

Interrogating the Intersections Between General and Special Education in the History of Teacher Education Reform

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Linda P. Blanton¹, Marleen C. Pugach², and Mildred Boveda³

Abstract

This article provides an historical analysis of major reforms in teacher education, beginning in the 1970s, specifically focusing on the opportunities each reform presented to build a shared agenda across pre-service general and special education, and the constraints that operated on them. The analysis revealed the existence of several such intersections, each of which created substantive occasions for joint action across general and special education at every stage of teacher education reform. However, four factors—*policy, funding, timing, and norms of separation*—appear to have operated as constraints upon mining the capacity of these potential intersections. If the promise of a cohesive system of education capable of and committed to supporting struggling students across multiple and intersecting diversities is to be realized, it will be critical to coalesce around a comprehensive equity agenda that builds on the intersections that continue to exist between general and special education.

Keywords

pre-service teacher education, special education teacher education, teacher education preparation, historical analysis, education reform

The emergence of teacher education as a formal field of study has been paired, nearly from its start, with calls for its reform. Modern teacher education reform efforts such as the push to establish a knowledge base have, from an historical perspective, existed concurrent with the philosophical and policy imperative to prepare both general¹ and special education teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities and the movement to establish their educational rights. Established in the 1970s with the original passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), that movement underscored the emerging national commitment to preparing teachers to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse school population. Indeed, many teacher education reforms since the 1970s hold, as a fundamental tenet, that new teachers must be ready to meet the equity challenges of teaching and learning.

Despite this historical convergence, these nearly 60 decades of modern reform in teacher education have rarely been interrogated in relationship to preparing teachers to educate students with disabilities—students who continue to show low educational attainment in both special and general education settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The absence of attention to special education was noted in relationship to the Holmes Group reports (e.g., Lilly, 1987; Pugach, 1987; Sapon-Shevin, 1990). Subsequently, Valli and Rennert-Ariev (2000) compared components of nine reform reports to elements proposed in the first two reports of the

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 1996, 1997). They identified high levels of agreement across reports on issues such as the importance of disciplinary knowledge, but low levels of agreement for preparing teachers to work with students with disabilities—principally because the topic was omitted. In 2005, Pugach noted the disconnection between the goals of the Dean's Grants Projects (DGPs) and the absence of a concomitant reform context in general teacher education. Furthermore, in their description of the evolution of the practice of collaboration in teacher education, Pugach, Blanton, and Correa (2011) began to connect some aspects of that history to particular reforms.

Missing, however, is any systematic exploration of the intersections within major teacher education reforms that held potential to build greater capacity between general and special education to improve the preparation of all teachers. We define such intersections as *timely opportunities to address common concerns in teaching and teacher education*

¹Florida International University, Miami, USA

²University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, USA

³Arizona State University, Tempe, USA

Corresponding Author:

Linda P. Blanton, Florida International University, 8989 N. Gainey Center Drive, Unit 128, Scottsdale, AZ 85258, USA.

Email: blantonlp@gmail.com

within these reforms. Our inquiry is designed to fill this analytic gap by providing an historical analysis of modern reforms in teacher education, focusing on the opportunities these intersections afforded and the constraints operating against them. Our purpose, then, is not to trace a history of the practice of collaboration, but rather to consider how and why these points of historical convergence may have played out as they did.

Unlike Valli and Rennert-Ariev (2000), we considered all major reforms since 1970, including those originating within special education. Systematically probing the extent to which teacher education either seized or sidestepped opportunities for building stronger relationships is critical for two reasons. First, reform initiatives are often strong drivers in producing change in national and state policies, for example, accreditation and state licensure requirements, all of which play meaningful roles in the subsequent content and process of teacher preparation. Second, such an analysis affords the potential for sharpening our understanding of what it might take to interrupt the long-standing structural divide between general and special education—a divide that has its roots in the earliest history of education in this country and that has played out in policy and practice. By problematizing pre-service reform in this way, we hope to shed light not only on the substance and pace of progress in preparing general and special education teachers to educate students with disabilities but also, most importantly, on how teacher education might marshal its full potential to coalesce around a commitment to establishing a comprehensive, shared equity agenda.

