

Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States

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Abstract

According to Baker and Rytina's (2014), the total number of legal immigrants coming to the United States during the ten years from 1980 to 1989 is 990,000, whereas in two more recent years from 2010 to 2012, the number rose to 2,810,000. As a country with an increasing influx of immigrants from all over the world, the United States has expressed a paramount need for the proportionately rising number of well-trained English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. This paper presents the origin of American teacher education dated back from the nineteenth century, noticing common features and variations amongst teacher preparation programs. The significance as well as desirable goals of American teacher training programs are also discussed. Additionally, realities at teacher preparation institutions and workplace, and enormous challenges facing programs of pre-service preparation in the U.S. are demonstrated. Perceptions of qualified teacher preparation programs held by teacher educators', teacher candidates', school administrators' perspectives, and the correlation amongst these three perceptions are explored. Finally, exemplars of qualified teacher education programs in the United States are demonstrated for replication.

Keywords: teacher education, teacher educators, pre-service teachers, English learners

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Preservice Teacher Education Programs

Origin

The origin of American programs of preservice preparation could be traced back to the early nineteenth century (Spring, 2011). The birth of the common schools resulted in the demand of teacher resources, and women were welcomed to participate in the teaching group because they accepted lower salaries compared with those of male teachers. In addition, since the colonial period, American colleges were regarded as a “child of the church” and a “nursery for ministers” as affirmed by President Thomas Clap of Yale in the eighteenth century, “educational institutions were essentially religious in nature and function” (Sansing, 1990, p. 3). The connection between domestic duties, moral virtues, and the abilities to nurture good future citizenry for the nation created the public image of women as publican mothers, salvaging the society. Therefore, the very beginning teacher education institutes chiefly trained female teachers.

Amongst the first teacher preparation schools in the United States were the Emma Willard School, which was originally named Troy Female Seminary, established in Troy, New York in 1814 but officially started in 1821 and the Reverend Samuel Hall, founded in 1823 in Concord, Vermont (Emma Willard School, 2016; Jeynes, 2007; Spring, 2011). In the teacher education program, besides content domain, teachers-to-be were trained in pedagogical methods, class management, and moral character development. Recommendation letters with the signatures of Emma Willard, the owner of the Troy Female Seminary, were regarded as the first documents certifying qualified pedagogues. During the Post-Revolution period, the door of more academies opened to young women. After graduation, female graduates were recruited by many schools, and it was concluded that teaching became women’s first professional career (Spring, 2011).

Common Features

Preservice teacher programs in different teacher training colleges and universities shared certain common modules. Foundation courses such as sociology, philosophy, educational psychology, and history were generally taught in the beginning of the programs. Next, content-area preparation, i.e., general education and liberal arts for primary teachers or subject concentration for high school teachers, would be covered by teacher candidates. Besides, essential courses relating to the nature of learning, cognitive development, pedagogical methodologies, and field experience were required in almost all training programs (Goodlad, 1990).

Variation

A range of marked variations amongst teacher preparation programs lay in instructors’ established various course objectives and different program components or structures. In terms of purpose of conferred degrees, teacher programs could be either academic study or licensing for certification. As for undergraduate students, the training programs might function as additional minors or major study programs. The length of programs could increase from four to five years for the undergraduates and be expanded to some more years for the graduate students. With respect to venue, the preservice teacher training can be university/college-based or field-based programs (Holmes Group, 1986).

Significance

Educating moral and competent citizenry for the nation has been consistently of paramount concerns for teacher educators. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) documented that inadequate investment in education brought about tragic consequences for America due to the remarkable correlation between low literacy and financial dependence, which increased the

likelihood of crime. In the same vein, Darling-Hammond (1997) stated that poor education did not support people a decent living standard and increased the possibility of joblessness, state reliance, and incarceration. To illustrate, over half of the U.S. prisoners were below the average level of literacy demanded by the job market, approximately 40% of the children involved in juvenile delinquency struggled with learning in schools.

Suffering from inadequate educational expenditure, in poor areas with “loose” teacher recruitment and high teacher attrition, thousands of pupils experienced unprepared and inexperienced teaching, and constant substitute teachers. Reported by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996), at least 56% of high school students were taught physics by either mathematics teachers (27%) or English teachers (21%) in the 1990-1991 academic year.

The doomsday scenario of American education escalated when several school districts continually recruited “teachers” who were not ready to work as teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996, p. 5). The following statistics from over forty states showed the dismal American condition of teacher. About a quarter of novice teachers were not qualified enough for the job. Over 12% of newly-recruited teachers did not undergo any formal teacher training. 14% new hires did not fulfil state teacher standards (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996).

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996), without sufficient education, the number of population who lived on assistance programs and Social Security would increase in the future and lead to a deleterious aftermath for the nation. Grappling with these insurmountable problems, James B. Hunt Jr., Chair of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future in 1994, called for drastic reforms in schooling starting with teacher education. He purported that teachers and teaching belonged at the “heart” of the education reform (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996, p. 4). After 20 years, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2016) preserved the affirmation that teachers was positioned at the “heart” of the educational system (p. 5) and that “the [education] system [began] with teachers” (p. 19). Consequently, the future of America heavily depended on seeking out qualified teachers, assisting them to maximize their potentials, and rewarding them for their rigorous work. The report of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996, 2016) served as a guideline for redesigning teacher preparation programs, licensing, hiring qualified teachers, conducting profession induction, setting proper standards for teachers and students, buttressing teachers with professional development, organizing schools in a manner that supported teachers' and students' success, and awarding effective teachers.

