Teacher Education Reform Initiatives and Special Education:

Convergence, Divergence, and Missed Opportunities

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Teacher education as a field of study has grown steadily since the press for an identifiable knowledge base first appeared in the 1970s. Almost simultaneously, calls for the reform of teacher education abounded and have, for over 40 years, existed alongside the development of research in teacher education. Accompanying the earliest stage of research -- which occurred from the 1950s to the 1980s (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005, 2008) -- was the advent of a national commitment to educating students with disabilities, which culminated in the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Yet these longstanding teacher education reform agendas have, for the most part, tended to avoid addressing the issue of how to prepare teachers to work with students who have disabilities. Further, the field of special education itself has not made it a high priority to attend to how developments in teacher education might apply to the preparation of both general and special education teachers for working with students who have disabilities. Nor, perhaps due to its history of having a research base rooted in medicine and psychology (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely, & Danielson, 2010), did special education develop its own tradition of research in teacher education.

In 1983, the landmark education document, *A Nation at Risk*, rattled the teacher education community with its call for fundamental educational reform, and several major teacher education reform reports and proposals appeared subsequent to its publication. Occasional discussion regarding the absence of special education in these reform reports appeared in the literature (e.g., Pugach, 1987; Pugach & Sapon-Shevin, 1987; Sapon-Shevin, 1990), but in general the distance has been wide. In one of the only analyses that compared major teacher education reform proposals that appeared between 1986 and 1998, Valli and Rennert-Ariev
(2000) examined components of nine reform reports in relation to components suggested in the two reports of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996, 1997). Their findings revealed a low level of agreement across reports with regard to preparing teachers to work with students with disabilities. In contrast, high levels of agreement were identified across reform proposals for issues such as the importance of disciplinary knowledge and the development of performance assessments. Since the Valli and Rennert-Ariev (2000) study, there has not been a review of teacher education reforms that features special education as a consideration, and especially not as a major consideration.

It is that gap we aim to address in this paper. Our goal is to offer practitioners of teacher education, policy makers, and teacher education researchers some new perspectives on teacher education reform in terms of its implications for the current and urgent press for teacher education efforts -- wherever they may take place -- to prepare all teachers for working effectively with students with disabilities. The analysis we offer first looks closely at teacher education reform documents to identify where there have been implicit connections—typically not acted upon—between the preparation of general and special education teachers for working with students with disabilities. We expand on Valli and Rennert-Ariev’s (2000) work by starting with reforms that occurred prior to 1983, and also by including reform efforts that have been promulgated from within special education.

We have framed the historical analysis of major reform initiatives in teacher education in terms of convergence, divergence, and missed opportunities between general and special teacher education. In so doing, we first examine the influence of these reforms on general and special education teacher preparation and, next, the ways in which these two fields intersect around reform initiatives. We consider this approach important for several reasons. First, reform
initiatives have served to produce change in national and state policies (e.g., national accreditation and state requirement for licensure), all of which play significant roles in the content and process of teacher preparation across general and special education alike. Next, the historical trajectories of teacher preparation in general and special education have differed substantially and the extent to which the fields intersect around reform initiatives is not fully understood. Understanding these intersections offers great potential for guiding today’s redesign of teacher preparation to meet the goal of inclusive education. Finally, we use this historical analysis as a departure point, anchored within the unprecedented scrutiny that teacher education is now experiencing, to offer a set of five recommendations to consider in preparing the next generation of special and general education teachers, whose roles will be carried out in schools where inclusive practice is the norm. We view the current turbulent times in which teacher education finds itself as an opportunity for general and special education to engage in robust collaborative program restructuring in ways that were often missed historically.

**Guiding Assumptions**

Three assumptions have guided how we approach and discuss teacher education reforms, the intersections between general and special education, and recommendations for the collaborative reform of teacher preparation. These assumptions help clarify the relationship between policy, practice and research. They are that: (1) general and special education teachers are both responsible for teaching students with disabilities; (2) teacher education reform is influenced both by research on the preparation of teachers and research on teaching; and (3) the preparation of teachers occurs along a continuum that extends from the preservice years into experienced teaching.
General and Special Education Teachers Are Both Responsible for Teaching Students with Disabilities

The expectation for shared responsibility between general and special education teachers has been part of the discourse in public education and in teacher education since 1975, when IDEA was first implemented. The most recent data reported by the federally funded Technical Assistance Coordination Center indicate that in 2011, 94.9% of students with disabilities, ages six through 21, were educated in general education classrooms for some portion of the school day. Further, 61% of students in special education spent 80% or more of their time in general education classrooms. As such, the general education teacher is most often the teacher of record for students with disabilities and may be solely responsible for the instruction of all the students in the classroom. Whether general education teachers are given primary responsibility for students so identified, and/or whether they work collaboratively with a special education teacher, their preparation for working with students with disabilities is as essential as that of the special education teacher – especially when about 80% of general education teachers report feeling challenged or very challenged in addressing the needs of the diversity of students in their classrooms (Harris Interactive, 2013) and also report that it is important to share responsibility among teachers for student achievement (Harris Interactive, 2010). Clearly the roles of both general and special education teachers have changed in relation to teaching students with disabilities, and teacher education programs must address these changing roles.

Teacher Education Reform Is Influenced Both by Research on the Preparation of Teachers and Research on Teaching

The relatively short history of teacher education as a profession is underscored by the similarly short history of the research base that supports how teacher education is carried out.
But the improvement of teacher education is not dependent on research on teacher education alone. It is also intimately tied to research on teaching, which informs what all teachers need to be able to do when instructing students and, in addition, what special education teachers need to be able to do instructionally to support students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum. In addition, special education teachers need to have specific knowledge of the academic curriculum, as well as instructional strategies that might be needed for students who have more significant disabilities. Therefore, a second assumption guiding this paper is that to achieve the kind of reform in teacher education that takes into account the needs of all students, those who have disabilities among them, teacher educators and policymakers will need to draw on the full complement of research -- both in teacher education and teaching -- that informs preparation programs.

Research on teacher education has primarily been conducted by general educators, with a smaller number of special educators engaged in conducting such research. Both general education and special education have strong traditions of research on teaching, but the two have diverged historically in how research on classroom instruction has been conceptualized and investigated, and often in the language used to describe classroom instruction. While research on instruction has begun to converge as teams of general and special educators work more closely, most often in the content areas (e.g., Minnesota Center for Reading Research [www.cehd.umn.edu/reading]), historically, special education has focused on interventions and strategies that were directed to specific groups of students with disabilities and were rarely part of general education’s research agenda. Because the research traditions of the two fields have not often intersected, it will be critical in the project of rethinking teacher education to bring
these communities of different research bases and traditions in teaching and teacher education together in substantive and continuous ways.