Two questions guided our analysis:

1. What intersections existed between general and special education in teacher education reforms that afforded opportunities to make progress in preparing all teachers to work effectively with students with disabilities, and what constraints operated on them?
2. What may have accounted for the ways these reforms were enacted relative to the intersection between general and special education?

Methods for Identifying Reforms

For this analysis we defined *teacher education reform* as (a) a movement or initiative originating either in general or special education to improve the preparation of teachers; (b) that the reform itself, or components comprising the initiative, was studied and analyzed over time in major literature sources in teacher education; and (c) that it had a lasting impact in terms of research and policy. To identify a preliminary list of key reforms, we first scanned major handbooks and handbook-like publications, including the following: (a) three handbooks of research on teacher education (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Houston, Haberman, & Sikula, 1990; Sikula, Buttery, & Guyton, 1996), (b) *The Teacher Educator's Handbook: Building a Knowledge*

Base for the Preparation of Teachers (Murray, 1996), (c) *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), and (d) *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Table 1 (available in the online version of this article) illustrates the empirical support both for establishing an initiative as a major reform and for judging the impact of a reform. To *establish an initiative as a major reform*, we searched major education research, educational policy, teacher education, and special education journals (See the appendix available in the online version of this article for the list of journals). In addition, we conducted ancestry searches and examined websites of professional organizations (e.g., American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education [AACTE]) and selected universities where reform initiatives were located.

To judge the *impact of a teacher education reform*, we considered the quantity of research (i.e., research reviews as summarized in Table 1) focused on components comprising the reform (e.g., university-school partnerships), as well as new policies enacted at state (e.g., requirements for clinical preparation) and national levels (e.g., the multicultural standard of the then National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE]) that derived from reform initiatives. For *components that comprised a reform*, we restricted our search to reviews of research. Although the existence of a research review does not necessarily demonstrate the quality of the research conducted, it does indicate high research activity and potential impact on teacher education policies emanating from a particular initiative. Based on authors' agreement from their scans and reviews of all prior resources, we used the following search terms: *325T Program, accountability, alternative certification, clinical practices, collaboration, collaboration models, content knowledge, Dean's Grant Projects, dual certification, evidence-based practices, faculty collaboration, highly qualified teacher, induction, mentoring, mentor-based induction, multicultural teacher education, No Child Left Behind, partnerships with schools, pedagogical content knowledge, professional development, Regular Education Initiative, special education teacher education reform, teacher education reform, Teachers for a New Era, teacher quality, the Holmes Group, traditional certification, response to intervention, and university partnerships.*

In summary, we deliberately included teacher education reforms that met our three criteria of (a) intention to improve teacher education, (b) having been studied in teacher education over time, and (c) having lasting impact on teacher education as demonstrated in research and policy. We excluded reforms that we identified as critical to pre-K-12 education but which did not originate as initiatives to improve teacher education (e.g., Response to Intervention)—even when they may subsequently have been adopted into the curricula of teacher education.

We agree with Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2016) that teacher education “is an emerging, complex, and multifaceted field” (p. 439); capturing 60 years of reform requires an organizational frame to better grasp its historical patterns. As we reviewed this literature, we identified numerous references to stages, or phases, in teacher education’s history (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005), and built on these to adopt a four-stage organizational framework. We begin in the 1970s (Stage 1), defined by the press to articulate a common core of knowledge and skills for teachers. A second stage took place in the 1980s, with groups issuing numerous reports to challenge the field and initiate new reforms. A growing focus on teacher education program accountability in the 1990s marked the third stage. Starting in the 2000s, the fourth stage continues to be firmly rooted in accountability and the performance assessment of program graduates. Table 1 summarizes each reform initiative by stage, providing references to support our framework and includes the name and major components comprising initiatives within each stage. Although we situated key initiatives within a specific stage, the continuation of a reform may have persisted into subsequent decades; evidence of its impact, and publications reflecting work accomplished in a particular stage, may appear in a later stage.

Analyzing Reforms and Their Intersections

As noted, the four stages of teacher education reform that emerged from our literature review form the organizing frame for describing what we learned about intersections between general and special education. The discussion of each stage is based on our analysis of the literature and documents in Table 1. For each stage, we address the two research questions that guided the analysis.

