

Evidence-based Reform in Teacher Education: *Caveat Emptor**

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* A doctrine that places on buyers the burden to reasonably examine property before purchase and take responsibility for its condition. See, e.g. SEC v. Zandford, 535 U.S. 813 (2002).

Where I'm "Coming From"

- Special education teacher
 - 30 years in teacher education
 - Director of Teacher Education
 - PI: Evidence and Action in TE
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- I love and respect the people who do the work for teacher preparation... but the way the work is done is very problematic, and needs to change.

Three Big Worries...

- **That TE won't change;** the fact is that TE, as a field, has several “wicked problems” it has struggled with for years...
 - Weak collaboration and communication between universities and P-12
 - Absence of a common and concrete language of practice
 - Weak feedback systems
- I am worried that the current reform movement largely ignores these, and won't contribute to solving them

- **That TE *will* change**, in ways that will reduce teacher educators' motivation and ability to engage the layered and nuanced nature of the problems they face in preparing new teachers

- **...But my biggest worry is that BOTH these things will happen:** that TE WILL change in ways that are superficial and reactive, and WON'T change in ways that deal with its most significant problems

Our current study*: How it contributes to my worries, how it gives me cause for hope...

- 30 programs nominated as “high data use” by NCATE, AACTE, TPAC
- 16 phone interviews (sites selected from the 30 for variance in institutional mission, program size, state policy context)
- 10 site visit programs (selected from the 16 interviewed, based on strong commitment and promising practices related to data use.
- 3 follow-along cases (selected as sites of “exemplary practice”)

* McDonald & Peck (2011-2014) Evidence and Action in Teacher Education. University of Washington. (The Spencer Foundation Grant #201200045)

Follow-along Cases

- Institutional contexts
 - 1 small liberal arts college
 - 1 large state teacher prep institution
 - 1 “boutique” program in a research intensive university
- 3-4 Site visits over 2 years
 - Interviews with faculty, field supervisors, P-12 partners, students, administrators
 - Observations (faculty meetings, field seminars, classes)
 - Documents (policies, external and internal reports, curricula, assessment tools)

Findings that are worrisome...

- Even programs that are strongly committed to using outcome data for continuous program improvement are struggling to figure out how to do this.
 - This finding is consistent with research on data use across human service fields... social work, medicine, nursing
 - The “data use” problem is *systemic*... requires develop of new tools, new policies, new practices
 - Programs have almost no guidance, no models and no supports for developing practices to support data use... but they are under tremendous ***pressure*** to do so

Our data suggest that, In their haste to comply with intensifying external pressures, many programs are making problematic decisions...

- Data platforms designed primarily around external reporting requirements, rather than internal use
- Deficit/remedial orientation to program improvement, rather than strategic leveraging of strengths
- Add-on solutions rather than systemic, integrative solutions
 - more fieldwork, rather than *better* fieldwork
 - more courses in “deficiency” areas, rather than better alignment, coherence and integration of coursework
 - more data, rather than more data *use*

Core tensions and contradictions: Paradoxes of control and commitment

- You have already encountered some of these ideas in your previous conversations... I just want to put a sharp point in this, and pause to investigate the issues... because they are central to my concerns about the reform movement
 - Katie Haycock talked about the need for pressure... I agree
 - But the folks from Finland and Singapore talked about the need for autonomy... and I agree with them too
 - So let's slow down and dig here...

What do we know from research on human motivation... ?

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>

Core Dilemma:

External pressure (accountability, incentives; threats of sanction) is often needed to generate attention and engagement with a problem...

but its not necessarily good for *solving* a problem.

Back to the 3 “exemplary” cases,
looking for some light...

- Small liberal arts college
 - Program organized around a series of locally developed performance assessment gateways, as well as a state-mandated performance assessment (edTPA)
 - Strategic user-centered design process related to selecting/building a data platform
 - Regularized policies for meeting time to support collaboration between faculty, field supervisors, and cooperating teachers

- Research intensive university
 - “Everyone scores” the edTPA (PACT)
 - Work routines modified to support focused data use work: suspension of coursework and field supervision during Scoring Week
 - Distributed leadership: small communities of practice investigate problems, propose solutions

- Large public teaching university (3000 ed majors)
 - “Squishy pilots” supported by the Dean’s office
 - post-hoc “drill down” analyses of VAM data
 - strategic supports for moving data-based program improvement work into publication

The Thread that Connects...

Inquiry vs. Compliance

What all of these programs share... is a focus on building and sustaining a culture of “inquiry”—They are strategic, and highly effective, at mobilizing the motivational dynamics of autonomy, mastery and purpose... to engage people in responding creatively and energetically to the pressures for change...

So where does that leave us....

- How can we conceptualize the relationship between autonomy and accountability in a way that helps us improve teacher education programs?

A visual metaphor...



A developmental metaphor...

- ...learning to think about two things at once...

Its time for us to develop a more *relational* way thinking about the paradoxes of autonomy and accountability in teacher education.

Some concrete strategies for improving TE outcomes:

- 1) Build strong organizational supports for *inquiry-oriented* data use
- 2) Strengthen the *informational quality* of feedback systems
 - “drill down” analyses of value-added measures
 - End of program performance assessments (edTPA)
 - R&R seminars
- 3) Strengthen *relationships*
 - with P-12
 - With community members

Thank you for inviting my comments