**The Preparation of Teachers Occurs Along a Continuum that Extends from the Preservice Years into Experienced Teaching**

Equally important in relationship to the redesign of teacher education is the reciprocal improvement of candidates for teacher education and the experienced teachers who serve as their mentors and guides. Research has demonstrated that teacher learning takes place at all stages of a career, from when novice teachers first begin their preparation into and throughout their advanced years of teaching. This progression has often been described as occurring along a continuum in three stages, from preservice preparation to induction/mentoring to continuing professional development (e.g., McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008; Wise, 1995; Wise & Leibbrand, 2001). Therefore, a third guiding assumption of this paper is the critical role that teacher educators play in partnership with PK-12 schools, specifically in relationship to practicing teachers' participation in teacher education as an opportunity for their ongoing professional development and learning—one that can take place as part of the process of teacher education. In other words, as teacher educators work to create new approaches to clinical preparation to support preparing teachers for working with students who have disabilities, engaging practicing teachers from general and special education in the complex and high level activity of preparing novices becomes a critical opportunity for their own advanced learning. This approach makes the redesign of teacher education critical across the careers of all teachers, rather than viewing the preparation of new teachers as “just” the purview of teacher education.

**Identifying and Organizing Reforms in Teacher Education**
With these assumptions in mind, we analyzed major reform efforts in teacher education to shed light on what they mean for the current and pressing efforts to redesign general and special teacher education in light of the persistent low levels of achievement of students with disabilities. For purposes of this analysis, we define a teacher education reform as a movement or specific initiative intended to improve the preparation of teachers; the reform itself, or the components comprising the reform initiative, have and continue to be studied and analyzed in teacher education literature. To identify a preliminary list of key teacher education reforms, we first scanned major handbooks and handbook-like publications in teacher education: (a) the three handbooks of research on teacher education produced by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) -- Houston, Haberman, and Sikula, (1990); Sikula, Buttery, and Guyton (1996); Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, and Demers (2008), (b) the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) sponsored handbook edited by Murray, The Teacher Educator’s Handbook: Building a Knowledge Base for the Preparation of Teachers (1996), (c) the teacher education study panel report produced by AERA, edited by Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005), and (d) Darling-Hammond and Bransford’s (2005) book on defining what teachers should know and be able to do, Preparing Teachers for a Changing World. To this list of reforms we added two initiatives - the Dean’s Grants and 325T Projects - that we judged to be teacher education reforms and that were initiated specifically from within special education.

Two criteria guided our more extensive search of the literature to determine whether a movement/initiative would be included as a major reform and whether it had a major impact on teacher education. We considered an initiative to be a reform if it was documented in and identified regularly in major literature sources (e.g., handbooks, special issues of journals) in teacher education. We defined evidence of the impact of a reform, as well as its lasting influence,
as demonstrated by the large quantity of related research reviewed and reported in literature, as well as by related policies that grew from the reform.

**Establishing Initiatives as Major Reforms**

In addition to drawing on major handbooks in teacher education as the primary sources to document the existence of major reforms, we also searched data bases and journals in both general and special education, including ERIC, Google Scholar, and the following journals: *American Educational Research Journal, American Journal of Education, Education Policy Analysis Archives, Educational Administration Quarterly, Educational Horizons, Educational Researcher, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Education Policy Analysis Archives, Educational Researcher, The Elementary School Journal, Harvard Educational Review, International Journal of Educational Management, Intervention in School and Clinic, Journal of Special Education, Journal of Teacher Education, Leadership and Policy in Schools, Peabody Journal of Education, Review of Educational Research, Review of Research in Education, Teacher Education and Practice, Teacher Education and Special Education, Teacher Education Quarterly, The Teacher Educator, Teachers College Record, Teachers and Teaching, Teaching and Teacher Education, Theory into Practice, and Urban Education.* Additionally, we used ancestry searching and searches of web sites of professional organizations (e.g., American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE]) and selected universities where a reform initiative may have been or is currently located.

**Evidence of the Impact of Reforms**

To judge the impact of a teacher education reform, we considered both the quantity of research that was focused on components comprising the reform (e.g., university-school partnerships), as well as policies enacted at state (e.g., state requirements for clinical preparation
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in teacher education) and national levels (e.g., multicultural education standard included by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], now the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP]) that appeared to be derived from or influenced by the reform initiative. For the components that comprised a reform, we restricted our search to reviews of research on these topics, using the ERIC and EBSCOHost databases, and used Google Scholar to locate resources beyond those acquired through electronic and hand searches of journals. Major terms used in the search were: teacher education reform, special education teacher education reform, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Highly Qualified Teacher, induction, professional development, evidence based practices, accountability, traditional certification, alternative certification, dual-certification, teacher quality, response to intervention, mentoring, mentor-based induction, Teachers for a New Era, 325T Program, Dean’s Grant Projects, content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, clinical practices, partnerships with schools, university partnerships, faculty collaboration, collaboration models, multicultural teacher education, Holmes Group, Regular Education Initiative. Hand searches were conducted of the following journals in general education and special education: Exceptional Children, Harvard Educational Review, Journal of Teacher Education, Remedial and Special Education, Review of Educational Research, Teacher Education and Special Education, Teachers College Record, and Teaching and Teacher Education. While the existence of the research reviews does not necessarily demonstrate the quality of the research that was conducted, it does indicate the level of research activity that took place, and particularly, the extent to which the quantity and quality of research in an area of teacher education were examined seriously. These same sources were used as primary references to document the linkages between research activity and policies that grew from or alongside this activity.
This work revealed numerous references to stages, or phases, in teacher education reform, often aligned within a specific decade, beginning in the 1970’s when there was a press to identify a common core of knowledge and skills that all teachers need in order to enter the profession. In the 1980’s, a second, highly active stage of reform took place, with groups issuing numerous reports to challenge the field, as well as initiating reform activities. The third stage, the 1990’s, was marked by a growing focus on accountability expectations in teacher education and the last, the 2000’s, is firmly rooted in these accountability expectations. Table 1, which is organized by stages, summarizes the reform movements/initiatives by (a) name, (b) major components comprising the movement, (c) whether the reform was initiated by general or special education, and (d) documentation for establishing the movement or initiative as a major reform and the evidence of its impact. Although key initiatives are situated within a specific decade, the development and continuation of a reform may persist into subsequent decades; evidence of the impact of a reform initiative, and publications reflecting work accomplished in a particular decade, may appear in a later one.

The Influence of Major Reform Initiatives on Restructuring Teacher Preparation: Connections between Special and General Education

In this section we describe major reform movements and initiatives by stages, and discuss missed and potential opportunities for intersections between general and special education. To provide an understanding of teacher education reforms during a particular time period, whether the reforms were broad-based or specialized, we begin each section with a general description of the reform movements, then illustrate the evidence for establishing an initiative as a reform and the impact of these reforms on research and teacher education policy.