Stage 1: The Evolving Knowledge Base (1970–1979)

The articulation of a knowledge base was a prominent movement in teacher education in the 1970s (e.g., Urban, 1990). As such, Stage 1 afforded the opportunity for general and special educators to engage not only in developing a shared knowledge base but also in curricular redesign. This initiative emanated from general teacher education scholars, based on years of research on teaching and teacher education, often known as Competency-Based Teacher Education (Urban, 1990). From this work, compendia of knowledge and skills came to fruition in subsequent stages (e.g., Gideonse, 1989; Reynolds, 1989; D. C. Smith, 1983). As compendia were assembled, research on teaching and teacher education was conducted to support specific components of the knowledge base. Reviews of this research began to appear following the 1970s (e.g., Koehler, 1985), providing mounting evidence of the impact of knowledge base activity. Impact was also

demonstrated by new state policies mandating skills as part of certification and/or state teacher education program approval (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008).

Special education was not commonly included in these early attempts to define a knowledge base, existing, as it historically had, separate from the teacher education community charged with the preparation of general education teachers. The roots of this division date as far back as the Common School Movement in the 1800s, when cultural norms about disability resulted in services for students with disabilities that were exclusionary and administered by a separate special education infrastructure, and which only much later—taking hold principally in the 1970s—became supplemental to general education. With this historical backdrop, and being largely isolated from general education’s larger effort to define a knowledge base, special education embarked upon its own development of knowledge and skills, also in the form of competencies (York & Reynolds, 1996). However, in 1974 the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services [OSERS]) funded the DGPs, aimed at supporting the pre-service preparation of general education teachers to work with students with disabilities (e.g., Kleinhammer-Tramill & Fiore, 2003). Initiated by special education, these projects launched a major teacher education reform agenda for collaboration across general and special pre-service educators. Awarded to a total of 260 programs in 45 states, DGPs pulled special educators into work with general education counterparts to redesign the general education pre-service curriculum (Pugach, Blanton, Mickelson, & Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2013).

Because these grants were awarded directly to deans, most of whom did not have special education background, a vital opportunity presented itself for general and special education to work more closely together. Furthermore, as part of curriculum redesign activities, lists of competencies for general education teachers to master in teaching students with disabilities were often developed by individual projects. Curriculum redesign strategies, competencies, and statements of related knowledge-based practices were shared through the DGP national technical assistance network (National Support Systems Project, 1980a, 1980b).

Within special education, the push in the 1970s for a free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities, and the concurrent need for general education teachers to be prepared to work with them, was viewed as a fundamental social justice commitment. Indeed, some discourse emanating from the DGPs reflected a connection to the larger civil rights agenda (e.g., Corrigan, 1978; Kennedy, 1978). Subsequently, Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005) suggested that social justice emerged as a major focus for teacher education in the 1990s. So by the time the social justice agenda in general teacher education had solidified, a parallel, separate effort for social justice—focused squarely on disabilities—had long been in place.

Furthermore, as a new player with substantial clout based on policies embedded in IDEA, special education was heavily focused on elevating its advocacy just as modern teacher education reform activities were taking place within the general teacher education infrastructure. With dedicated federal funding to support the preparation of special education teachers, efforts were concentrated on establishing special education as an identifiable player in the educational arena. For example, the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) was founded during this stage; its journal, *Teacher Education and Special Education*, was first published in 1977. Moreover, despite their focus on collaboration in the preparation of general education teachers, DGPs were mainly viewed by general educators as special education reform projects (Pugach, 2005).

Although practices such as state mandated pre-service courses in special education for general education teachers began to take hold during this stage (Patton & Braithwaite, 1980; Voltz, 2003), representing some measure of progress, such policies worked against a reconsideration of the pre-service curriculum writ large (Pugach et al., 2011). Requirements like these located responsibility for preparing general education teachers in courses that were typically “owned” and delivered by special education faculty. Nevertheless, the concept of collaboration as a reform strategy was initiated during this stage. However, notwithstanding the collaborative focus of the DGPs, the long-standing norms of division were exacerbated—just as teacher education in special education was establishing an early identity, and as general teacher education was working toward greater recognition as a profession. This is exemplified by the absence of interaction during knowledge base development activities, the separate view of special education relative to a social justice agenda, and the internal activity and funding to establish special education on its own.

