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## Teacher Education for Diversity

### Policy and Politics

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#### POLICY AS DISCOURSE AND THE POLICY WEB

Since the 1990s, a discourse approach to policy analysis has been used in a number of social science fields, including political science, sociology, linguistics, planning and environmental policy, nursing, and education (e.g., Bacchi, 2000; Ball, 2008; Cheek & Gibson, 1997; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Joshee, 2007; Luke, 2002; Popkewitz & Lindbled, 2000; Sharp & Richardson, 2001).<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, those who take a discourse perspective reject the idea that policymaking is the result of the objective and nonbiased assessment by experts about how to obtain clear and fixed goals; they also reject the idea that policymaking is an apolitical, strictly rational process. Rather, from a discourse perspective, it is understood that goals themselves are competing and protean. Problems are constructed by multiple actors through language and deed rather than discovered "out there" through universal and scientific methods. From a discourse perspective, it is assumed that policymaking involves many agents at multiple levels, all of whom are engaged in constructing meaning (Bacchi, 2000). This means, as Deborah Stone (1997) suggests, that policy making is a struggle over ideas: "Each idea is an argument . . . in favor of different ways of seeing the world . . . There are multiple understandings of what appears to be a single concept, how these understandings are created, and how they are manipulated as part of political strategy" (p. 11).

Echoing the language of the "interpretive" and "linguistic" turns in twentieth-century philosophy, Fischer and Forester (1993) use the term *the argumentative turn* to emphasize that policymaking and policy analysis are argument-making processes. Like Stone, they emphasize that policy actors must first formulate and construct what "the problem" is before they can propose plausible solutions and recommendations. In political terms, they suggest:

Policy and planning arguments are intimately involved with relations of power and the exercise of power, including the concerns of some and excluding others, distributing

responsibility as well as causality, imputing praise and blame as well as efficacy, and employing particular political strategies of problem framing and not others. (p. 7)

A central way groups, individuals, and agencies promote their definitions of problems and their conclusions about who is praise- and blameworthy is through metaphor and analogy, emblematic language, symbols, stories, and literary devices along with recurring arguments that forward their own positions and discredit others. All of these can be understood, discursively, as attempts by the proponents of particular positions to garner support—not simply for the solutions they favor but also for their ways of understanding the issues in the first place (Stone, 1997). Viewing policy through a discursive lens means that policy controversies are struggles over values, worldviews, and underlying ideologies as well as agreements and disagreements over strategies.

Consistent with a discourse perspective on policy, in our examination of teacher quality and teacher education policy, we use the notion of a “policy web,” as developed by Reva Joshee and Laurie Johnson (Joshee, 2007, 2009; Joshee & Johnson, 2005), who in turn built on Hogwood and Gunn’s (1990) suggestion that policies are made “by the interactions of many policy influentials operating in a power network” (cited in Joshee & Johnson, 2005, p. 55). Joshee and Johnson suggest that the web image conveys the idea that policies are developed formally on multiple levels and in multiple forms, like the rings of a web, and that policy discourses are both discrete and interconnected, like the cross-cutting, but nonlinear, threads of a web. The web image also suggests that specific policy issues must be interpreted within a larger network of related policies. As Joshee and Johnson point out, the notion of a policy web calls attention to the relationships between and among discourses, who the actors are, how new ideas and competing agendas enter into the larger arena, and which discourses are predominant, silenced, valorized, and marginalized.

### THE TEACHER QUALITY-TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY WEB

Increasingly over the last decade, major policy discussions about the preparation and education of teachers have been part of, or intertwined with, larger discussions about teacher quality. In fact, at this juncture, it is impossible to understand teacher education policy without understanding larger teacher quality issues. Thus the focus of this analysis is what we refer to here as the “teacher quality-teacher education policy web.” Like policy regarding other public services in the United States, policies related to teacher quality and teacher education are not developed and enacted at a single level by a single agency but at multiple levels and by many actors, including federal, state, and local agencies. In addition, teacher quality-teacher education policy is developed and enacted by professional organizations and national and regional accreditors, as well as by individual higher education institutions (or higher education systems) and by alternate providers of preservice preparation who make decisions related to recruitment, admissions, placement, curriculum, program completion, and graduation.