Stage 1: The Need for a Knowledge Base (1970-1979)
During the 1970s, teacher education was still in the early stages of its development as a field. Firmly establishing this emerging field as a profession required a knowledge base, defined broadly as “that body of knowledge that people should possess and ultimately be able to apply in order to begin teaching” (Gardner, 1989, p. xi). Although a core beginning teacher knowledge base should be common to all teacher education programs, the knowledge base understandably changes and grows over time as research accumulates. The knowledge base movement, broad in its base and emanating predominantly from general teacher education scholars, yielded compendia of knowledge and skills for use by teacher preparation programs. As the knowledge base grew and expanded, these compilations (e.g., Gideonse, 1989; Smith, 1983) were published in subsequent time periods. One such book was edited by a special educator, Maynard Reynolds (1989), and focused on the core knowledge and skills needed by every beginning teacher. Included was a chapter devoted to students with disabilities that addressed not only students in special education, but also students in poverty, migrant children, bilingual children, and abused and neglected children—representing an early understanding of the range of student diversity for which teachers would need to be prepared.

As these knowledge base compendia were assembled, research on teacher education was growing and beginning to support specific components of the knowledge base. Reviews of available research reflecting this activity began to appear following the 1970s -- in journals (e.g., Koehler, 1985), reports (e.g., Allen, 2003), and handbooks (e.g., Houston, Haberman, & Sikula, 1990), providing evidence of the impact of an identifiable knowledge base. Impact was also demonstrated by the growing number of state policies requiring specifically mandated skills as part of certification and/or state teacher education program approval (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008). In addition, NCATE, at the time the only body for national accreditation of
teacher education, periodically revised its standards to include knowledge and skills comprising
the most current knowledge base (Christensen, 1996; Tom & Valli, 1990).

Although special education as a field was not an active part of these earliest attempts in
general education to define a knowledge base for teacher education, the Office of Special
Education Programs (then the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped) launched the Dean’s
Grant Projects (DGPs) in 1974; these were teacher education reform projects aimed at supporting
the preservice preparation of general education teachers to work with students with disabilities.
DGPs, lasting until 1982, were awarded to a total of 260 preservice programs in 45 states
(Pugach, Blanton, Mickelson, & Kleinhammer-Tramill, 2013). This activity may have been
influential in the inclusion of a standard on special education in revisions to the NCATE
standards in 1982 (Lilly, 1983). State policies were also likely influenced as states began to
mandate courses in special education for all teachers (Patton & Braithwaite, 1980).

**Intersection of special and general teacher education.** Few overt intersections
between reform in general and special teacher education were acknowledged or appeared during
this time period. However, the work of the DGP’s marked one often overlooked turning point in
teacher education, as these projects began to pull some special educators into early work with the
general education preservice curriculum and with their general education teacher education
counterparts (Pugach et al., 2013). The grants were awarded directly to deans, most of whom did
not have special education background, and some overlap occurred between general and special
education as special educators were often called upon to support the work of Dean’s offices.
Further, as part of the ongoing DGP activities, specific lists of competencies appropriate for
general education teachers to master for teaching students with disabilities were often developed
by individual projects, reflecting the work of local teams of general and special educators, and
shared through the national technical assistance project for the DGPs, the National Support Systems Project (Pugach et al., 2013).

Simultaneously, however, just as starting to define a knowledge base was prominent in general teacher education, special education teacher education curricula remained largely independent of general education and drew primarily on lists of their own competencies (York and Reynolds, 1996), most often made available by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Related, the technical assistance arm of the DPGs was led by Maynard Reynolds who played a major role in trying to create linkages between general and special educators in teacher education (Pugach et al., 2013). His work in the DPGs foreshadowed the development of standards, rather than competencies, in relationship to preparing all teachers to work with students with disabilities (Pugach, 2005).

But not until the next decade was the need for a formal knowledge base for teacher education in special education identified specifically. For example, Reynolds (1990) proposed a knowledge base for special education programs in the first Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, but consistent with his earlier work on the DPGs, noted that “it is surely not unique to the teaching of handicapped students” (p. 426). This suggested that some level of a shared knowledge base was desirable. In the second Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, York and Reynolds (1996) pointed to a special issue of Teacher Education and Special Education in 1992 (Volume 15 [2]) as an early instance of a focus on the issue of a knowledge base. That same year, Reynolds, Wang, and Walberg (1992) concluded that there were similarities in the knowledge bases of special and general education, noting that preparation “could be done mainly in a single or combined program” (p. 6). Despite this early interest in establishing a knowledge base with a strong shared component, within special education the
competency approach dominated, diminishing potential interest in a shared knowledge base as suggested early on by Reynolds and his colleagues, effectively making them outliers in their views and limiting the potential for shared work on a common knowledge base at that time. Nevertheless, Reynolds was a commanding voice in speaking about the overlap between the knowledge bases in general and special teacher education, and later edited a book sponsored by AACTE, in 1989, on the beginning teacher knowledge base for all teachers. His pioneering efforts, coupled with opportunities for collaboration provided through eight years of funded DGPs, were missed opportunities as each field continued to pursue different priorities and developed discourses and practices independent of one another other.

Another source of divergence took place with respect to a social justice agenda for teacher education. Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005) argue that social justice only began to be a major agenda for teacher education in the 1990’s. Within special education, however, the initial push for a free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities in the 1970’s was viewed as a social justice commitment to the redistribution of resources to achieve equity (North, 2008)—but limited to a concern for students with disabilities that did not substantially intersect with the full spectrum of social justice concerns across multiple social markers of identity. However, during this early period, at least some of the discourse around preparing general education teachers for their work with students with disabilities emanating from the Dean’s Grants explicitly reflected a concern with the larger civil rights agenda (e.g., Corrigan, 1978; Kennedy, 1978). However, in general, special education as an equity issue appeared to be viewed separately from the larger social justice agenda that would emerge in general teacher education, and this early isolation seemed consistent with the division between fields that was set as a
pattern. The missed opportunity to consistently explore the relationship among social justice, diversity, and special education has continued (Pugach, Blanton, & Florian, 2012).

What else might have accounted for the absence of greater interaction across general and special education preservice at this stage of reform? As a new player with substantial clout post IDEA in 1975, special education’s strong advocacy focus during these initial modern reform efforts may have been one reason for missed opportunities between general and special education, in that efforts were focused on establishing special education as a modern field in and of itself—albeit in the context of a commitment to inclusive practice. The absence of greater interaction at the start seemed to lay the groundwork for a division between general and special teacher education, one that persists today. Further, despite their focus on the preparation of general education teachers, the DGPs seemed to be perceived mainly as special education reform projects (Pugach et al., 2013). Finally, although practices such as states requiring a course in special education for novice general education teachers began to take hold during this early stage of reform (Patton & Braithwaite, 1980, 1990), and was appropriately viewed as progress, this did not lead to collaboration across program components in general and special education programs.

**Stage 2: The Rapid Expansion of Reform in Teacher Education (1980-1989)**

The release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, while not itself a teacher education reform document, triggered what many would call the highest level of reform activity seen in the history of teacher education (Sikula, 1990). Subsequent to this report, numerous groups (e.g., national foundations, education deans) assembled and produced reports and recommendations for addressing the challenges and potential reform of teacher education. Two broad-based movements dominated teacher education reform during the 1980’s: standards-based teacher education and multicultural education. Additionally, several new teacher education groups were
created and began initiatives that were more specialized in scope, for example, partnerships between teacher preparation programs and PK-12 schools.

