [2014](#), p. 623), with higher education institutions (HEIs) gradually losing "much of the autonomy they once had over structures, validation, governance and even staffing of ITE" (Murray & Passy, [2014](#), p. 496), a process once begun, became progressively more intense (Furlong et al., [2000](#)), with various "general politics" of truth being assembled to support policies driving these changes (Maguire, [2014](#)).

In the United States, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education NCATE was founded in 1954 to accredit teacher certification programs at colleges and universities. Even though accreditation is governed by state law in the United States and therefore being accredited by NCATE is voluntary, it has dominated teacher education accreditation in the United States for most of its history, often alongside and in addition to state approval processes (Bullough, [2014](#)). In 1997, an alternative accreditor of teacher preparation programs, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), established an accountability model that allowed HEIs to articulate the aims and goals of their programs and then to provide evidence of their success in relation to what they had set out to do. In 2013, NCATE merged with TEAC to form the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) though there is some concern that the innovative TEAC approach may be diminished and NCATE's model strengthened in this new entity (Bullough, [2014](#)). In Australia, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was established by the federal government in 2010 to oversee the development of national professional standards for teachers and principals, national regulation of teacher education accreditation, and national professional development for teachers and school leaders. This followed several decades of state- and territory-controlled teacher regulatory agencies linked to state departments of education that were involved to varying degrees in accrediting teacher education programs and certifying teachers. Even though there had been quite a long period of support for an Australian-wide accreditation of professional preparation programs (Adey, [1998](#)), recent federal political action and related resources have meant increasingly tighter regulation and control of teacher education programs across the country. As a result, it is probably not surprising that federal-state tensions have emerged, one indicator being the state/territory-based "elaborations" to the national program standards which detail additional requirements purported to be unique for each state or territory, thereby creating another layer of standards and regulation to be negotiated by teacher education providers seeking accreditation in each state and territory.

### *Increasing Use of Standards*

As part of this increasing regulation, the development of professional standards has swept the Western world (Mahony & Hextall, [2000](#)) amidst criticisms that they portray teaching and teachers' work as little more than a technical activity. In Australia, for example, the first tranche of standards development was dominated by the large state government school systems and influenced by competency-based conceptions of standards characterized by long lists of duties, opaque language, generic skills, decontextualized performances, an expanded range of duties, and weak assessments (Louden, [2000](#)). During the 1990s, a lot of work was done across the country in developing professional standards for teaching, but this was done in states and by professional associations working independently of each



other, such that the actual standards were then used in unrelated and differing ways. However, with the establishment of AITSL in 2010 as a national and government-resourced body, national standards for teachers and principals have been developed and consistently implemented. In the United States, the “reform mania of the 1980s” (Bullough, [2014](#), p. 483) involved the establishment of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Both developed standards—InTASC for beginning teachers and NBPTS for advanced certification.

This activity in developing standards for teaching and/or for teachers has often led to accountability mechanisms based on notions of performance and performativity, with the standards criticized for being unnecessarily restrictive promoting a technical view of what it means to an effective teacher and/or a reduction of what it is to be a teacher (Beck, [2009](#); Furlong et al., [2000](#); Hegarty, [2000](#)). Professional standards have also been critiqued as neglecting professional knowledge and skills to work with culturally diverse learners (Santoro & Kennedy, 2016) and as having implicit discourses of inequality which serve to maintain inequitable outcomes (Smith, [2013](#)). Menter and Hulme ([2008](#)) have suggested that the development of professional standards in Scotland involved a process different from elsewhere in the United Kingdom, with more collaboration and higher levels of professional trust, and that as a result, the actual standards are different including dimensions of social justice and research underpinnings as well as teacher professionalism with teacher curriculum autonomy. This issue of how standards are developed and who actually develops them is an important consideration. Professional standards are rarely research-based, though the preambles and rationales usually include something about the development of the standards being informed by research (as in Australia). Moreover, members of the profession are not always involved in leading the development and implementation of standards. Sometimes the standards are constructed by public servants employed in regulatory authorities and driven by political imperatives and then, at best, “road-tested” by members of the profession. Other times, members of the profession are involved through being on task forces convened by the regulatory authorities, which then adopt the standards.