Sorting out the overlap and interplay of federal, state, local or institutional, and professional-organizational levels is central to understanding teacher quality-

teacher education policy. Identifying the official actors and agencies at these levels is relatively straightforward, and their formal policy statements and related documents are generally easy to access. Just as important to understanding the teacher quality-teacher education policy web, however, are the multiple alliances, advocacy groups, research organizations, centers, consortiums, commissions, think tanks, and other individuals and groups, which are organized on an ad hoc or longer-term basis to inform and influence policy at various levels. These are somewhat more difficult to enumerate and sort out. To identify the major "influencers" in debates about teacher quality and teacher education, we drew on Swanson and Barlage's (2006) study of people, organizations, and reports that have influenced the educational policy landscape during the past decade; Wilson and Tamir's (2008) notion of the players in the "social field" of teacher education; and DeBray-Pelot and McGuinn's (2009) analysis of the new politics of post-NCLB education policy. Additionally, we noted what expert witnesses were called before congressional committees that had been assigned the task of considering, instituting, and reauthorizing federal policies related to teacher quality-teacher education and which groups or individuals were cited by policy makers and others to buttress their positions. The multiple levels, actors, and agencies involved in the teacher quality-teacher education policy web are represented in table 17.1.

To establish an initial list of pertinent documents, texts, and other items for this analysis of the teacher quality-teacher education policy web, we conducted a Boolean literature search using the terms *policy*, *teacher education*, and/or *teacher quality* in the United States between 2005 and 2009, using major databases (e.g., ERIC, Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, Books in Print). In keeping with a discourse perspective, however, we did not simply review official documents and formal policy statements. Rather, the web involves multiple channels and modes of discourse, many of which are texts or text analogues, but also including actions and instantiations. Thus we also located news articles, blogs, op ed pieces, podcasts, transcriptions of videotaped speeches, congressional testimony, public position statements, and reports. We also reviewed the websites and major documents of the actors and agencies identified in table 17.1. Here we performed a "quick read" of items and documents to determine which were pertinent to teacher quality-teacher education and whether and how diversity, social justice, equity, or multiculturalism were constructed. In addition, because we were specifically interested in diversity, we reviewed a selection of articles in major teacher education journals related to multicultural, diversity, and social justice-oriented teacher education policy and practice. We added to and subtracted from our list based on hand searches of major texts, references cited in other sources, and newly released reports and documents. Eventually we accumulated more than 225 policy statements, press releases, reports, research studies, news articles, positions statements, editorials, transcripts of debates, testimonies, speeches, and journal articles. Although space limitations prevent us from including the entire list, table 17.2 lists selected documents and texts for each of the actors and agencies in the policy web to provide a sense of the material we used.

To identify major discourses, we read and reread these materials, paying particular attention to the language, metaphors, and logic of the arguments that were constructed as well as noting which arguments were most prominent in which

**Table 17.1 The Teacher Education/Teacher Quality Policy Web: Multiple Levels, Actors, and Agencies**

FEDERAL LEVEL	STATE LEVEL	LOCAL/ INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL	PROFESSIONAL/ ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL
Federal Mandates/ Programs ESEA (NCLB)– Title II–teacher quality mandates relative to teachers in the classroom; Title I and III–includes provisions relative to qualifications for teachers who work with students with limited English proficiency HEA–Title II–mandates relative to teacher preparation IDEA–includes mandates relative to special education	State DOE Regulations regarding teacher licensure, certification, program approval, teacher testing, alternate routes	Local school districts: policies and practices regarding recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, assessment of new teachers, including collective bargaining agreements	National/regional accreditors and licensing agencies: regulations and standards regarding regional/ national accreditation of universities and/or professional preparation programs or professional licensing of teachers (e.g., NCATE, TEAC, NBPTS, CHEA)
Funding opportunities: for example: ARRA (Stimulus funds) Race-to-the-Top Funds Innovation Funds Teacher Quality Grants	Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) accountability requirements relative to teacher preparation, licensing, and ongoing professional development	Higher education institutions: policies and practices related to teacher preparation program selection, preparation, assessment, completion of teacher candidates in college/university-recommending programs	Professional organizations: standards and positions regarding teacher preparation (e.g., AACTE) including in specific subject matter areas or school levels (e.g., NCTE, NCTM, TESOL, ACEI)
Position statements regarding the administrations' education agenda, related to teacher education/teacher quality	State-advisory agencies: Provides technical support as well as policy analysis and research to state governors and state DOE (e.g., NGA, ECS)	Other teacher recruitment/ preparation providers: policies and practices related to selection, preparation, assessment, completion of teacher candidates in alternate recruitment and preparation routes	Teachers associations/ federations: positions related to collective bargaining agreements at local/state levels (e.g., AFT, NEA)
Congressional Committees on Education: U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the U.S. House of Representative's Committee on Education and Labor			