Growing from the prior years of work to define a knowledge base, the standards-based movement was set firmly in motion when the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) recommended rigorous national standards for teachers (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008), resulting in the development of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in 1987. Only in the next stage of reform, in 1992, were standards for beginning teachers developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers through its landmark project, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). Together these two projects, derived from the expanding knowledge base work already underway in the prior period, began to set expectations for what beginning and accomplished teachers should know and be able to do at these stages of their careers.

The impact of national teacher education standards played out quickly in state policy, as some states supported practicing teachers to become national board certified through NBPTS and some states later modeled the state’s standards for teacher education program approval on the INTASC standards (Gollnick, 2008). Concurrently, NCATE’s standards were revised in the 1980’s. In addition, several specialty professional organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, were early participants in the activity to develop standards for those professional fields (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008). As the standards-based movement grew, the ways standards were defined and used expanded, with differences by type (e.g., content, performance), purpose (e.g., accreditation, recruitment), and the role that these expectations could play (e.g., political) (Roth, 1996). Although the Council for Exceptional Children produced books of organized knowledge and skills for the profession (Heller &
Ridenhour, 1983), these were extensive listings of competencies, rather than the broader based standards being developed in teacher education (Blanton, 1992; York & Reynolds, 1996). Only much later, in 2001, did the CEC standards revision process include an explicit alignment with the INTASC standards (CEC Standards, 2001).

The multiple movements that began in the 1950’s and 1960’s had for some time placed pressure on the education community to ensure that teachers develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach diverse learners in schools (Grant & Agosto, 2008; Howard & Aleman, 2008). Further, teacher educators were faced with the task of preparing predominately White teachers for an increasingly diverse group of students; culturally diverse students were becoming a majority in many regions of the country, especially in the nation’s largest public school districts (Villegas, 2008). From this pressure, the multicultural education movement emerged in the 1980’s and was instrumental in expanding the knowledge base for teachers, and 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). The impact of multicultural education reforms is evidenced by the research and historical reviews in teacher education handbooks and by the multiple reviews of research on multicultural education that we identified (e.g., Banks, 1998, 2004; Hollins & Guzman, 2005). At the turn of the decade, in 1979, NCATE included a multicultural standard and emphasized cultural diversity (Gollnick, 2008; Hidalgo, Chavez-Chavez, & Ramege, 1996; Villegas, 2008).

Also in the 1980’s, a number of groups assembled to support specialized teacher education reform agendas, chief among them the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), the Holmes Group, Project 30 Alliance, The Renaissance Group, and the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. Although each group pressed for its own reform issues,
as shown in Table 1, two themes stand out across four of the groups (NNER, Holmes, Project 30 Alliance, The Renaissance Group) as contributing to improved teacher preparation: (a) university/school partnerships, and (b) collaboration with Arts and Sciences faculty/subject matter knowledge. Other issues addressed in reports included admission standards (NNER), technology (The Renaissance Group), induction (Carnegie Forum), and accountability (The Renaissance Group). Collaborating with Arts and Sciences faculty and the growing emphasis on subject matter knowledge represented the initiation of a durable period of concern for teachers to possess strong knowledge of the subjects they teach (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008). However, groups whose primary concern lay with issues such as subject matter knowledge (e.g., Project 30 Alliance), or reform in general (e.g., The Renaissance Group), also raised issues about the importance of helping teachers develop cultural perspectives and the importance of field placements that provided experiences with diverse students, in response to the multicultural movement. In addition, the question of whether a teacher’s preparation should occur in five year programs or at the graduate level was addressed by two groups – the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force – and represented a concern that was expressed in earlier reports such as *Educating a Profession* in 1976 (as cited in Arends & Winitzky, 1996).

**Intersection of special and general education.** This phase of teacher education reform was characterized less by intersections and more by missed opportunities and missteps in terms of the relationship between special and general preservice education emanating from reform documents, agendas, and actions. For example, although standards documents included reference to working with diverse student populations, which may assume including students with disabilities, explicit connections to special education were only infrequently drawn. This likely helped maintain the traditional division between special and general education. Next, while the
field of multicultural education was emerging, special education as a marker of student diversity was only rarely viewed explicitly in practice as a major area of interest across teacher education programs. Although multicultural authors such as Sleeter and Grant (1988) anticipated this issue and included disability as a fundamental issue in the first edition of *Making Choices for Multicultural Education*, in practice discussions of special education were typically limited to the problem of overrepresentation of students of color in special education. While this issue clearly needed to be foregrounded, and still does, it did not substitute for a more integrated view of the relationship between student diversity and special education across the preservice curriculum, and seemed to set a pattern of separation that continues to need attention today (Pugach et al., 2012).

The emergence of the multicultural education movement in the 1980’s, with its emphasis on equity and social justice, provided what might have been an opportune time for general and special education teacher educators to coalesce around a common priority – equity in education. Multicultural teacher educators and special educators in teacher education had an opportunity to come together to influence the larger standards-movement of the time period and provide leadership for addressing the rapidly changing and multifaceted landscape of diversity in PK-12 schools. Likely because each field was still growing and emerging, however, this potential joint opportunity was minimized. Artiles and Trent (1997) argued that the isolation of special educators prevented them from benefiting from the emerging knowledge base in general education, especially in regards to multicultural education.

When specialty reform groups like Project 30 took on the question of the role of the arts and sciences in teacher preparation, these projects were primarily focused on the preparation of general education teachers. The issue of arts and sciences preparation for special education
teachers did not become a prominent issue until much later, when the 2004 reauthorization of
IDEA was aligned with the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) mandate associated with NCLB.
Finally, when substantial school-university partnership reform efforts were implemented through
Professional Development Schools (PDS) as conceptualized by the Holmes Group (1986),
considerations for how PDSs related to the preparation of special education teachers were not
well developed (Yssel, Koch, & Merbler, 2002). In some instances special education felt the
need to develop their own PDS sites, further cementing the distance between reforms in the two
fields. Nevertheless, in very small numbers, some teacher education programs did eventually
develop joint PDS ventures (Epanchin & Wooley-Brown, 1993; Paul, Duchnowski, & Danforth,
1993), but that did not appear to be the norm.

Also during this time period, a substantial special section of an issue of the journal
Exceptional Children was devoted to the absence of special education in the early reform reports
and proposals (Hagerty & Abramson, 1987; Lilly, 1987; Pugach & Sapon-Shevin, 1987; Sapon-
Shevin, 1987), providing multiple analyses of where convergences might exist, where major
challenges lay, and what might need to occur to move forward in some kind of related fashion. In
addition, within the Holmes Group, a group of special educators who were actively involved in
that reform effort began to raise concerns about the absence of explicit attention to special
education within the Holmes Group’s proposals (Sapon-Shevin, 1990). Also at that time, Pugach
(1988) argued that in maintaining the structural division, the very existence of special education
for students with mild disabilities might serve as a deterrent to a developing a shared agenda of
teacher education reform. Related, although the NNER began during this stage, in 1986, it was
not until 2002 that a publication emanating from the NNER (Smith & Edelen-Smith, 2002)
addressed issues of the relationship between teacher education reform in general and special education.