Stage 2: The Rapid Expansion of Reform (1980–1989)

The release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, although not a teacher education reform document, triggered what many called the highest level of reform activity in the history of teacher education (Sikula, 1990), with numerous groups producing recommendations for reform. Two broad-based movements emerged in the 1980s: standards-based teacher education and multicultural education. Furthermore, new groups launched reform initiatives that were specialized in scope (e.g., The Holmes Group’s Professional Development Schools (PDS)). This period of high reform activity afforded opportunities for general and special teacher educators to collaborate around standards development, diversity as a more comprehensive concept, and school-university partnerships.

Building on Stage 1 efforts to articulate a knowledge base, the standards-based movement was set in motion when the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession

recommended rigorous national standards for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006), resulting in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in 1987. This movement continued to dominate this and the next stage, as Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards (INTASC, 1992) for beginning teachers were developed. The impact of national standards quickly played out in state policy and in revisions to NCATE standards and those of specialty professional organizations (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008).

Although standards regularly included references to working with diverse students, which could imply students with disabilities, explicit connections were rarely drawn. CEC produced lists of competencies for special education (Heller & Ridenhour, 1983), but not in relation to the broader-based standards being developed in general education (Blanton, 1992). It was not until 2001 that these lists of special education competencies were aligned with standards in general education—a dislocation in timing that constrained collective work.

The movement for multicultural education was also established during this stage and was instrumental in expanding the knowledge base—as well as the standards derived from them—to “recognize the important roles that race, culture, language, gender, and class currently play in the United States” (Howard & Aleman, 2008, pp. 163-164). NCATE supported this movement when in 1979, a multicultural standard was added emphasizing cultural diversity (e.g., Gollnick, 2008). Research and historical reviews in teacher education, as well as multiple reviews of research on multicultural education (e.g., Banks & Banks, 1995, 2004; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995) provide evidence of the impact of this reform. Paralleling the way states responded to special education, the typical curricular solution was to mandate stand-alone multicultural education courses (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

As a marker of student diversity, special education was rarely viewed as part of the multicultural movement. Among multicultural teacher educators, Sleeter and Grant (1988) uniquely anticipated this problem, including disability as a major topic in the first edition of *Making Choices for Multicultural Education*. And although multicultural educators have long critiqued the overrepresentation of students of color in special education, this never led to the development of a robust relationship between multicultural and special education to create an integrated, comprehensive pre-service curriculum (Villegas, 2012).

The multicultural education movement afforded multicultural and special education teacher educators the opportunity to coalesce around the common priority of equity and social justice in education, influence the larger standards movement, and provide leadership for addressing the changing landscape of diversity in the schools (Pugach et al., 2011). However, as each sub-community in teacher education was establishing itself and seeking recognition, they were also

competing for limited resources (Irvine, 2012). Finally, instituting separate courses for multicultural education and special education from the outset diminished the potential for integrated course sequences and a comprehensive approach toward diversity.

Also during this stage, new groups assembled to support specialized reform agendas, including the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), the Holmes Group, Project 30 Alliance, The Renaissance Group (TRG), and the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. Although each pressed for its own reform issues, two themes stand out across four of the groups (NNER, Holmes, Project 30, TRG): (a) university and school partnerships, and (b) collaboration with arts and sciences faculty to assure subject matter knowledge. From these, a focus on clinical experiences (NCATE, 2010), and expectations for teachers to possess strong knowledge of the subjects they teach (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008), became enduring issues.

Specialty reform groups that took on the question of the role of arts and sciences in teacher preparation focused on the preparation of general education teachers; arts and sciences preparation for special education teachers did not become a prominent issue until 2004, when the reauthorization of IDEA was finally aligned with No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) highly qualified teacher (HQT) mandate, pressing special education to address preparing its teachers for instructing in the full academic curriculum. Furthermore, although substantial school-university partnership reform efforts were implemented through PDSs (Holmes Group, 1986), how this concept related to the preparation of special education teachers was not well developed (Yssel, Koch, & Merbler, 2002). The PDS movement represented a significant opportunity to create shared clinical experiences and became even more salient with the introduction of co-teaching in the schools (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989) toward the end of this stage.

Also in this stage, the collaboration reform agenda in pre-service special education was eclipsed by heated policy debates within special education regarding where students with disabilities should be educated. Then assistant secretary for OSERS, Madeleine Will, called for including students with disabilities in general education classrooms as special education policy, known as *The Regular Education Initiative* (CEC, 1986). Because this initiative ran the risk of inadequate consideration for how teachers and schools would actually address individual differences among students, this issue created much tension within the special education community. As a result, these heated internal struggles stood in the way of discussions with general education counterparts, reinforcing an already durable structural divide between the two.