It was crucial that preservice teacher programs performed a pivotal role in the upcoming decades. Every single aspect of educational reforms highly depended on competent teachers with necessary knowledge and skills (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Nationwide legislators, experts, and educators have called for dramatic reforms in prospective teacher programs to train well-performed teachers in an attempt to raise educational standards to higher levels and create the human capital for the demands of the labor market. Sweeping changes to education were proposed by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996, 2016) showing no tolerance for unprofessional teachers, poor teacher training programs, incompetent teaching practice, or unbeneficial pedagogical methods that could not enhance learning.

Desirable Goals

Because “the true use of Education, is to qualify Men for the Employments of Life,” to “infuse them with a Public Spirit,” a “Benevolence for Mankind,” and “to make them more extensively serviceable to the Commonwealth” (Sansing, 1990, p. 3), Zeichner and Liston (1996) proposed that teacher training practice ought to be conducted under the five following reflective traditions concerning teaching education and teaching practice during the twentieth century. The first tradition, the academic orientation, was described as a content-based approach. This tradition placed emphasis

on teachers' content-area knowledge and their capacity to transmute the subject to students. However, knowledge of subject matter alone was not sufficient to teach learners, teachers had to attain pedagogical knowledge to transfer what they knew and understood to students.

Holding the belief that scientific research studies provided valuable findings for education, the social efficiency version stressed teachers' capabilities to wisely put research findings regarding pedagogical knowledge into their own practice. Teachers could either match their internal classroom practice with external research results (i.e., technical strand) or self-judge their personal ideologies and experience to flexibly transmit concepts, ideas to students.

The developmentalist orientation focused on teachers' capacities to build up lessons and instructional activities on students themselves. Teachers' observations and awareness of students' prior knowledge, backgrounds, interests, intellectuals, and especially students' readiness for specific assignment should generate classroom actions. The role of effective teachers includes observing students' behaviors in the classroom atmosphere like a "naturalist," inquiring into their own practice like a "researcher," and connecting students' active class participation and learning process like an "artist" (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 58).

From a political point of view, the social reconstructionist version emphasized teachers' abilities to comprehend and analyze the circumstances of the society with the express purpose of reflecting on schooling and assessment of classroom practice to actively and effectively contribute to the development of a better society with equity, justice, and improved living standards. Teachers' actions should be grounded on both classroom and society contexts since what took place in the class resulted from the world beyond the classroom. In fact, human beings were under the influence of cultural, political, institutional forces; nonetheless, these forces were affected by what individuals did. Consequently, schooling could not be parted from the realities happening outward the classroom. Teachers' practice had to be connected to the changes and development of the society in which schooling were incorporated as a component. In order for teaching practice to become more socially reflective, teachers had better amalgamate to form teacher communities for mutual learning and support.

Aiming at making teaching better, the generic orientation highlighted teachers' thoughts or intentional reflections about what they were doing. Only by developing rationales for all of classroom activities – what teachers were doing, why they were doing this activity, what would occur after the activity – did teachers not become "slave[s] to chance, irrationality, self-interest, and superstition" (Cruikshank, 1987, p. 34).

Although teachers' priority and certain situations might determine their stress on one of the first four aforementioned traditions, teachers were not expected to follow a separate orientation. Good teachers, according to Zeichner and Liston (1996), had to pay attention to all five traditions with different forms and emphases as their components were not completely exclusive. Whether the set of orientations could be achieved depended on teachers' objectives and how they attained these goals.

Advocating the fourth tradition, Villegas and Lucas (2002) argued that their proposal of integration of multicultural social components into the prospective teacher programs was situated on the beliefs that diversity deserved to be addressed. The panacea view of schooling considered education as a tool to endorse justice and equity in the multicultural society (Spring, 2011; Villegas and Lucas, 2002). It was supposed that the infusion of multicultural awareness in the preservice curriculum would make teachers culturally responsive when instructing learners. In an equitable school, teachers would become socio-culturally conscious of their own identities and complicated connections between the school and the society, articulate plurality of students' varied backgrounds as valid, and nurture the belief that they could work as "agents of change" to reconstruct education (Villegas and Lucas, 2002, p. 25). Additionally, constructivism view ought to be modelled by teacher trainers in college courses, not just talking about its strengths. According to this view of learning, all children were considered to be able to acquire new knowledge, and teachers' responsibilities

encompassed responding to the diversity of learners, bridging the gap between what students knew and the new concepts by encouraging their critical thinking abilities and cooperation in problem-solving tasks. Direct instruction, memorization or rote learning, recitation should never be employed in a constructivism class, even for learners at beginning levels. In order to facilitate the learning process, teachers had to acknowledge as much information about students as possible, inside and outside the school boundary (i.e., their hobbies, interests, past experiences that built up their current attitudes) (Villegas and Lucas, 2002).

In line with the first four reflective teaching practices described by Zeichner & Liston (1996), Schubert (2014) mentioned four traditions for designing what was worth learning or what should be included in the curriculum that prospective teachers should be aware of. First, the intellectual tradition valued great works in art, music, literature, philosophy, psychology, mathematics, history, social sciences, and natural sciences. This tradition assumed that the organized knowledge, understandings, insights from these disciplines, which stood the passing of time, were beneficial for students. Second, the social behavior version stressed the practical values of behaviors that helped students to succeed in their lives. What being taught in schools should be the behaviors that brought students success in the real world. Third, the experiential orientation supported John Dewey's (1938) progressive curriculum philosophy with experiential learning (Schubert, 2014). Advocates of this orientation believed that students learned best when their interests and curiosity generated learning activities. Fourth, the critical reconstruction version reiterated Joel Spring's (2011, p. 383) viewpoint of schooling as "sorting machines" of the society. Individuals' social variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, competence, socioeconomic status, marital status, and the like all impacted their education in terms of types and levels of quality that they received. What required from sympathetic teachers was fair treatment and justified attitudes towards students with social disadvantages.