Within special education itself, however, one development that did set in motion a conversation about the relationship between special and general education that had implications for teacher education reform was The Regular Education Initiative (REI) (Will, 1986). This proposal, prepared by Madeleine Will, then Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, focused on the need for including students with disabilities in general education classrooms as special education policy. The REI led to a flood of debates in special education, pitting those who supported such an initiative against those who saw it as harming services for students with disabilities. Although initially focused on practice in PK-12 schools, this initiative quickly led to debates within special education teacher education, as evidenced by the Teacher Education Division of CEC putting forth a position statement about the impact of REI on teacher education (A Statement by the Teacher, 1986), numerous articles published in special education journals (e.g., Stainback & Stainback, 1987) as well as in general education journals (e.g., Hinders, 1995; Swartz, Hidalgo, & Hays, 1991-92), and at least one examination of the extent to which the REI influenced personnel preparation proposals submitted by special educators (e.g., Korinek & Laycock, 1988). However, these discussions were primarily internal to special education and were largely separate from discussions regarding the reform of teacher education in general. Clearly, the question of where students with disabilities would be educated would continue to have serious implications for the preparation of teachers—despite the fact that reforms in general teacher education did not take up this issue explicitly.

In general, special educators seemed absent from the table in playing any major role in these specialized reform groups that came together around large issues like school-university
partnerships and subject-matter knowledge. Special education seemed largely untouched by these conversations at their inception in the 1980’s. And although there was certainly some overlap in terms of the emerging presence of multicultural education and the issue of equity for students with disabilities, a strong partnership never emerged.

**Stage 3: The Turn to Accountability in Teacher Education (1990-1999)**

The accountability movement in teacher education was operationalized early on in the 1990’s as a result of many states implementing student and teacher standards and the challenge of how to measure whether these standards were attained. In addition, the first beginning teacher standards from INTASC appeared in 1992, further supporting a framework for accountability in teacher education. A second national accreditation body for teacher education, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), also emerged during this time period and focused exclusively on output standards (Wilson & Youngs, 2005).

The move to a focus on accountability both for PK-12 schools and for teacher education programs emerged full force as a result of amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1994 and amendments to the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1992 and 1998 (Imig & Imig, 2008; Wilson & Youngs, 2005). Through ESEA and HEA, the federal government made it clear that states would use student outcome data to evaluate teacher performance. Reports were also published showing that states implementing reform initiatives that focused on teacher quality (e.g., rigorous teacher education requirements focused on both a content major plus pedagogy) produced the highest student achievement (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1999). The 1997 reauthorization of the IDEA emphasized access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities, foreshadowing the growing pressure on
teacher education with regard to teachers’ content knowledge, and increasingly, their pedagogical content knowledge (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Shulman, 1986).

The push for accountability was accompanied by two competing agendas: regulation and deregulation (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). As federal regulations on teacher education--and subsequent regulations in states--grew as a result of ESEA and HEA, as well as the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, traditional teacher education programs were faced with a number of external controls, both for what they should include in programs and for how they would report the impact of their graduates’ teaching on students’ achievement. This regulation agenda affected many programs -- general and special education alike -- and although teacher education’s accountability expectations were clear for reporting data on the program’s impact on K-12 student learning, how these data would apply to students with disabilities was unclear during this period. However, the regulatory groundwork was laid as a result of IDEA’s 1997 revisions requiring student with disabilities to have access to the general education curriculum, and expanded with the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA and its focus on special education teachers, alongside general education teachers, needing to demonstrate content knowledge.

As regulations were growing tighter on traditional teacher education programs, the concurrent agenda to deregulate the teacher education enterprise itself was taking place. Cochran-Smith (2001) and Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005) describe the deregulation agenda as growing from a concern that too many persons were kept from the profession by weak teacher education programs and certification requirements. This deregulation agenda applied across general and special education, leading to the development of alternative certification programs for both.
Similar to the 1980’s, in the 1990’s, new groups assembled that were focused on teacher education reform and to push key interests in teacher education; these groups continued to produce reports to define their goals. One of the most influential, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF), continued the press for high standards and suggested that all teacher preparation programs obtain national accreditation. NCTAF’s two main reports, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future* (1996) and *Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching* (1997), also suggested building teacher preparation on Arts and Sciences degrees. One significant impact of the NCTAF reports is that they summarized empirical evidence for the importance of teachers in their students’ achievement, adding to the strongly emerging emphasis in federal laws to connect teacher performance to student outcomes (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Two additional initiatives during this stage, the Urban Network for the Improvement of Teacher Education (UNITE) and the BellSouth Initiative, emphasized and expanded ongoing reforms initiated by prior groups (e.g., UNITE’s focus on university and school partnerships) and reforms not yet receiving specialized focus (e.g., BellSouth’s emphasis on teachers’ technology use). As a network of urban schools and colleges of education, UNITE underscored the need to embrace close university and P-12 school partnerships to reform teacher preparation, specifically in urban and inner city communities (Howey, 1996, 1999). Universities in the UNITE network worked closely with local school districts to demonstrate the importance of such partnerships in the recruitment and retention of teachers for urban settings. The BellSouth Foundation was the first to showcase technology as critical to the reform of teacher education for future generations.

**Intersection of special and general education.** With accountability for student learning at the forefront of reform considerations during this stage, there was a great deal of potential to
draw on special education. For example, special education had a long history of using curriculum-based assessments to measure student progress as evidence of teachers’ instructional effectiveness (Deno, 2003). The history of curriculum-based measurement was in many ways a natural fit for collaboration between special and general preservice education. This was especially relevant considering that these skills were routinely included in, and viewed as important for the preparation of teachers in special education (Greenwood & Maheady, 1997). However, this link was not made as a part of reform activity—perhaps because few general teacher education faculty were aware of the depth of curriculum-based assessment practice within preservice special education. Yet a shared agenda was not developed, despite the prominent focus on the need for teachers to engage in monitoring student progress, likely a function of how deep the separation between the two actually was.

Collaboration among professionals also appeared as important in both the INTASC and National Board for Professional Teaching standards (Pugach, 2005). Further, collaboration both among schools and universities and general and special education preservice programs was noted in a review of selected literature on teacher education as being related to successful teacher education reform (Lindsey & Strawderman, 1995). However, despite its relevance across the board in terms of how school professionals interact, and how school professionals interact with families, it seemed to have special relevance in these documents for preparing general and special education teachers to work together.