Pre-service general and special education, then, functioned on parallel tracks during Stage 2. Not only were standards established separately, but the development and scope of multicultural education proceeded separately from the implementation of dedicated special education courses, each vying for

program space and attention. Specialized reform groups that came together around issues like subject matter knowledge operated outside of special education. Simultaneously, policy debates within special education fixed its gaze inward.

Stage 3: The Turn to Accountability (1990–1999)

During Stage 3, pressure from federal policies (e.g., 1992 and 1998 amendments to the Higher Education Act [HEA]), operationalized the accountability movement in teacher education as states implemented student and teacher standards and addressed the challenge of measuring their attainment (Wilson & Youngs, 2005). Although new accountability expectations were clear about reporting data on the quality of pre-service programs, they were less clear regarding how they applied to students with disabilities. Only as a result of the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 was the regulatory groundwork laid within special education requiring that students with disabilities should have access to the general education curriculum. And only in 2004, just shy of 30 years after its initial passage, did IDEA reinforce this issue by mandating that special education teachers demonstrate content knowledge similar to their general education counterparts. Consequently, opportunities for collaboration in Stage 3 were constrained by differences in the timing of policy-driven requirements.

New reform-oriented groups continued to assemble and produce reports defining their visions. While NCTAF (1996, 1997) continued the press for high standards, suggesting that all teacher preparation programs obtain national accreditation and build on arts and sciences degrees, the Urban Network for the Improvement of Teacher Education (UNITE), a network of urban schools and colleges of education, expanded ongoing reforms initiated by prior groups. UNITE's focus on building university and pre-K-12 school partnerships in urban, inner city communities (Howey, 1996, 1999); grew out of the Holmes Group's commitment to redefining this relationship. UNITE's urban focus afforded an opportunity to build the relationship between multicultural teacher educators and special education teacher educators across urban schools—yet this perspective was not emphasized. Also during this time, technology education as a reform in teacher education became prominent, demonstrated by the BellSouth initiative (Wisniewski, 2000), followed by the federally funded Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) projects (Polly, Mims, Shepherd, & Inan, 2010). Although individual PT3 projects might have focused on special education, in general this attention to technology as a way of transforming teacher education never systematically brought together general and special education. Thus, the increasing emphasis on technology was largely an unexplored opportunity to connect these new initiatives either to the long-standing field of assistive technology in special education, or to the emergence of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

With accountability for student learning at the forefront, a natural fit for building relationships between special and general pre-service education related to strategies for monitoring and measuring student progress. Special education had a long history of using curriculum-based assessments of student learning as evidence of teachers' instructional effectiveness (Deno, 2003). Curriculum-based measurement was especially relevant to the accountability movement, as these skills were already routinely included in, and viewed as critical for the preparation of special education teachers (Greenwood & Maheady, 1997). Despite this prominent focus on the importance of teachers monitoring student progress, there was limited awareness on the part of general teacher education of the depth of curriculum-based assessment practices within pre-service special education, compounded by the fact that research-related publications on teacher progress monitoring appeared chiefly within the special education literature. That general teacher education faculty largely focused on new policy-driven accountability requirements in isolation reflected the divide and contributed to a divergence of efforts.

Within special education, collaboration as a pre-service reform strategy for teacher education was addressed extensively during this stage (e.g., Blanton, Griffin, Winn, & Pugach, 1997; Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely, & Danielson, 2010) and became a focus within CEC's Teacher Education Division (e.g., initiating a forum at annual meetings highlighting research in general teacher education). This renewed emphasis on pre-service collaboration also reflected the new reality of co-teaching within pre-K-12 practice. New pre-service courses on professional collaboration were created, but were typically required only of special education candidates (McKenzie, 2009). Although teacher educators in special education continued to place high value on collaboration in classroom practice, most of the dialogue took place within special education itself—outside of the broader teacher education discourse about accountability and content preparation. Articles about collaboration occasionally appeared in general teacher education outlets, but most often in the special education literature.