Realities

At teacher training institutions. In contrast to comprehensive philosophical traditions of teacher training programs, there were a mismatch between most prospective teacher programs and the aforementioned philosophies. Goodlad (1990) disparaged the incoherence among teacher education program components such as foundation courses and subject matter, and confusion caused by poor organizations of different departments housed in colleges/schools of education, even in one of the smallest programs in his research sample. Many teacher students complained about incoherent and inappropriate foundation classes as they were "too theoretical" and extremely inauthentic (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 202). What they learned from these classes did not help what they would have to do in a real class. To illustrate, regarding method courses, students lodged complaints about inadequate amount of practice whilst the courses were supposed to equip students with approaches, methods, instructions, and curricula. In general, novice teachers criticized these courses to be time-consuming and unintellectual. Sharing the same viewpoint, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) condemned the organization of teacher programs were disjointed in such a way that made it difficult for undergraduates to make connections or to pool all the fragmented courses for a whole view. The situation became worse when Goodlad (1990) found the lack of communication and coordination amongst the authority who controlled the future of teacher training programs. Similarly, teacher education course instructors did not have the tendency to communicate with one another, and they did not share the ideological notions either.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) addressed knotty problems with teacher education programs, primarily caused by insufficient teacher preparation. Since teacher programs did not have to be accredited, the quality of these programs in different universities tremendously varied. Many universities regarded educating teachers as "cash cows," so school funds might be invested in any other students rather than preservice teacher students (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 13). Moreover, the period of four years was misjudged to be adequate for preservice elementary and secondary teacher students to acquire the content knowledge, the fundamentals of learning process, and the learners. The goal of developing teacher students to become subject experts was neglected. Prospective teachers were not exhilarated to quest

and deepen their content domain knowledge to teach thorough and challenging curricula (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The negligence of promoting education research studies amongst teacher candidates impeded their “lifelong learning” for there is no connection between school learning, teaching, and research findings in the field (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 202). Next, most of the college classes were delivered in lecture format and low standards, which caused boredom to learners. This teaching method together with recitation, memorization diverged students considerably from problem-based, “minds-on,” or hands-on activities (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 202). Accordingly, preservice teachers attending education programs with the same attitudes as they did in high schools: passive, disengaging, and submissive (Holmes Group, 1986). In fact, the way that preservice teachers acquired knowledge in teacher education institutions was likely to be replicated to how their future students learn in the classroom (Bransford et al., 2000). In other words, these bad teaching models for prospective teachers increased the likelihood that novice teachers would use these approaches when teaching students. With respect to disastrous impacts on teacher students, grading practices in teacher programs contributed to discourage student collaboration (Bransford et al., 2000). Additionally, due to the demand of certification and degree requirements, programs of preservice teacher preparation tended to become superficial in terms of content area and educational research studies, which was not sufficient for teacher students to work professionally in the future classrooms.

Zeichner (1981) vehemently condemned the increase of hours in clinical experiences without reference to the quality of the field-based experience, which was worth to be put into full consideration. He bombarded field experience with direct questions:

What did teacher students learn during their participation?

Were the established goals for this experience achieved?

How did prospective teachers perceive the relationship between the internship purposes and what they claimed to learn?

Likewise, the Holmes Group (1986) criticized parts of the curriculum of teacher programs were disjointed, redundant, incomprehensive, irresponsive, and ineffective, which left teachers-to-be to “wander about” during the undergraduate programs (p. 50). The prospective teachers’ real experiences with the teacher preparatory programs usually provoked unresolved conflicts with preservice teacher ideologies and negatively affected the quality of teacher programs.

After graduation, teacher graduates had to take licensing tests which were not grounded on latest research studies and to some extent supported George Bernard Shaw’s infamous maxim about teaching profession: “He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches” (Shaw, 2008, p. 4). To illustrate, Shulman (2013) compared the teacher certification tests in various American states dated back to March 1875 and those in 1980s. Up to 99 percent of the California State Board examination for endorsing primary teachers concentrated on subject matter in 1875 while the 1980s teacher examinations heavily emphasized teaching abilities, without reference to the knowledge of content. The test questions in the 1980s ignored the process of transformation from teachers’ knowledge to learners’ interpretation. Most of the exams focused on methods of instruction, test time management, low-level questions, and so on.

Moreover, political influence from the federal, state government, university administration boards, school authority, which regarded as gross interference by Goodlad (1990), exerted a deleterious effect on preservice teacher preparation programs. It was the interference of political regulations with pioneering teacher programs that caused these education programs to be less innovative. To put it another way, local politicians and authorities, rather than educators and experts, shaped the preservice teacher training programs (Shulman, 2013). In fact, most teacher students were trained in public colleges and universities financially sponsored by the legislators and governors of the state. After graduation, they worked in public schools and again were put under the pressure of the local and federal authority through the school administration boards (Elmore & Sykes, 1992).

At workplace. After experiencing all the difficulties in preservice teacher programs, novice teachers, even those from renowned teacher education institutions, were fraught with serious challenges. Amongst the most severe difficulties encountered was to surmount the transfer phase between education and employment (Bransford et al., 2000). In other words, apprentice teachers needed assistance to smooth the transition from college environment with classes supervised by faculty to a real-world school where they were recruited as teachers and defied to transfer their content and pedagogy knowledge. Although teacher candidates gained vast initial knowledge during the transfer process, this was regarded as "critical time" for them (Faez & Valeo, 2012, p. 450). The transition process did not take place automatically, it required assistance in applying acquired knowledge into new contexts for constructive feedback and reflection. The new environments offered high chances for novice teachers to try and adjust themselves for dramatic growth as educators. Shulman (2013) referred to this transition as the challenging period from an expert learner to an apprentice teacher. He showed concerns about this important transformation in the following questions:

How did the successful college student transform his or her expertise in the subject matter into a form that high school students can comprehend?