The importance of collaboration between general and special educators was written about extensively within special education during the 1990’s (e.g., Pugach, 1992; Sindelar, Pugach, Grifin, & Seidl, 1995; Winn & Blanton, 1997), related both to practice and to teacher
preparation. As part of a series on special education in an era of school reform, a report by Hardman, McDonald, and Welch (1998) noted:

The reality is that neither general nor special education alone has the capacity to respond to the growing diversity in the schools that includes students with disabilities, children from diverse backgrounds, and students who are at-risk of school failure. Collaboration is a key to raising expectations and increasing the performance of all students. (p. 10)

Collaboration across general and special teacher education became a focus for the Teacher Education Division of CEC during this stage, when the organization implemented a strand (i.e., The Forum) in its annual conference for discussions related to how developments in general teacher education could be connected to teacher education in special education. At the same time, a book edited by Blanton, Griffin, Winn, and Pugach (1997), Teacher Education in Transition: Collaborative Programs to Prepare General and Special Educators, described the development of several early university level adopters of collaborative teacher education, spread geographically across the United States, in the context of the larger reform agenda in teacher education. Many of these chapters were co-authored by general and special educators in teacher education, illustrating ways such relationships could evolve, although some may have moved forward because a handful of states required a general education license before a special education license was awarded. Yet despite the tentative movement toward some form of joint practice, the distance between an organic rethinking of teacher education and starting to put together isolated aspects of programs was still quite wide, and it was already many years into modern teacher education reform that these fledgling developments first began taking hold. The modal practice for including special education continued to be the requirement of a course in special education for general education teacher candidates (Voltz, 2003).
Despite the efforts on the part of teacher educators in both general and special education, these activities did not reflect a mutually informed or mutually beneficial effort. For example, the urban focus of UNITE provided an important opportunity to interrogate the relationship between urban multicultural teacher educators and urban special educators, and the overrepresentation of students of color in special education, but UNITE did not reflect that kind of activity. Special educators displayed a high value for collaboration, but with the exception of a small number of early adopters noted above, most of the dialogue took place within special education, even if individual programs were making progress across preservice general and special education and even if small-scale efforts were developed.

The missed opportunities between general and special educators in the early stages of the accountability movement in the 1990’s was perhaps one of the larger missteps that occurred, given the extent to which special education had long placed a priority on measuring student progress and making assessment courses a priority in teacher education. As noted previously, however, general teacher education may have been largely unaware of special education’s extensive literature base on curriculum-based measurement and, in general, their emphasis on measuring student progress and on including this as an essential component of preservice preparation. Similarly, general education teacher educators may have been unaware of how extensive the conversations were within special education regarding collaboration with colleagues in general education. While special educators may have published occasional articles in general teacher education outlets, most publications by special educators relating to collaborative teacher preparation efforts were restricted to special education journals and reports.

Stage 4: The Deep Rooting of Accountability in Teacher Education (2000-present)
The accountability movement for the reform of teacher education developed strong roots in the 2000’s. With federal requirements leading the way, the importance of linking teacher education to PK-12 student outcomes became less of a debate among teacher educators and policy makers and more of an implementation challenge. Coming into the 2000’s, NCATE released *NCATE 2000*, a revision that focused predominantly on teacher education outcomes and required programs seeking national accreditation to report assessment data relating to program improvement and candidate performance (Gollnick, 2008). The stakes for teacher education accountability have continued to grow higher as more recent federal requirements (i.e., American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [ARRA] of 2009) mandated that the evaluation of teacher education programs must include assessments showing how well a teacher education program’s graduates improve achievement for the students they teach (Smith, Robb, West, & Tyler, 2010).

Although debates may have subsided about whether teacher education programs should be held accountable for the achievement of students taught by their graduates, what is still being debated is how this is to be accomplished. With the growth of large-scale data bases in school districts and states, value-added models to make links between PK-12 students and teacher preparation programs are receiving much attention in general and special education (Blanton, McLeskey, & Hernandez, in press; Gansle, Noell, & Burns, 2012). Although these models are in part being used to evaluate teacher education programs in some states, other measures (e.g., graduates’ job placement and job retention, satisfaction surveys of employers and graduates, and performance assessments) are also being used or considered (Nelson, 2012; Pianta, 2012). The shift to an accountability framework in teacher education is moving forward with required national performance assessments; one such measure, the edTPA, is being piloted in approximately 25 states and the District of Columbia (http://edtpa.aacte.org/).
One highly visible national reform effort in teacher education which began in 2001, Teachers for a New Era (TNE), focused largely on three reform goals: how best to gather evidence of teacher effectiveness using value added models, how to improve teacher education as a clinically taught profession, and how to involve Arts and Sciences faculty and make teacher education a university-wide endeavor and commitment. These three TNE principles echoed reform focuses of prior stages, as well as the accountability emphasis in Stage 4. TNE was based on the assumption that teacher education belongs in the university, counter to the deregulation agenda that began during Stage 3 and that continues today.

Probably the most defining reform movement for teacher education in the 2000’s, one that was imposed externally, came with the 2001 revisions of ESEA, or NCLB. Not only did NCLB focus on student and teacher accountability, but it also defined teacher quality through its HQT provisions (i.e., hold a bachelor’s degree, state certification, and demonstrate knowledge of subject matter content), strengthening the deregulation agenda suggested by Cochran-Smith (2001) and Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005). Given the ongoing teacher shortages reported in targeted teaching areas, including special education (Billingsley, 2011), greater numbers of alternative routes to certification evolved in general education (Wilson, 2008) and in special education (Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2005) and have sent contradictory messages of regulation on the one hand for traditional teacher preparation, and deregulation on the other.

Subsequent to the 2004 IDEA clarification that extended HQT requirements to special education teachers, the 325T program, a reform initiated from within special education, was implemented in 2007 to enhance special education teacher quality by ensuring that graduates meet HQT requirements. In 2010, the call for 325T proposals included a new competitive priority for dual certification, which seemed to send the message that special and general
education should engage in greater collaborative program reform—building on the efforts of early adopters of collaborative, dual certification programs as illustrated by Blanton et al. (1997). An alternative interpretation, however, may have been that dual certification was an efficient means toward the acquisition of HQT, rather than to engage in deep reform across general and special education that was possible under a dual certification model (Pugach et al., 2013). Nevertheless, some programs may have used the 325T funding as a way to engage in serious collaboration among special and general educators and serious joint program redesign. To date, however, only limited data about the outcomes of these 325T programs are available.

**Intersection of special and general education.** Once the accountability agenda was in place, and it was clear that it applied equally to general and special education, the door was open for a serious collaboration regarding how preservice programs might address these challenges together. Further, this development provided a unique opportunity to establish partnerships between the Arts and Sciences and teacher education, a concern that first appeared in contemporary reform activity with the advent of Project 30. Yet the organizational culture in most universities often kept general and special education more divided than working together. For example, significant reform efforts such as TNE did not by design include special education faculty as major players (although projects at some institutions did assure they were included), even at the same time that Arts and Sciences faculty and deans were required to be major players.

Early in this stage, an effort to begin making explicit connections between general and special education took place with regard to one major teacher education accountability tool, the INTASC standards. Through a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, a companion document to the original INTASC standards was developed and published in 2001 to
delineate the relationship between the INTASC standards and their meaning specifically for general and special education teachers with respect to teaching students with disabilities. Within special education the default was to focus on standards documents produced internally. In general education, the existence of the 2001 INTASC document did not seem to be widely known, nor was it widely used; one explanation may be that the field was not ready to have that conversation at such an explicit level.