**INFLUENCERS:**

Think tanks, agencies, commissions, professional organizations, centers, alliances, advocacy groups, research organizations, and consortiums that have as one of their major goals influencing or informing policymaking related to teacher quality/teacher education at any of the above levels, **and/or** individual analysts whose work is intended to influence one or more of these levels, for example: Achieve Inc., American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, American Enterprise Institute, Center for American Progress, Center for Teaching Quality, Economic Policy Institute, Education Trust, Fordham Foundation, Hoover Institute, National Academy of Sciences, National Center on Education and the Economy, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, National Council on Teaching Quality, Progressive Policy Institute, Public Agenda, Teach for America, and Urban Institute.

Table 17.2 Selected/Sample Documents at Each Level

Federal	<p>U.S. Department of Education Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Department of Education. (2002). <i>Meeting the highly qualified teachers challenge: The Secretary's annual report on teacher quality</i>. Washington, DC: Author.</li> <li>• U.S. Department of Education. (2003). <i>Meeting the highly qualified teachers challenge: The Secretary's second annual report on teacher quality</i>. Washington, DC: Author.</li> </ul> <p>Hearings before the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESEA Reauthorization: Boosting quality in the teaching profession. (2007).</li> <li>• Protecting America's Competitive Edge Act (S. 2198). <i>Finding, training, and keeping talented math and science teachers</i>. (2006).</li> <li>• Speeches by President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan</li> <li>• Duncan, A. (2009c). Teacher preparation: Reforming the uncertain profession. (Remarks made at Teachers College, Columbia University, October 22). Retrieved from <a href="http://www.ed.gov">http://www.ed.gov</a></li> <li>• Obama, B. (2009). Taking on education: Speech before the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov">http://www.whitehouse.gov</a></li> </ul>
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feistritzer, E. (2005, September). <i>State policy trends for alternative routes to teacher certification: A moving target</i>. Paper presented at the Conference on Alternative Certification: A Forum for Highlighting Rigorous Research, Washington, DC.</li> <li>• National Council on Teacher Quality. (2008). <i>State teacher policy yearbook: What states can do to retain effective new teachers</i>. Washington, DC: Author.</li> <li>• National Governors Association, CCSSO, &amp; Achieve. (2008). <i>Benchmarking for success: Ensuring U.S. students receive a world-class education</i>. Washington, DC: National Governors Association.</li> </ul>
Local/ Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cochran-Smith, M., &amp; Zeichner, K. (Eds.). (2005). <i>Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education</i>. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.</li> <li>• Darling-Hammond, L., &amp; Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). <i>Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do</i>. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.</li> <li>• Wineburg, M. (2006). Evidence in teacher preparation: Establishing a framework for accountability. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i>, 57(1), 51–64.</li> </ul>
Professional/ Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AACTE. (2009). AACTE's resolutions toward policy development. Washington, DC: Author.</li> <li>• NCATE. (2008, Fall). NCATE Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Programs. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.ncate.org">www.ncate.org</a></li> </ul>
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ayers, W., Quinn, T., &amp; Stovall, D. (Eds.). (2009). <i>Handbook of social justice in education</i>. Philadelphia: Taylor &amp; Francis.</li> <li>• Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). The flat earth and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future. <i>Educational Researcher</i>, 36(6), 318–34.</li> <li>• Economic Policy Institute. (2008). A broader, bolder approach to education. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.boldapproach.org">http://www.boldapproach.org</a></li> <li>• Hess, R., &amp; Petrilli, M. (2009). Wrong turn on school reform. <i>Policy Review</i>, 55–68.</li> <li>• National Academy of Education. (2009). <i>White Paper: Teacher quality and distribution</i>. Washington, DC: Author.</li> <li>• Peske, H., &amp; Haycock, K. (2006). <i>Teaching inequality: How poor and minority students are shortchanged on teacher quality: A report and recommendations by the Education Trust</i> (No. ED 494820-ERIC Document).</li> <li>• Walsh, K., &amp; Jacobs, S. (2007d). <i>Alternative certification isn't alternative</i>. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.</li> </ul>