Accepting all these critiques of professional standards and accepting that they are a point in time descriptor of what “someone” believes teachers should know and be able to do, for the purposes of this article I argue that once developed, an important aspect often overlooked is how they are used or not. This is explored in more depth later in the article as an important consideration for professionalizing teacher education accountability.

### ***Deregulation***

Ironically, given this development and implementation of increasingly complex systems of teacher certification and teacher education regulation, global policy responses have at the same time moved to deregulate teacher education and open up the market to alternative providers with a crisis and salvation rhetoric powerfully embedded in the deregulation and market-based policies (Ellis et al., [2016](#); Zeichner & Pena-Sandoval, [2015](#)). Deregulation versus professionalism debates abound with those supporting deregulation arguing that the market deciding in a competitive environment offering alternative approaches will improve the quality of teacher education and therefore teaching and others arguing that investment

in professionalizing the teaching workforce with high-level qualifications and ongoing professional learning will enhance teacher quality and therefore student learning (Darling-Hammond, [1997](#), [2000a](#), [2000b](#); Furlong et al., [2000](#)). Indeed, the neoliberal policies that include arguments for deregulation often redefine professionalism creating a “new professionalism” that, among other things, challenges the idea of individual teacher autonomy (Furlong, [2013](#)). In addition, “local” and “branded” professionalisms are more and more evident, like those of the Teach First and Academy chains in England (Whitty, [2014](#)).

#### *Bypassing Teacher Education in Higher Education Institutions and the Associated Regulation*

In the United States, the Bush administration’s No Child Left Behind legislation provided a context for challenging the value of teacher preparation by suggesting that subject matter knowledge and verbal ability are the fundamental determinants of quality teaching. It was argued that subject matter knowledge is best acquired outside schools of education, while many other things could be learned “on the job.” This set the context for the growth of alternate pathways into teaching like Teach for America and also for the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence, which provided an option for prospective teachers to bypass traditional teacher education en route to certification by paying to take an online examination to be “certified” as a teacher. Alternative routes like Teach for America have continued to grow in the United States despite the absence of conclusive evidence demonstrating increased effectiveness over traditionally certified teachers (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, [2002](#)) and questions about the retention of these teachers (Vasquez Heilig & Jez, [2014](#)). In overall terms, a majority of teachers still enter the profession through HEI programs, however there are parts of the United States where almost half enter via non-HEI pathways (Zeichner, [2014](#)). A growing body of research has shown that, on average, preparedness, effectiveness, and retention are higher for new teachers who have completed pre-service programs than for new teachers who received less preparation prior to entering the classroom (Boyd et al., 2006; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff, & Wyckoff, 2008;; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005). Moreover, the issue of the differential and inequitable distribution of qualified teachers has been raised by governments and academics alike, especially since teachers entering teaching through non-HEI pathways are likely to be concentrated in high-poverty and high-minority schools and school systems (Little & Bartlett, [2010](#)).

Similar policies in the United Kingdom have enabled employers in England and Wales to employ teachers to learn “on the job” (e.g., Teach First and the more recent School Direct program). Even though these programs attract relatively small cohorts, the rapidly changing policy environment involving moving teacher education into schools has had, and will continue to have, a destabilizing effect on other models of initial teacher education (British Educational Research Association, [2014](#)) and on the roles for teacher educators in HEIs (Childs, [2013](#)).

In Australia, the \$550 million federal government-funded *Smarter Schools—Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership* (TQNP) program (2009–2013) provided the context for the establishment and implementation of Teach for Australia borrowed from the global Teach for All scheme aimed at recruiting high flyers into the profession for part of their working lives. Again, while only attracting small cohorts (Weldon, McKenzie, Kleinhenz, &



Reid, [2013](#)), Teach for Australia has been successful in securing high levels of government funding.