During this stage, the Office of Special Education Programs launched three large federally funded projects focused on teacher education reform related to special education. The Center for Improving Teacher Quality, housed at the Council of Chief State School Officers beginning in 2002, by design brought together higher education and state level leaders from general and special education to consider how to redesign teacher education across special and general education. From this project, a focus on multiple structures for dual certification emerged to help states and higher education institutions consider what reforming teacher education might mean across the two, including a set of rubrics to guide the redesign of teacher education (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Two other projects focused more specifically on teacher education in special education itself. The Center for Personnel Preparation in Special Education (COPSSE) focused on compiling the research literature in special education teacher education (Sindelar, Brownell, & Billingsley, 2010), and the National Center to Inform Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development (NCIPP) focused on collaboration and induction practices for special education teachers. While there may have been connections to practices in general teacher education, these two latter efforts were limited in scope to special education.

As other current reform efforts continue, for example, restructuring clinical preparation as proposed by the 2010 NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel report, the intention is clearly to prepare all
teachers to work with students with disabilities, as well as to work with students who are English Learners. But early on in reforms, and certainly in standards documents as noted above, the intent always seemed to be inclusive of “all students.” In this fourth stage of teacher education reform, the same inclusive intent is being communicated. The difference is that under NCLB, the achievement of specific groups of students is under a microscope. It remains to be seen whether such intent can be translated into new, responsive teacher education practice.

**Bringing the Historical Lessons Forward:**

**Challenges for Policy Makers and Practitioners and a Cause for Cautious Optimism**

We have used the lens of an historical look at teacher education reform to examine the convergence, divergence and missed opportunities between general and special education teacher education. Probing the history of teacher education reform provides policy makers, teacher educators, as well as researchers an opportunity to more fully understand the influences on teacher education in its short evolution as a field, as well as to identify the trajectories of general and special education within this history. Understanding this shifting and growing research activity and teacher education practices can provide perspective to help guide teacher educators and policy makers for building on what has been learned, and especially for avoiding the missed opportunities of the past, focusing instead on the potential for convergence.

While there is little doubt that the two fields seem to converge around the overarching goal of preparing novice teachers to work with the diversity of students in PK-12 classrooms, when examined in the context of modern teacher education reform, general and special educators have typically kept a distance from one another. Perhaps, as noted earlier, this is a result of different histories (e.g., special education’s roots in medicine and psychology), different priorities (e.g., special education’s equity emphasis in the early stages of teacher education,
reform when general education pursued other priorities such as a knowledge base), and the different discourses and practices at work in each field as a result of being at different stages during teacher education’s growth as a field. On this latter point, for example, general and special teacher educators have typically published in separate journals and attended separate conferences and, in general, both teacher educators and policy makers have tended to talk among themselves more than with their respective general or special education colleagues.

Yet despite the history of missed opportunities, we are cautiously optimistic about the future of this teacher education relationship and reform. We believe there are four reasons that point to new levels of potential convergence for effectively bringing together general education and special education teacher educators on behalf of students with disabilities.

First, despite the pronounced shortcomings of NCLB, problems with the achievement of students with disabilities are now public knowledge. While underlying disagreements may exist regarding who is more responsible for this state of affairs (i.e., is it because general education has the students for a long period of time during school, or is it because special education has been tasked and resourced to accomplish this specific goal?), there is common agreement that improving the school achievement of students with disabilities is a high priority. While there is not always agreement about how to solve this problem and how best to measure student progress in learning, there is agreement that every teacher needs to be prepared to meet not only the philosophical goal of working with students with disabilities, but also the practical goal of improving their learning as measured by whatever indicators of learning are adopted.

Second, multiple reforms in teacher education and in practice in PK-12 education are making related and/or parallel demands on both general and special educators. For example, like their general education counterparts, today special education teachers have to be prepared in the
academic content areas. While in the past these preservice teachers usually had reading as part of their preparation, and perhaps some limited preparation for teaching mathematics, today they are expected to master all of the content areas they are responsible for teaching. Although this requirement can be met in different ways, some of which require much less collaboration between Arts and Sciences and Education than others (i.e., passing content examinations), the promise of early attention to this issue with reforms like Project 30, Teachers for a New Era, and to some extent the 325T special education preservice projects, opened the door both for building these relationships and for shining a light on how both general and special preservice education need to be linked to academic content preparation. Similarly, at a time when the general education curriculum is of central importance to special education, the current implementation of the Common Core Standards is putting pressure on all teachers to shift their curriculum and instruction practices, and for general and special education preservice candidates to be prepared to work together within the framework of the Common Core. Finally with regard to reforms at the PK-12 level, multi-tiered models such as Response to Intervention (RtI) pressure both general and special education teachers alike to ask and answer the question about what constitutes appropriate Tier 1 practice—as well as the relationship between what occurs in Tiers 2 and 3 and what occurs in the general education classroom.

Third, there is beginning to be some greater movement around connecting scholars in social justice, diversity, and multicultural education across special and general education. Scholars with special education background, for example, are taking major roles in building connections across Division G of AERA, the Social Context of Education. Scholars in social justice and multicultural teacher education are participating in more direct dialogue about special education (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Dudley-Marling, 2012; Irvine, 2012; Rueda & Stillman, 2012)
in an attempt to identify and locate commonalities that previously were not acknowledged or perhaps not well understood. These conversations are meant to move beyond the necessary, continuing, discourse about disproportionality. Instead, they are meant to represent a recognition that discourse on disproportionality is not sufficient in and of itself to answer the much more complex questions about the place of disability in the larger context of diversity in the schools (Seidl & Pugach, 2009), and especially the challenge of the intersectionality of social markers of diversity (Connor, 2009).

Finally, there is growing support for the idea that special education teachers should be required to have certification in general education, referred to generally as “dual certification”. The program structures in which dual certification takes place can differ substantially, from discrete traditional programs, to merged programs where all graduates earn both licenses, to programs where special education builds upon a redesigned base of general preservice preparation, or integrated programs (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, 2011). There is longstanding historical precedent for special education teachers to be skilled in general education first (Connor, 1976). In contemporary practice post 1975, early calls for this approach to certification were made (Pugach, 1988) and recently revisited (Brownell et al., 2010). Further, today there are several models for doing this (e.g., Oyler, 2011) that can be viewed as building on an earlier tradition of such collaborative teacher education programs (Blanton et al., 1997). Finally, dual certification was also promulgated in the 325T grants (Pugach et al., 2013). While not all dual certification programs actually manage the transition to being a shared enterprise, and remain discrete more than connected (Young, 2011), in the current context of reform, dual certification, thoughtfully constructed and implemented, opens the door for a viable path to much more serious levels of a shared reform agenda than ever before.
Recommendations

With these convergences serving as a cautious cause for optimism, we build on the lessons of the past to offer five recommendations for a new practice of teacher education that facilitates setting a joint action agenda for restructuring teacher education for both general and special teacher education to prepare them for their work with students with disabilities. Given the relatively chaotic state of education, and the current challenges to teacher education, it is a critical time for teacher educators to take a proactive stance in redesigning and reforming its practice. For each recommendation, we first provide a brief summary of how teacher education reform initiatives contributed historically to identifying the recommendation and, second, we delineate action steps\(^1\) targeted specifically to accomplishing the recommendation for the purpose of simultaneously redesigning teacher preparation in general and special education for inclusive practices in schools.