When this novice teacher confronted flawed or muddled textbook chapters or befuddled students, how did he or she employ content expertise to generate new explanations, representations, or clarifications?

What were the sources of analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations, and rephrasings?

How did the novice teacher (or even the seasoned veteran) draw on expertise in the subject matter in the process of teaching?

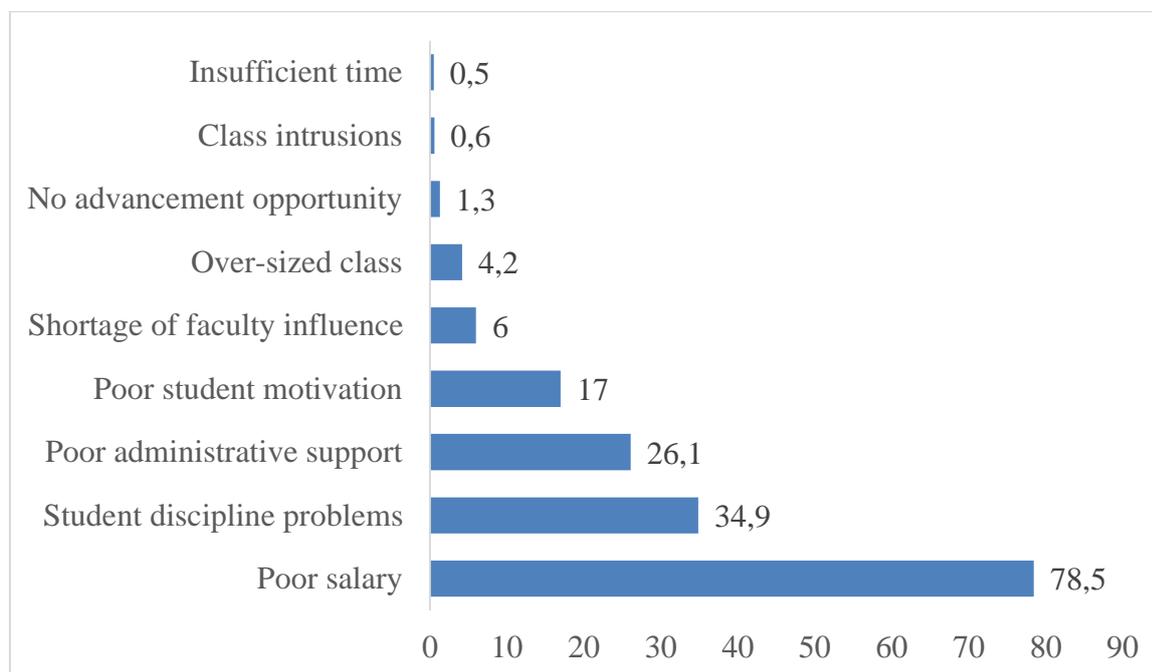
What pedagogical prices were paid when the teacher's subject matter competence was itself compromised by deficiencies of prior education or ability? (p. 5)

In addition to the baffling transition period, beginning teachers encountered a host of disparities between what they expected and what real schooling was like. Many schools were not operated consistently with the state-of-the-art findings from educational research studies on learning. Too often, the school administrators showed preference for quantity rather than quality of the subject knowledge, testing subject content and abilities in isolation and de-contextualization rather than integration, individual teaching rather than team teaching, and limited application of new educational technology. Consequently, entering the very first classes with updated knowledge from the teacher preparation programs, novice teachers were confronted with differences and even contradictory beliefs, conflicting ideological and philosophical notions, which fermented the discord between educational studies and realistic classroom traditions (Bransford et al., 2000). Apprentice teachers were mandated to either "sink or swim" in the beginning career as teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 14).

Furthermore, new teachers were bedeviled by other school-related matter that gave cause for job dissatisfaction. For instance, they were frequently assigned the most problematic classes like oversized classrooms with at-risk students and extracurricular responsibilities without or with little assistance from veteran teachers. Apart from bureaucratic pressure, teachers received modest wages as "semi-skilled workers" (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 6). As a result, within the first three years of the teaching job, the turnover rate of apprentice teachers was unsurprisingly reported to be of alarmingly high (30%) (Darling-Hammond, 1997). According to Ingersoll and Smith (2003), the data they collated from the Schools and Staffing Survey and Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) nationwide displayed that the percentage of beginning teachers who left the profession in the first five years was between 40 and 50. Responding the TFS, 18.9% of beginning teachers left the schools because of staff cutback or school reorganization; 42% of teachers quit the job due to their personal reasons such as pregnancy, health, child rearing, etc.; 38.8% pursued other jobs, and 28.9% left because they felt

dissatisfied with education. Aligning with Darling-Hammond (1997), Ingersoll and Smith's (2003) reported that low salaries caused 78.5% of these dissatisfied former teachers to leave the profession.

Figure 1. Reasons causing new dissatisfied teachers to leave the profession



Teachers played a significant part in the success of knowledge enhancement in a school. Accordingly, teacher students should be given many opportunities to understand the nature of learning process (Bransford et al., 2000). Nevertheless, most of courses in teacher training programs and professional development were conducted in a different, even opposite manner to what documented by the body of educational studies about efficient learning. Whilst research reported that teacher effectiveness was built up by having teachers spend time sharing their experience about student learning within the teacher community, many teacher workshops and seminars were carried out as a decontextualized, one-off event and hence did not fulfil teachers' needs. Formal professional development for teachers did not satisfy the criteria for learning to occur from learner-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered perspectives (Bransford et al., 2000). Moreover, whenever districts had to struggle to balance their budgets, the fund for teacher development would be the very first in the list to be cut (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

A large number of preservice programs did not fit neatly into the learning practices recommended by the latest educational studies. Due to their radical effects on new teachers' preparation for initial teaching, attitudes towards lifelong learning and professional development, teacher education programs should be delivered with well-defined objectives, beliefs about the nature of learning based on ground-breaking research, and academic curricula filled with considerable and deep apprehension. The ultimate goal was to avoid the cacophony between what undergraduates learned at teacher training institutions and what occurred in real classrooms, which might impede their employment of educational theories and research in teaching learners.