Some countries like Ireland and Finland have not been impacted by moves to alternative pathways mostly because of the high demand for teacher education places (Conway, Murphy, Rath, & Hall, [2009](#); Evagorou, Dillon, Viiri, & Albe, [2015](#)). Likewise, as noted above, in Scotland there has been resistance to employment-based routes despite its close proximity to England (Gilroy, [2014](#)).

### ***Measuring the Value Added by Teacher Education***

Few would disagree that the ultimate goal of teacher education is enhanced student learning as a result of knowledgeable and competent teachers. What is not so easily agreed upon are the most appropriate ways for determining the impact of teacher education, and indeed the teacher, on student learning. In the United States there has been rapid growth in value-added assessments of teachers, and a few states have initiated efforts to use value-added modeling (VAM) to assess and evaluate teacher preparation programs (Lewis & Young, [2013](#); Henry, [2012](#)).

Teacher educators consistently point out the complexity of attempting to make causal links from teacher preparation to students learning outcomes because of the numerous other variables not accounted for, both within the school and also within the teacher education program. Darling-Hammond questions “whether VAM metrics can accurately identify individual teachers” contributions to student learning and hence offer a credible measure of teacher “effectiveness” ([2015](#), p. 132). Berliner highlights what he considers a fatal flaw in value-added assessments:

[B]ecause of the effects of countless other exogenous variables on student classroom achievement, value-added assessments do not now and may never be stable enough from class to class or year to year to be used in evaluating teachers. (2014, p. 1)

Further, Darling-Hammond and Adamson ([2014](#)) suggest that a focus on the tests for VAM will likely reduced teachers’ time spent teaching other important content and skills. Similarly, it is argued that the use of VAM models may discourage teachers from working in high-needs schools, causing even more teacher shortages in these schools (Johnson, [2015](#)). Further, Johnson highlights a concern about the focus on individual teachers and writes that this may inhibit collegial and collaborative work among teachers to address student needs. While VAM is currently being used mainly in the United States, there is growing interest across other countries in finding mechanisms for linking teacher education and impact on student learning (see, for example, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, [2015](#)).

So far this article has examined the current policy moment that is positioning teacher education as a problem that needs to be fixed and related policy responses. These include tighter regulation with more standards and standardization while at the same time opening up a deregulated teacher education environment, along with a focus on measuring the value added by teacher preparation. In the remainder of the article I argue for other more professionalizing options for teacher education accountability.

### **Professionalizing Teacher Education Accountability**

Thinking beyond current regulation systems that standardize programs and tightly control inputs that are often informed by not much more than political whim, how might we professionalize teacher education accountability to ensure it prepares high-quality beginning teachers for the range of diverse contexts in which they will work? Shulman (1998, p. 516) has suggested six characteristics of professions:

- The obligation of service to others, as in a “calling”
- Understanding of a scholarly or theoretical kind
- A domain of skilled performance or practice
- The exercise of judgment under conditions of unavoidable uncertainty
- The need for learning from experience as theory and practice interact
- A professional community to monitor quality and aggregate knowledge

Acknowledging all these characteristics but focusing on how the professional community can monitor quality and aggregate knowledge, I argue that accreditation must provide quality assurance, support continuous program improvement, and encourage ongoing innovation as part of a professionalized teacher education accountability system. This should involve an evidence-informed process, including data collection and monitoring, participation of and feedback from appropriate stakeholders, data analysis and interpretation, and the use of evidence to increase the effectiveness of preparation programs (Mayer, [2015](#)). Continuous improvement is demonstrated by evidence of:

- Regular and systematic evidence-informed analysis and appropriate changes to the provider’s programs as needed
- Evidence that changes are grounded by research and evidence from the field as well as data analyses from the provider’s own system
- The provider’s investigations of the effects of changes, determining whether they are improvements

In this section I discuss ways of professionalizing accountability for teacher education framed by these arguments and specifically focus on (1) teacher education in a new hybrid space, a space which goes beyond the current and often used term “partnerships,” (2) authentic graduate assessments that goes beyond the currently in vogue term “classroom ready,” and (3) rigorous research evidence, going beyond current value-added modeling approaches. These will comprise, I believe, the core components of a more professionalized approach to teacher education accountability.