Given the high levels of pre-service activity in general education (e.g., research on content preparation) and special education (e.g., measuring student progress and collaboration), the failure to capitalize on opportunities that could have connected them was problematic in this early stage of the accountability movement. Teacher educators in general education seemed unfamiliar with the priorities and practices of special education; likewise, special education seemed to look inward, often overlooking the larger pre-service community. Finally, the intense pressure to respond to federal policies mandating new forms of accountability dominated reform in general teacher education first, commanding attention at a time when teacher educators in special education were more focused on preparing candidates for new forms of collaborative practice. Teacher educators in special

education would not feel the same accountability pressure until the start of the next stage and the new policy demands that emerged.

Stage 4: The Deep Rooting of Accountability (2000–Present)

With federal policy leading the way, the importance of linking teacher education to pre-K-12 student outcomes became less a debate among teacher educators than an implementation challenge. The stakes for education accountability grew higher as more federal requirements (i.e., American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009) mandated that the evaluation of teacher education include assessments showing how program graduates improved the achievement of their students (D. D. Smith, Robb, West, & Tyler, 2010). This shift to an accountability framework was further exemplified by states' adopting teacher performance assessments. As the pre-service accountability movement intensified, special education was focused on a new reform initiative that developed out of requirements for teachers' academic content preparation and special education's focus on collaboration, namely, the move toward dual and multiple certification.

One dominant, externally imposed teacher education reform arose from the 2001 revisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or NCLB. As a result of this legislation, the achievement of students with disabilities became public knowledge—a policy that put pressure on special and general education to work together to address achievement gaps that were, for the first time, so openly exposed. NCLB also defined teacher quality through new mandates for teachers to be “highly qualified” in subject matter, with the 2004 clarification of IDEA extending these subject matter requirements to special education teachers as noted earlier. Later in this stage, in 2007, the federally funded “325T” program was launched to support revising the pre-service curriculum to assure that special education teachers would meet this content mandate (Little, Sobel, McCray, & Wang, 2015). These mandates presented valuable opportunities for general and special education to address these issues together. However, the timing of the implementation of NCLB created a misalignment of these efforts. Even if good intentions existed, prevailing norms of separation seem to have been reinforced by federal funding of 325T grants that were awarded to special education.

One additional highly visible national reform, launched in 2001, was Teachers for a New Era (TNE), which also emphasized subject matter preparation as one of its goals. Arts and sciences faculty and deans were required to be major players to facilitate addressing the content preparation of teachers. TNE did not require special education faculty to be involved. However, some projects viewed their participation as essential, since special education faculty was now increasingly pressured to comply with the subject matter mandate.

As accountability continued to take center stage, a series of efforts focused on pre-service reform as a way of fostering

more explicit connections between general and special teacher education were supported with federal special education funding. The first brought together teacher educators and teachers in general and special education to develop a companion document to the original INTASC standards (INTASC, 2001). This document interpreted the meaning of the INTASC standards for preparing all teachers for teaching students with disabilities. Under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), this project represented an effort to move discussions of teacher preparation for a more inclusive practice out of the singular auspices of special education. However, the document was not widely used in either general or special education—signaling a lack of readiness to engage in that level of joint conversation.

Two other multi-year efforts focused on teacher education reform supported by federal special education funds illustrate the emergence of dual/multiple certification as a key strategy to broaden the scope and program space of pre-service preparation in general and special education. The Center for Improving Teacher Quality (CTQ), housed at the CCSSO to signify broad project ownership and to diminish norms of separation, was launched in 2002. CTQ engaged higher education and state leaders from general and special education in 45 states to consider the redesign of teacher education. These deliberations resulted in multiple approaches for joint work, emphasizing various forms of dual and multiple teacher certifications as a method of helping states and educator preparation programs envision joint reform, while also meeting the requirement for teachers to be highly qualified. Although some forms of dual certification had been practiced for decades, typically they were carried out as *discrete*, parallel programs in states that required a general education license prior to earning a special education license (Blanton & Pugach, 2011), or represented outliers in a limited number of progressive pre-service programs (Blanton et al., 1997). As a result of this CTQ project, *dual certification* began to emerge as a broad-based reform strategy with multiple configurations (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, 2011). Subsequently, the federal 325T project, originally focused on reforming academic content preparation *within* pre-service special education, added a priority for dual certification to its 2010 competition.