Challenges

Teaching profession has been neglected for decades and no dramatic changes has been made partly on account of the following widely-held beliefs:

"Anyone can teach"

"Teacher education makes no difference"

"Teachers don't work very hard," etc. (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 11)

"He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches" (Shaw, 2008, p. 4)

Despite assuming that this maxim deeply insulted educators, Shulman (2013) admitted that this philosophy underlay certain educational policies. There existed an enormous distance between what was stated as educational goals and the realities (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Shulman, 2013). Notwithstanding desired goals, less than 10% of American high school students were literate in scientific skills required by the labor market, and American students were ranked near the bottom of the international tests in math and science (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), the U.S. ranked 40th out of 70 countries and territories participating in the 2015 PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) mathematics literacy assessment. The failure of American schooling in the past was credited to the shortage of the "know-how" and teaching resources that teachers needed to bridge the gap between the classrooms and the real world (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 6). Moreover, a non-stop growing number of population have addressed another tough challenge to American education.

The United States will need to hire 2 million teachers over the next decade to meet the demands of rapidly rising enrollments, growing retirements, and attrition that can reach 30% for beginning teachers in their initial years...And they will need to be prepared to teach an increasingly diverse group of learners to every higher standard of academic achievement. (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 16)

The demand for the teaching force was bolstered by the figures reported by the National Center for Education Statistics, a subdivision of the U.S. Department of Education. The number of new teachers hired in 2011 was 241,000 while that of 2024 was projected to grow up to 375,000 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). In the academic year of 2017-2018, the U.S. system of public elementary and secondary schools employed approximately 3.2 million full-time teachers and expended as much as \$623.5 billion (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). With this excessive demand of teacher employment and the government's sizable financial investment, teacher preparation programs had the burden of training prospective teachers with preparedness and efficacy on the shoulders. Darling-Hammond (1997) defied how preservice programs should be structured and what pristine conditions in which teacher candidates were well-prepared to acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to educate the future labor force for the nation.

Perceptions of Qualified Teacher Preparation Programs

From Teacher Trainers' Perspectives

Studies from a large sample of 1,217 American faculty members in which 60 percent employed at universities or colleges more than eleven years, 42 percent employed at least sixteen years, and nearly 65 percent of whom were associate or full professors indicated that many teacher trainers held strong beliefs in their effort to produce better teachers for the nation, but their efforts were not fully recognized by the institutions (Goodlad, 1990). Other faculty members assumed that teacher students were not mature enough to perceive sophisticated educational issues and admitted to the programs with insufficient preparation.

Goodlad (1990) ranked four on a seven-point scale for overall teachers' beliefs in the high quality of preservice teacher education programs. Many faculty members believed that teacher-to-be selection processes and monitoring should be taken into serious consideration. Besides, qualified teacher programs had to assist future teachers to cope with the realistic needs expressed by students.

43 percent of faculty in flagship public universities revealed their expectations for teacher training programs to educate future teachers to uplift the society. By and large, general and specialized studies, observation skills, mentored field-based experience ought to be integrated in the undergraduate education with well-defined missions and consensus-achieved objectives.

From Teacher Candidates' Perspectives

Faez and Valeo (2012) carried out a quantitative and qualitative research study investigating the perceptions of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Teacher Education program in terms of preparedness and efficacy for their classroom practice. One-hundred-and-fifteen apprentice teachers in Canada participated in the first phase of the study: responding to online questions to express their own viewpoints on the usefulness and preparedness of the TESOL education program on a likert scale ranging from zero (i.e., "not at all prepared/effective") to ten (i.e., "extremely well prepared/effective") (Faez & Valeo, 2012, p. 457). Eight teachers amongst sixty-six volunteering teacher participants were chosen for the follow-up audiotaped interviews in person or on the phone, based on their responses to the online questionnaire at the higher end (8-10), lower end (1-3) of the scale, or showing profound differences from other participants.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, means, standard deviation, and related-measures *t* test calculating the data collated from the questionnaire displayed a dramatic increase of 1.2 point in terms of preparedness after the TESOL teacher program with statistically significant results $t(114) = -6.7, p = .000$ and a medium-to-large size effect Cohen's $d = 0.624$. Most of participants admitted that they gained preparedness after completing the education program. The sense of teacher efficacy was highly appreciated by participants as they felt well prepared for classroom management ($M = 8.2, SD = 1.7$), material selection ($M = 8.1, SD = 1.6$), lesson plan design ($M = 8.0, SD = 1.7$). However, teacher candidates' insecure feeling was aroused by teaching English as a Second Language literacy ($M = 6.1, SD = 3.0$), English for Academic Purposes ($M = 6.5, SD = 2.7$), English in foreign context ($M = 6.6, SD = 2.7$). The results suggested that teacher preparatory programs should take contextualization into serious consideration to help prospective teachers tackle teaching in various circumstances (Faez & Valeo, 2012).

Qualitative analysis was utilized to code repetitive themes or patterns recognized from transcribed interviews. Three out of six interviewees scored lower after taking the TESOL education program. Explanations for the decrease included their concern about job opportunities, limited classroom experience, lack of confidence, mismatch between what taught and what took place in the real classes, and inability to adjust the knowledge from training program to the field situations (Faez & Valeo, 2012).