### ***Teacher Education in a New Hybrid Space: Beyond “Partnerships”***

The value of partnerships in teacher education, usually between universities and schools, has long been recognized as important and is a key recommendation in recent reviews of teacher education, for example, in Australia (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, [2014](#)), in England (Carter, [2015](#)), and in Scotland (Donaldson, [2010](#)). Government policies for teacher education have been increasingly dominated by a “turn or (re)turn to the practical” (e.g., in the United Kingdom; Beauchamp, Clarke, Hulme, & Murray, [2013](#)), and this has meant an increasing emphasis on practical preparation for teaching and calls for HEIs to work closely with schools in various types of partnerships during the teacher education program prompting dominant “discourses of relevance” (Murray & Passy, [2014](#))

that are being increasingly taken for granted when thinking about teacher education. The assumption is that by working closely with schools in partnerships, teachers will be prepared in more relevant ways focused on practical knowledge and skills for the current practice in those schools. This is often scaled up to propose models of teacher education that appear to do this best with calls for everyone to attend to and replicate “best practice” approaches. As Simons and Kelchtermans ([2008](#), p. 289) have pointed out, focusing on “what was working yesterday” as the guiding principle for “what shall be working tomorrow” narrows the scope for both teacher educators and teachers to practices of the past, practices that I would argue may not be in the best interests of teachers working in increasingly rich and complex schools and their communities with learners with diverse learning needs.

Teacher education programs are charged with preparing teachers for work in schools in a range of settings. To understand and inform what that means for teacher education and for professionalizing teacher education accountability, I draw on analysis of findings from the first large-scale longitudinal study of the effectiveness of teacher education in Australia, the Studying the Effectiveness of Teacher Education (SETE) project (Mayer et al., [2015](#); Rowan, Mayer, Kline, Kostogriz, & Walker-Gibbs, [2015](#)). SETE concludes that to understand how teachers are prepared for the variety of school and community settings in which they ultimately teach, teacher education must focus on a transitional space, a new, hybrid, and possibly third space, one where learning teaching and/or doing teaching is not situated at one point in time with one side of the “partnership” (in university), and then at another point in another partnership space (in school), and then somewhere in between after graduation and during early employment where the graduates themselves are left to make sense of and negotiate the context and their learning, often with little support.

SETE investigated the effectiveness of teacher education for early career teachers employed in schools across a range of diverse settings by following graduates (a target population of almost 15,000 graduates) to understand their preparedness for teaching by their teacher education programs and their effectiveness as early career teachers. In addition, it investigated their principals’ perceptions of their effectiveness. SETE started from the premise that there are multiple ways of thinking about and enacting teacher education that involve different, but related, spatial practices, drawing on the work of Lefebvre ([1991](#)) and Soja ([1996](#)). In this way, teacher education is not a singular construct but a set of representations, practices, and experiences that are socio-spatial and relational in their nature. This framing for the SETE study provided a way of understanding the experiences of beginning teachers, particularly as they transitioned from teacher education in universities to their early career appointments in schools.

Despite the many reported partnerships in teacher education programs across Australia, SETE results highlighted a lack of connection between teacher education in universities and teacher education and teaching practice in schools. This was popularized as a theory-practice divide but played out as a disconnect between learning teaching and doing teaching. The idea of teacher education as a continuum of teacher learning has been evident in policy and some practice for some time (Conway et al., [2009](#)), and in 2009 Green argued for thinking about teacher education across a continuum of preparatory, transitional, and continuing teacher education, involving both universities and the profession (Green, [2009](#)). While supporting an initial-transitional-continuing view of teacher

education as a journey from novice to expert, SETE findings highlighted the importance of focusing on graduate teachers' lived sense of preparedness and effectiveness *in* the transitional space, a space in which the boundaries between "being prepared" and "being effective" are blurred. In this space, learning teaching and doing teaching are mediated by the local context (universities and schools) as well as the broader political context and by local conditions of work. While Zeichner, Payne, and Brayko (2015) called for approaches to teacher preparation that value and promote interaction between practitioner, academic, and community-based knowledge requiring the creation of new "hybrid spaces" where these knowledges can come together, SETE argues for more and newer synergies in creating new collaborative hybrid spaces for teacher education (physical as well as conceptual) involving universities, employers, and schools that bring together learning teaching and doing teaching. This "beyond partnerships" approach will be critical to effective teacher education and professionalizing teacher education accountability by redefining what is most relevant when asking questions about the effectiveness of teacher education.