1. **General education teacher education programs should be redesigned to (a) address the diversity of students making up classrooms in U.S. schools today and (b) meet the most current standards of the profession, to include grounding content and delivery in the research knowledge base of general and special education.**

Recommendation 1 expands on similar standards of state and national groups in its emphasis on using the research knowledge bases of both general and special education. Historically, this recommendation has its roots in the press for a *Knowledge Base for Teacher Education*, beginning in the 1970’s, and has continued to evolve through the influence of the Dean’s *Grant Projects*, the *Multicultural Education and Standards’ Based* reform movements, and specialized reform efforts such as the *Arts and Sciences Teacher Education Collaborative* and the *Bell South Initiative*. Building on this history, restructuring general education programs will require today’s policy makers and teacher educators to:

(a) Use a framework for addressing the multiple diversities of every student, including students with disabilities, in an integrated manner, cognizant of the intersection of diversities.

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\(^1\) Refer to Blanton and Pugach (2007) for an expanded set of action steps and for further explanations of key terms used in the recommendations (e.g., depth of knowledge).
(b) Specify what constitutes special education knowledge in relationship to curriculum and instruction in the academic content areas – i.e., the special education knowledge base needed by general education teachers.

2. Special education teacher education programs should (a) be built on a redesigned general education base and be of sufficient length to provide adequate depth of knowledge in the general and special education areas offered, and (b) meet the most current standards of the profession, to include grounding content and delivery in the research knowledge base of special and general education.

Recommendation 2 also expands on similar standards of state and national groups in its emphasis on using the research knowledge bases of both general and special education. Historically, this recommendation is derived from the Accountability in Teacher Education movement of the 1990’s and 2000’s and the increasing expectation for students with disabilities to have access to, and achieve in, the general education curriculum. In addition, three reform groups (Holmes Group, Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future) highlighted the issue of ensuring that teacher preparation programs have sufficient curriculum space to address the knowledge base of the profession. Whether teacher educators and policy makers choose to offer special education at the initial or advanced licensure level, today’s policy context demands that they:

(a) Identify what constitutes the redesign of the base general education preservice curriculum as a fundamental reform activity in relationship to meeting the needs of students who have disabilities. Only with this reform in place can the redesign of special education effectively take place, as raising the bar for general education has implications for where the preparation of special educators begins.

(b) Ensure that programs devote sufficient curriculum space (i.e., depth of preparation via courses and experiences) for novice special educators to learn both the general education base and the depth of knowledge (specified in standards) for teaching in areas of special education for which graduates are being prepared.

3. Teacher education programs in general and special teacher education should be a collaborative enterprise among the faculty in special and general education, as well as in the arts and sciences.

Recommendation 3 emanates from the historical focus on education as a collaborative enterprise, both between education and the arts and sciences (e.g., Arts and Sciences Teacher Education Collaborative – Project 30 Alliance, National Network for Educational Renewal, The Renaissance Group, National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, Teachers for a New Era, 325T Program) and between special and general education as emphasized by the 325T Program. If the collaborative redesign of teacher education is to be sustained, policy makers and teacher educators must:
(a) Capitalize on the research strengths of both general and special education by including what has been learned, for example, in special education about evidence-based instructional practices for students with disabilities and what has been learned in general education about the teacher education curriculum (e.g., content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum coherence).

(b) Ensure that the leadership of teacher education programs provides the scaffolds to move past the historical division between general and special education and helps professionals redefine their expertise in relationship to one another rather than in opposition to one another.

(c) Examine state teacher licensure structures to determine the extent to which current structures support collaborative teacher education program redesign in general and special education for the goal of inclusive practices in schools.

4. **Teacher education programs in general and special education should be anchored in practice and in partnership with schools to ensure that graduates understand** (a) the realities of teachers’ future work experiences relating to students with disabilities and (b) that preparation occurs along a continuum from preservice preparation through ongoing development of expertise.

Recommendation 4 is anchored historically in the work of the many reform groups that have promoted university and school partnerships as a central component of preservice teacher preparation: National Network for Educational Renewal, the Holmes Group, The Renaissance Group, the Urban Network for the Improvement of Teacher Education (UNITE), National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) and Teachers for a New Era (TNE). Many of these same groups (i.e., Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, UNITE, NCTAF, TNE) promoted partnerships beyond the preservice years to highlight the importance of supporting graduates through the early years of teaching (i.e., induction), the role that such partnerships play in the continuing professional development of teachers and in particular the reciprocal improvement of teaching and teacher education. The actions associated with this recommendation for teacher educators and policy makers include:

(a) Embed clinical experiences throughout programs to support novice general and special education teachers in understanding their roles in relation to the complex, intersectional diversity of learners in classrooms and novice general and special education teachers as they develop understanding of their collaborative roles in schools.

(b) Examine the quality of the experienced teachers with whom novice general and special education teachers work to assure ongoing experiences in schools with teachers who are modeling inclusive education.

5. **General and special education teacher education programs should be grounded in** evidence and informed by multiple indicators of quality by (a) calling on specific
criteria in the selection of candidates for teacher preparation and (b) using multiple indicators for monitoring candidate performance, including their impact on PK-12 learning for all students, including students with disabilities, and for measuring the quality of the program overall.

Recommendation 5 is derived historically from multiple initiatives that focused on evidence in teacher education (i.e., Teachers for a New Era and The Renaissance Group) and the Accountability in Teacher Education movement that was established beginning in the 1990’s. The NCLB Act, with its emphasis on all school children, including those with disabilities, amplified the emphasis on PK-12 student learning and served as one lever for general and special education to work more closely on indicators measuring their candidates’ performances in programs. One teacher education reform initiative (i.e., National Network for Educational Renewal) pursued the need for stronger criteria in the selection of teacher candidates, a topic that has been examined in research. To focus on the interconnectedness of general and special education, teacher educators and policy makers will need to:

(a) Examine indicators for monitoring candidate performance to ensure that disability is considered as one among several intersecting markers of identity for a student with disability, and not as an isolated marker of identity that is privileged over others.

(b) Use a shared performance assessment base for general and special education programs to assure that both general and special education novice teachers demonstrate content and pedagogical content knowledge and success in supporting students with disabilities to learn and achieve in schools; use additional specialized assessments for those who specialize in special education reflecting special expertise built on the common performance assessment.

In making these recommendations, we want to clarify that the redesign of special and general education programs applies to all programs that prepare teachers. This means applying the same high expectations to the different pathways that are sanctioned to offer teacher preparation -- face-to-face, on-line, longer or shorter routes -- and regardless of the location of the program (e.g., university-based, school district-based, non-profit or for-profit). While it is understood that one size does not fit all, it is also understood that what we know and learn about the quality of teachers and the expectations for preparing them must apply to all programs.
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