In 2013, a second center began—Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform, or CEEDAR (<http://cedar.education.ufl.edu>), providing support for joint activity across general and special education nationwide, working intensively in 20 states. This center emphasized reform through work in, and alignment of, teacher and leader preparation programs in special and general education, preparation program evaluation and accountability, and state program approval and licensure, further solidifying dual certification as an increasingly common reform strategy.

These reform projects, originating from within special education but aspiring to the kind of broad pre-service

curricular reform first addressed in the DGPs, elevated the importance of directly attending to the relationship between preparing general and special education teachers as a way of addressing the full range of student diversity, and resulting in the growing implementation of dual certification programs. Not all dual certification programs manage the transition to becoming a fully shared enterprise, nor attend to the complex re-envisioning of the general education pre-service curriculum required as a basis for the successful transformation of pre-service practice (Blanton & Pugach, 2011; Young, 2011). But in the current context of reform, dual certification—thoughtfully constructed and implemented—has created one viable path toward a more common teacher education reform agenda.

However, at the same time that projects like these began to foster closer local relationships across general and special pre-service education and elevated the importance of dual certification, other accountability activities in this stage appear to have reverted to norms of separation. One example is the edTPA. The development of this assessment represented an opportunity for teacher educators in general and special education to build a common framework for assessing what it means to be prepared to teach in a diverse classroom, taking into account multiple forms of expertise. However, in a comparison of the elementary literacy assessment and the special education assessment, Pugach and Peck (2016) described how the edTPA functions as a cultural tool to reify the historic division between general and special education. Furthermore, reporting on faculty perceptions in the first year of the assessment's implementation, Ledwell and Oyler (2016) illustrated how the edTPA serves a narrowing curricular function, working against an inclusive philosophy of teaching.

In this fourth stage then, as new efforts emerge, opportunities remain high for general and special educators to work together to rethink pre-service preparation, especially with data on the low achievement of students with disabilities so openly available. Such opportunities include the focus on content preparation for all teachers, performance assessments, and capitalizing on federal funding that has pressed for closer relationships between general and special education. However, the misaligned timing of policy, alongside federal funding streams originating within special education that serve to perpetuate the normative view that such efforts are “special education” projects, have not provided an optimal context for joint activity, even in the face of good intentions. The expansion of dual and multiple certifications, encouraged directly or indirectly throughout this stage, seems to have emerged as having the most durable potential for joint reform.

Discussion

Teacher educators in general and special education aspire to prepare their graduates to work with the full diversity of

students in pre-K-12 classrooms. Examined in the context of modern teacher education reform, however, they have continually worked at a great distance from one another. This analysis describes how the potential existed, at every stage of reform, for general and special education to intersect. However, even as the discourse of preparing candidates for “all” students dominates, the relationship among teacher educators has been characterized less by active exploration of these potential intersections, and more by continuous missed opportunities for achieving a robust, common teacher education community with a shared mission.

This analysis indicates that four factors—*policy*, *funding*, *timing*, and *norms of separation*—appear to have functioned as constraints upon the joint reconceptualization and redesign of teacher education, although one may have been more prominent than another in any given stage. In Stage 1, for example, despite the mobilization of DGPs, strong policy and funding agendas in special education sustained the separation from much of the mainstream knowledge base work that was taking place. In Stage 2, norms of separation remained prominent, as most reforms did not explicitly include special education or, as special education took its own path when standards were first being developed. Although all factors were at play in Stage 3, the timing of the implementation of, for example, content preparation and accountability requirements, seemed to magnify the distance between efforts in general and special education teacher preparation. Finally, in Stage 4, misaligned timing, and funding by and to special education, exacerbated norms of separation.

As a field, teacher education is responding to increased scrutiny and mounting—and often ahistorical—critiques. Understanding how these four factors have worked to undermine the potential for common, sustained engagement across the pre-service curriculum can inform future efforts to create capacity in teacher education for the next generation. In the face of the continued low achievement of multiple diverse groups of students in our schools—students with complex, multiple, and intersecting identities—it is critical for teacher education to coalesce around a comprehensive equity agenda based on a common commitment to overcoming this historic record of missed opportunities.