### ***Authentic Graduate Assessment: Beyond "Classroom Ready"***

With the turn or (re)turn to the practical, the phrase "classroom ready" has become a familiar refrain (see for example, the title of Australia's most recent review of teacher education` "Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers," Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, [2014](#)) emphasizing practical knowledge and skills for immediate teaching in the schools of today and to teach according to current curriculum and pedagogical practice (Murray & Passy, [2014](#)). However, in addition to the limitations of teaching tomorrow as today, as noted earlier, it is important to recognize that teachers' work is both in the classroom as well as beyond the classroom. Moreover, it is collaborative, agentive, and often social (Connell, [2009](#); Darling-Hammond, [2013](#)). Therefore, teacher education accountability mechanisms must seek ways whereby teacher educators make judgments about graduates as beginning teachers that incorporate all dimensions of teachers' work. Currently, approaches to outcomes-based accountability for teacher preparation programs have fallen into one of four main categories: (a) evaluation based on the achievement scores of students taught by program graduates, (b) evaluation based on teacher candidates' demonstration of research-supported teaching behaviors, (c) evaluation of teacher candidates during their preparation period based on how students perform in response to their teaching, and (d) evaluation based on how students perform in response to programs graduates' teaching during graduates' early years of teaching (Cochran-Smith & Powers, 2010).

While some approaches focus on what competent teaching should look like (Danielson, [1996](#)), either in part or whole, and use observations and checklists to record and judge this, increasing attention is being given to capstone performance assessments linked to professional standards for teaching that detail what it is that beginning teachers should know and be able to do. However, for the most part, these have not been designed by members of the profession, nor have they always captured the essence of the knowledge and skills needed for teaching (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, [2013](#)). There have been some examples where members of the profession have attempted to design assessments that capture the essence of the knowledge and skills needed for teaching. In California, the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) was developed as a capstone performance assessment to assess "the planning, instruction, assessment, and reflection

skills of student teachers against professional standards of practice” (Darling-Hammond, [2006](#), p. 121) and then endorsed as part of the state’s teacher credentialing system. The tasks were “designed to measure and promote candidates’ abilities to integrate their knowledge of content, students and instructional context in making instructional decisions and to stimulate teacher reflection on practice” (Pecheone & Chung, [2006](#), p. 24). While PACT has been shown to have internal structure validity (Duckor, Castellano, Téllez, Wihardini, & Wilson, [2014](#)) and claims that involvement in PACT has led to teacher education program improvement (Peck, Galluci, & Sloan, [2010](#)), questions have been raised about its value in adequately assessing culturally responsive pedagogies (Ajayi, [2014](#)) and cultural competence (Dee, [2012](#)) and about its suitability and applicability in some subject areas, such as arts teacher preparation programs (Parkes & Powell, [2015](#)). Research on the effects of the PACT link it to improved K–12 student learning and achievement (Liu & Milman, [2013](#); Pecheone, Pigg, Chung, & Souviney, [2005](#)), and claims are made that it could improve teacher educator and candidates’ practice and that the scores from the assessment could predict teachers’ later effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, Newton, & Wei, [2013](#); Newton, [2010](#)). PACT was used as the basis of the edTPA, an assessment program for teacher candidates to be used across the United States, available nationally in over 27 individual content areas and nationally validated in 2013 to establish its reliability and validity (Pecheone, Shear, Whittaker, & Darling-Hammond, [2013](#)). However, there are claims that moving this to scale and including the administration and support of Pearson Education Inc. has compromised the use of such assessments to inform program improvement (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., [2013](#)).