According to novice teacher participants, the beneficial components of the TESOL programs were order-ranked from highest to lowest as follows: field-based experience (82/115 participants), instructors' quality (38/115), program length (i.e., 4 months) (Faez & Valeo, 2012). Practicum experience gave new teachers opportunities to enter the threshold of real-world classrooms, to try out their training knowledge in authentic situations, check whether they could adjust and "survive" the realities (Faez & Valeo, 2012, p. 464). The least useful features of the programs comprised of theory knowledge about language acquisition, linguistics, and the like. Participants proposed the application of these theories rather than the language theories themselves should be stressed in the training programs.

Findings from a study of about 3,000 survey questionnaires and more than 650 interviews indicated that teachers-to-be were confident in dealing with schooling and students after taking the teacher preparation programs (Goodlad, 1990). They claimed the usefulness of the training programs lay in all preparation courses, except foundation classes. Preservice teachers rated social foundation classes with a mean of 3.8 while their rating for student teaching was 6.7 on a seven-point scale. Goodlad (1990) rated 5.0 on a seven-point scale for students' perceptions that the education programs

made a marked difference, and 6.0 on the same scale for prospective teachers' perceptions of their abilities to teach effectively in the future classrooms.

In a two-year qualitative research study, preservice secondary teachers disclosed their concerns and struggles before and after participating in student teaching (Cooper & He, 2012). Firstly, they perceived teacher roles as both the authoritarians versus facilitators in the class, transmitting content knowledge to students, and developing students' morality. Next, participants were worried about class management, how to deliver content areas effectively, and students' varied needs. Their concerns resulted from the shortage of self-confidence, their personal interests about content knowledge versus students' subject interests, their own learning experiences versus students' learning demands, self-perception of ideal teachers and the ongoing process of teacher professional development, and the ideologies and realities of teaching (Cooper & He, 2012). These grave difficulties should be addressed into the undergraduate education. Cooper and He (2012) recommended that the vision of prospective teacher programs should be revisited and that the curriculum should deepen teacher students' content knowledge, assist preservice teachers to acquire knowledge about learners, and especially uncover the realities of teaching for better teacher preparedness.

From School Administrators' Perspectives

Cheng and Cheung (2004) attempted to seek out the perceptions of school administrations who recruited teacher students graduating from the two-year full-time Certificate of Primary Education Program (CPEP) at the Hong Kong Institute of Education as well as those of the program participants to make comparison. School principals from 180 primary schools in Hong Kong employing the CPEP graduates were invited to complete questionnaire indicating how they perceived beginning teachers' performance and important professional competencies on a five-point rating scale after hiring new teachers for six months. Apprentice teachers in corresponding schools were also asked to respond to questionnaires relating to their perceptions of their own teaching performance after taking the CPEP. The findings demonstrated a high correlation between principals' and new teachers' perception of competent teaching performance. Results from the Cronbach's reliability coefficient alpha of the questionnaires showed 0.98 and 0.97 for the principals and the beginning teachers respectively.

With respect to important teacher competency items, school administrators rated 4.69 out of 5.00 for work attitude (i.e., sense of responsibility and commitment, ability to work independently, caring for students, perseverance, professional ethics, and seeking to develop oneself professionally). As for inter-personal skills, primary school principals evaluated 4.62 for novice teachers' team work ability to build rapport with colleagues/ students/ parents/ superiors. Academic and professional competency, including the use of classroom language – Cantonese, knowledge of the subject of teaching, suitable teaching methods of the subject taught, was given a score of 4.51. Other necessary skills such as analytical and problem-solving abilities, information technology competency, Chinese Language proficiency, and English Language proficiency were assessed with scores of 4.42, 4.33, 4.26, and 4.07 respectively.

Despite satisfying with novice teachers' performance, the school principals offered some suggestions for improvising teacher education programs so that new teachers would be well-performed on job-related capacities. Firstly, concerning academic and professional competency, beginning teachers ought to pay more attention to students' interest, students' varied needs (especially those with emotional and/ or behavioral problems), general classroom teaching skills, classroom management, grading, student autonomy, developing students' problem-solving skills, and their well-rounded growth. Besides, novice teachers' work attitude such as their initiative and drive should be enhanced to work more effectively as teachers.

Correlation amongst Perceptions of Qualified Teacher Training Programs Held by Teacher Trainers, Preservice Teachers, and School Administrators

As mentioned above, there exists a dearth of research studies on competent ESL teachers and qualified ESL teacher preparation from ESL learners' perspectives. As a result, this part solely discusses the correlation among perceptions from perspectives of preservice teachers, faculty, and school administrators in general education. Archival data amalgamated from the literature body implicated several attributes to qualified teacher preparation programs. In reference to academic training, both teacher trainers and teacher candidates agreed on the need of preparing prospective teachers for more extensively excavating from the content knowledge as well as mentored field experience. Furthermore, other pedagogical components such as classroom management, teachers' knowledge of diverse learners, teachers' personal interest versus students' interests, and pedagogical skills ought to be given heavier emphasis from teacher candidates and teacher recruiters' perspectives.

Exemplars of Qualified Teacher Education Programs

Myers, Price, Anderson, and Fives (2007) proposed a teacher professional development model in the pilot study implementing the Recruiting Educators through Alternative Licensure (Project REAL) funded by the grant from Transition to Teaching. In this study, college faculty members worked in collaboration with school teachers to assist secondary prospective teachers in transition phase from novice learners to professional teachers. Participants revealed through their written responses and interviews that teaching performance required a great deal of commitment in terms of planning time, undiminished enthusiasm for content area and instruction methods, and active self-involvement. John, a novice teacher in the study, expressed in his written reflection of successful instruction as follows.

The art and profession of being a teacher is not just getting up every day and standing in front of a group of high school students. The true professional prepares for each day as if he or she will be appearing before a court, going into surgery, or walking on a stage. The art is in the performance and the professionalism is in the preparation. (Myers et al., 2007, p. 23)

Preservice teachers also realized that competent teaching was an "ongoing, open-ended learning process" for all teachers (Myers et al., 2007, p. 24). Once students showed a lack of understanding, instead of repeating the same explanation in a louder voice (which many teachers tended to act this way), teachers had to come up with different clarification or presentations in a variety of contexts and examples that connected students' schemata.