To do so, however, will require sustained, intentional action that is responsive to the multiple influences of *policy*, *funding*, *timing*, and *norms of separation*. For example, *policies* such as licensing structures can be interpreted as opportunities for creating shared rather than isolated curricular spaces that enable pre-service students to gain content and pedagogical expertise applicable across diversities—not relegated to one social marker of diversity alone—as well as to gain appropriate advanced specialized expertise. Next, it is essential to prioritize the design of externally funded projects from the outset such that *funding* is used to support projects that bring together diversity communities and routinely include shared, collaborative leadership spanning diversity interests across teacher education. In this way teacher

educators can begin to push back against funding by isolated social markers of identity, which privileges one social marker over others and diminishes a shared understanding of where intersections exist. Furthermore, while pre-service programs may not have control over the *timing* of reform initiatives that provide structural, curricular, or fiscal opportunity, they do have control over expanding the scope of what is viewed as relevant for any particular initiative. That is, for any new pre-service initiative, there should be common discourse and collaborative participation from the outset of planning that purposefully addresses students’ struggles across diversity communities. Furthermore, general and special education teacher educators must redefine their expertise in relationship, rather than in opposition, to one another—transcending *norms of separation* to embrace how their knowledge and skills both overlap and differ.

The primary problem this analysis reveals is not simply that most major reform reports failed to attend to special education. Rather, it is that the chance to build a comprehensive equity agenda has been squandered for decades. The urgent challenge before us, then, is figuring out how best to interrupt this deeply troubling pattern.

To this end, we offer two overarching recommendations. First, we call on teacher educators to organize themselves as active, deliberative *Communities for Pre-service Learning* (Blanton & Pugach, 2017), in much the same way we expect Pre-K-12 teachers to work within their own school-based learning communities (a) to collaboratively address the thorny questions regarding the relationship between all social markers of diversity and the intersectionalities among them, and (b) to unpack which approaches to instruction cross diversities and which might not. These learning communities must become part of the organizational culture of teacher education if they are to be successful in transcending the idea that there is one teacher education community for “general” education and another one for “special” education. It is within this larger community that teacher educators, both in general and special education, can begin the hard work of reconceptualizing the role of expertise in teaching. Second, these communities of teacher educators will likely need to draw on specific tools and protocols to provide structure for creating new shared discourses required to achieve a common equity agenda and overcome the deeply embedded structural and historical divide between general and special education (Pugach, 2017). Otherwise, these new efforts run the risk of being viewed narrowly as an opportunity to “put” special education into the curriculum, rather than the opportunity to reconceptualize teacher education in ways that widen each teacher’s view of what is “normal” in the classroom and build capacity to broaden their knowledge and skills accordingly, instead of targeting individuals for “intervention” (Florian, 2012). What is needed is the preparation of teacher candidates for the counter-hegemonic teaching that will be required to assure learning across the intersectionally diverse student populations in our schools (Ohito & Oyler, 2017).

The history of modern reform reveals that the challenge is not a lack of opportunities for working together. At present, for example, current opportunities such as the focus on high leverage practices in teacher education curricula, and the recent changes in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements with regard to the evaluation of teacher education programs provide openings for general and special education pre-service faculty to engage in a substantive rethinking of their work toward a shared commitment to preparing teachers well for students who struggle in schools, among them those with disabilities. But as this analysis shows, it is essential for teacher educators to develop a heightened awareness of what may have dissuaded us from sharing this commitment—and the urgency to respond accordingly. Failing this, it is likely we could find ourselves in the same position the next time we take stock of our progress toward preparing teachers to work effectively across the full range of students in our schools.

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Note

1. We use the term *general education* to distinguish between the broader field of teacher education and a segment of the field, *special education* teacher education.

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*Denotes reference for Table 1, available online.

Author Biographies

Linda P. Blanton is Professor Emerita in the College of Education at Florida International University. Her research interests and expertise are in the areas of teacher quality, teacher education reform and policy, and special and general education collaboration in teacher education.

Marleen C. Pugach is Professor Emerita in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her areas of research and scholarship focus on the teacher education policy and reform at the intersection of general and special education, situating disability within the larger question of equity in the preparation of teachers, and qualitative research methods.

Mildred Boveda is an assistant professor at Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. In her research, she examines teachers' preparedness for an increasingly diverse school population. Drawing from intersectionality theory and collaborative teacher education research, she interrogates how diversity is framed across education communities to inform education policy and practice.