The claims and counterclaims continue, but for the purposes of this chapter, PACT, edTPA, and graduate teacher performance assessments like them do, in the end, only assess teachers’ work in the classroom. If such teacher performance assessments can constitute part of a professional approach to teacher education accountability, and I argue that they can, then more work is needed to ensure that authentic assessments of graduates capture “beyond classroom-ready” notions of what it means to teach today and into the future.

### ***Rigorous Research Evidence: Beyond “Value Added”***

Finally, I consider what rigorous research evidence, beyond the current value-added modeling approaches, could contribute in professionalizing teacher education accountability. It has been suggested for some time that teacher education research is underdeveloped, undertheorized, fragmentary and parochial (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, [2005](#); Menter, Hulme, Elliot, & Lewin, [2010](#); Murray, Nuttall, & Mitchell, [2008](#); Sleeter, [2014](#)). After a 4-year review of initial teacher education research in the United States by the American Educational Research Association’s Panel on Research and Teacher Education, Ken Zeichner concluded:

The main issue in our view is to develop a research program in teacher education that can address the variety of questions that investigators seek about teacher education and its connections to the various kinds of outcomes important to society. (Zeichner, [2005](#), p. 738)

The panel pointed out that there was little evidence of a shared research program linking teacher education with professional learning and impact on student learning outcomes. As such, teacher educator practitioners and researchers are not usually recognized as

significant players in driving a research agenda to demonstrate the effectiveness (or otherwise) of teacher education for accountability purposes (Grossman, [2008](#)). Part of this is because funding for teacher education research is usually rather small and therefore teacher educators evaluate and research their own programs in small-scale studies that are difficult to benchmark and build evidence at scale. However, Sleeter's analysis of almost 200 articles in leading international teacher education journals "did not see evidence of an emerging, shared research program designed to inform policy" (Sleeter, [2014](#), p. 151). As she concludes:

The problem [ . . . ] is that the weight of the research, being fragmented, often narrowly focussed, and usually not directly connected to a shared research agenda on teacher education, does not position teacher educators strongly to craft an evidence-based narrative about teacher education. . . . (Sleeter, [2014](#), p. 152)

Sleeter suggests that teacher education organizations should collaborate and develop a research agenda that links teacher education with its impact on teachers and on students, focus more on preparation for and rewarding of research that contributes to building a knowledge base, and emphasize collaboration among researchers. Similarly, the report of the *BERA-RSA Inquiry into the Role of Research in Teacher Education* highlights the "need for more research that looks systematically at the effectiveness of different types of initial teacher education" (British Educational Research Association, [2014](#)).

Teacher educators must consider how to ensure "credible evidence" that does not avoid the "impact on student learning" question. An approach whereby teacher education providers submit evidence of the effectiveness of their programs for (re)accreditation could be informed by employer and graduate survey data and complementary interviews, focus groups, and/or case studies as well as by building on current longitudinal research studies. While outcome measures of the effect of teacher education employed by follow-up surveys can be seen to be weakened by their heavy reliance on the beginning teachers' judgments of themselves, of their own growth, and of what their programs might have contributed to their growth (Kennedy, [1999](#)), they can form one component of a comprehensive and cohesive approach by which providers demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs for accreditation and credentialing purposes.

## **Conclusion**

In this article I have examined the political landscape of teacher education and the accountability systems that seek to assure the public of the quality of its beginning teacher workforce. The current policy moment is positioning teacher education as a problem that needs to be fixed. Government responses to this perceived problem include tighter regulation with more standards and standardization while at the same time deregulating the teacher education space such that the academy is essentially bypassed. In addition, reform agendas are spotlighting attempts to measure the value added by teacher preparation. I have argued that professionalizing teacher education accountability will mean going beyond the well-meaning, albeit somewhat clichéd, goals of "partnerships," "classroom ready," and "value added" currently dominating the debates and policies to consider teacher education in a new hybrid space, authentic graduate assessment and rigorous research evidence as the core of a more professionalized teacher education accountability. This will require the teacher educator community to collaboratively engage



both with their community and with governments and policymakers to lead teacher education policy, practice, and research.

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