I just kept talking and talking to her [the student] about this concept they were studying in history. I finally looked in her eyes and realized she didn't have a clue about what I was trying to convey. It was then that I knew I had to talk differently, rephrase, and find something she could connect with before she would understand. (Myers et al., 2007, p. 24)

The Project REAL specified that prolonged joint mentorship with frequent feedback on student teaching positively supported prospective teachers during their transition from learners to teachers. With respect to increasing the quality of teacher preparation programs, Myers et al. (2007) stressed the significance of creating "mentoring mosaics" (i.e., a network of mentorship relationships via group discussions on websites, planned chats, electronic contacts, personal meetings, etc.), expanded field experiences, and involvement of teacher candidates in the community of academies and educators (p. 18). This mentorship support was also of imperative role in reducing the number of newly-recruited teacher turnover.

Thompson and Smith (2005) introduced a beginning teacher education program entitled The Integrative Studies Major Program that well prepared preservice teachers through numerous field

experiences and beneficial mentoring provision. Participants in this program passed or gained higher scores in the Praxis II Series tests required by the State Department of Education. The implementation of the program discussed benefits from interaction with peers and university professors for support, integrated course curriculum, participation in the parent-teacher meetings as well as drawbacks such as college course workload unconnected with real practices at school site, disqualified teacher practitioners at host school, and their unfair grading manners. Of the most important attributes to the success of the teacher preparation program was the extensive field-based experiences that teacher candidates had to work and teach over 100 hours at real schools. These intensive and deeper hands-on classroom practices were perceived as the best of the Integrative Studies Major Program as expressed in an intern's explanation: "What we learn in class we go out and use the next day. Instead of it just being teacher-tell, you use that strategy to see if it will work in your classroom" (Thompson & Smith, 2005, p. 81).

Voicing considerable concern for field-based experiences, Cooper and He (2012), Darling-Hammond (1997), Faez and Valeo (2012), Myers et al. (2007), the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996, 2016), Thompson and Smith (2005), and Zeichner (1981) recommended extending the length of field time at real-world schools for better teaching preparedness. Specifically, Darling-Hammond (1997) and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2016) suggested that internships should be extended to "multi-year induction" and "high-quality mentoring" for teacher development (p. 21). This proposal was vital in the sense that classroom practices gave teacher students a closer look at learner diversity, authentic classroom practices, effective instructions, etc. and gradually cultivated their positive dispositions and self-reflective teaching for professional development.

Nonetheless, simply expanding field-based experience, according to Zeichner (1981), was not adequate, it was the quality resulting from the internship that counted. Experiencing a campus-based seminar at the University of Wisconsin, Zeichner (1981) developed a set of ideas making practicum qualified for students' growth as teachers. First of all, teacher students had to critically examine classroom problems and educational issues. These problems were discovered and identified by the teacher candidates themselves and then viewed from multiple perspectives, usually conflicting ones, to be aware of potential effects. Secondly, preservice teachers ought to think beyond the conventional classroom practice. Rationally thinking about classroom practice, teacher students walked out of the common paradigms and started to deeply ponder the problems. Thirdly, prospective teachers had better keep record of classroom practice history and question the embedded rationales of the institution and classroom routines. Comprehension of the current status of a school would be inadequate without understanding its historical development. To illustrate, Zeichner (1981) posed the following questions:

Why was math taught every day and social studies taught once a week?

What assumptions underlay the particular ways in which students were grouped for instruction, the ways in which time and space were utilized, the ways in which certain knowledge was selected to be taught, etc.?

Why were these decisions made? (p. 13)

The last question was the most important one as it led teacher students to scrutinize the rationales underlying what was conducted as present regular schooling routines. By taking notes of what happened in the class, teacher candidates understood the interactions and the mental processes of information implicitly under particular classroom activities or techniques. Fourthly, teachers-to-be were encouraged to explore their own perceptions, biases, and assumptions to acknowledge how these might affect their classroom actions. After taking courses at teacher education institutions, new teachers entered the classes with a wealth of pre-assumptions about education. It was of important that teacher students had to explore their own beliefs as these chiefly determined their teaching behaviors. Finally, processes of teachers as social individuals should be thoroughly investigated. Classroom routines were, indeed, affected by factors that came from a much larger context than the institutions:

social interests and structures. Zeichner (1981) suggested having teacher students to read and then discuss questions about the clinical experience outcomes, what creative classroom practices were, how these experiences shaped them as teachers. The five components of the seminar should be tied together to nurture the mind habits to reflective thoughts. Moreover, mastery of inquiry abilities was necessary to help teachers-to-be to successfully take part in the campus-based experience (Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 1981).

In line with Zeichner (1981), Faez and Valeo (2012) suggested that not only the length, but also the nature and roles of field-based experience ought to be reinvestigated and renovated as an integral part of teacher preparation programs. These experiences offered the chances for new teachers to connect theory to practice, allow them to adapt their acquired skills, knowledge to diverse contexts in realities. Practicum period should be structured in a way that molded students' development as teachers. In addition, Goodlad (1990) and Faez and Valeo (2012) reminded that teacher education courses should prepare prospective teachers to participate in a wide professional community, not just a future classroom. Novice teachers ought to be aware of educational issues in the field, align themselves more to the realities of classroom and employment opportunities as teachers.

Similarly, Holmes Group (1986) advised that programs of prospective teachers had to well train teachers-to-be for the knowledge of subject area, psychology of education, pedagogy, and courses beyond the boundaries of college academic classes, producing thoughtful and reflective teachers, engaging students in learning activities in a way that students performed rather than just talked about the subject matter. Additionally, since students did not go to class with "empty" heads but prior knowledge, sometimes even misconceptions, the training programs had better encompassed teaching comprehension and skills responsive to diverse learners, abilities to create efficient tutor relationship with students, and positive teacher dispositions. Lastly but importantly, all of the aforementioned aspects had to be assimilated into the clinical experiences at various school sites so that practicing teachers could apply what was taught into the real-world classrooms.

It was of important that teacher educators became aware of and understood the difficulties above faced by teacher students so that they could systematically facilitate and support prospective teachers during their transition phase to overcome these obstacles and become "teachers." Correspondingly, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) proposed essential changes in an attempt to reduce future strenuous efforts required for teacher effectiveness. Teacher preparation education and professional development programs should be organized around suitable standards for both students and teachers. Financial support ought to be allocated for mentoring new teachers so that these apprentice teachers received constructive feedback for teaching reflections and professional development. Sustainable teacher development had to occur in collaborative planning, coaching, researching, team learning with assistance from educator communities that linked schools and universities. These activities had to become a part of day-to-day teachers' duties.

Justifiably criticized by Goodlad (1990) as neither clear missions nor coherence, teacher education programs should be restructured around standards for students' learning and teachers' teaching practices, preparing future teachers to be capable of building on students' preconceptions, dealing with these existing assumptions, and unceasingly assessing students toward the ultimate goal of profound understanding. The teacher preparedness programs had better equip prospective teachers with the skills to transfer subject matter to students' relevant domains, to develop students' metacognitive abilities, and to view themselves as learners with flexibility expertise (Bransford et al., 2000). Prospective teachers ought to demonstrate their attainment of knowledge of learners, content areas, pedagogy, and multicultural responsiveness (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Furthermore, creating the learning environment that promoted learner-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered approaches (Bransford et al., 2000), using technology in a way that fostered rather than substituted traditional instructions to learning, and mastery of collaboration skills to connect with teacher communities, professor/educator academies would accelerate the pathway to teacher professional development (Cheng and Cheung, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Faez & Valeo, 2012). Existence of pilot study at aforementioned model schools could be counted as thousands, and

even more in the future. However, without the endorsement of policies and essential resources, these demonstration classroom practices could not be spread to be implemented on nationwide scale for educational reform (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) introduced Linguistically Responsive Pedagogical Practices as a guide to frame ESL teacher training programs. According to this framework, pre-service teachers are expected to know and understand the following six essential principles (Table 1).

Table 1 Essential Understandings of Second Language Learning for Linguistically Responsive Teachers

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1. Conversational language proficiency is fundamentally different from academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1981, 2000), and it can take many more years for an ELL to become fluent in the latter than in the former (Cummins, 2008).
 2. Second language learners must have access to comprehensible input that is just beyond their current level of competence (Krashen, 1982, 2003), and they must have opportunities to produce output for meaningful purposes (Swain, 1995).
 3. Social interaction in which ELLs actively participate fosters the development of conversational and academic English (Gass, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2005).
 4. ELLs with strong native language skills are more likely to achieve parity with native-English-speaking peers than are those with weak native-language skills (Cummins, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002).
 5. A safe, welcoming classroom environment with minimal anxiety about performing in a second language is essential for ELLs to learn (Krashen, 2003; Pappamihel, 2002; Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008).
 6. Explicit attention to linguistic form and function is essential to second language learning (Gass, 1997; Schleppegrell, 2004; Swain, 1995).

**Note. ELL = English language learner.
(Lucas et al., p. 363)**

In order to become a qualified ESL teacher, pre-service teachers had better be trained to deliver differentiated instruction and scaffolds for multilinguistic and multicultural students. Differentiating teaching instructions depends on learners' prior knowledge, interests, abilities, and native language. These modifications must be implemented in a manner that capitalizes on learners' cognitive ability and build on learners' strengths. Scaffolds aim to assist English learners to obtain new learning. For effective scaffolding, teacher candidates need to familiarize themselves with learners' language background, schemata, understand language demand of the educational activities, and possess the skills to utilize appropriate scaffolding strategies to help students deal with the assigned task. Not only teacher candidates, but also teacher educators in higher education institutions have to be trained to be linguistic responsive educators to fulfil the academic needs of English learner student population.

By and large, qualified teacher training courses had to establish specific objectives, beliefs and perceptions based on updated learning theory, and arduous curricula that demanded deep comprehension from learners. It was proposed that novice teachers had to be filled with considerable apprehension of learning process, stages of mental development, pedagogy, and inquiry structures (Darling-Hammond (1997). Unsuccessful teacher programs, resulted from the disharmony of the university courses and the reality at classrooms, caused difficulties for novice teachers, their lifelong learning attitudes, and ongoing professional development as educators (Bransford et al., 2000). Additionally, in initial classes, apprentice teachers tended to adopt outmoded or classical teaching

methods instead of constructivism, student-centered approach because of the influence from the school environment (i.e., other classrooms, colleagues, etc.). For the purpose of producing effective teachers, stakeholders from teacher preparation institutions to the school administrators had to cooperate to create a “continuum” of lifelong learning opportunities for teachers to grow from novices to experts (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 205).

Regarding Shaw’s negative aphorism about teaching profession, Aristotle, holding a totally different point of view from Shaw’s, was quoted as confirming “what distinguished the man who knows from the ignorant man is an ability to teach” (as cited in Shulman, 2013, p. 4). Aristotle defined teaching career by showing the relationship between teaching and knowing. Shulman (2013), on encouraging teachers to undertake inquiry to contribute to the body of education literature review and to become members of academy communities, vigorously rejected Shaw’s viewpoint on teachers and affirmed “Those who can, do, Those who understand, teach” (Shaw, 2008, p. 4).

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