debates and how the various ideas were connected to or disconnected from each other. We examined the strategies of persuasion and argumentation the various actors, agencies, and stakeholders used to support, extend, authorize, or undermine various constructions of the problems of teacher quality-teacher education. We also noted how the threads and cross-threads of the various discourses overlapped and intersected, but also sharply diverged.

### TEACHER QUALITY AND TEACHER EDUCATION: MAJOR DISCOURSES IN THE POLICY WEB

Not surprisingly, our analysis of a large number of documents revealed that in the United States there is not a single policy discourse surrounding controversies related to teacher education and teacher quality but multiple discourses that sometimes compete, but are also sometimes combined, for political expediency. We also found that some discourses and actors were much more influential than others in current debates; indeed, some have gained substantially in influence over the last decade while others have been marginalized. We identified five major discourses, as follows:

- **Discourse #1:** The Teacher Quality Gap and Educational Inequality
- **Discourse #2:** Teacher Quality and the Market
- **Discourse #3:** Teacher Quality in a Globalized Society
- **Discourse #4:** Teacher Quality and Professional Teacher Education
- **Discourse #5:** Teacher Quality and Social Justice

The argumentative structure of each of these discourses is based on particular constructions of the problems and issues regarding teacher education and quality, which lead more or less logically to particular policy solutions and recommendations. These discourses reflect larger worldviews and ideologies related to difference and diversity. Below we discuss each of the five discourses, including its argumentation, the major actors and larger agendas with which each is associated, underlying ideologies and worldviews, commonalities and differences in relation to other discourses, and how each discourse constructs diversity.

#### **Discourse #1: The Teacher Quality Gap and Educational Inequality**

In policy debates about teacher quality and preparation, the "teacher quality gap" has emerged as a powerful idea that builds on the imagery, connotations, and language of the very familiar "achievement gap" between students of color, poor students, and immigrants and others whose first language is not English, on one hand, and their white, middle-class counterparts, on the other. The argumentation goes something like this: (1) Research has shown that teacher quality and effectiveness are among the most important factors in students' achievement. (2) Schools with large numbers of poor and minority students are most likely to have teachers who are inexperienced, assigned to teach in areas outside their fields, or otherwise not well qualified. (3) Thus the teacher quality gap exacerbates the achievement gap.

(4) Direct action targeted at school factors will redress the inequality of educational opportunities and outcomes, particularly distribution of quality teachers.

The *teacher quality gap* discourse uses the rhetoric and logic of civil rights to appeal to the long American struggle against injustice in the form of discrimination and exclusion of diverse and minority groups. The concept of “justice for all” emphasizes that all students have the right to equal educational opportunities and, presumably as a result, equal educational outcomes. This is dramatically different from simply claiming that all students must achieve to the same high standards despite unequal opportunities. Rather, from this perspective, opportunity is a key part of equality, and the argument is that opportunity to be taught by well-educated teachers has too long been denied to students in hard-to-staff and low-performing schools.

The *teacher quality gap* discourse is illustrated in a number of highly influential reports and analyses about teacher distribution patterns and states’ responses to No Child Left Behind’s (NCLB) equity requirements (e.g., Education Trust, 2008; National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2009; Peske, Crawford, & Pick, 2006; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Walsh, 2007a, b, c), as this excerpt illustrates:

Poor and minority children don’t underachieve in school just because they often enter behind; but, also because the schools that are supposed to serve them actually *short-change* them in the one resource they most need to reach their potential—high-quality teachers. Research has shown that when it comes to the distribution of the best teachers, poor and minority students do not get their fair share. (Peske & Haycock, 2006, p. 1)

Reports like this one urge the federal government to demand that states comply with NCLB’s teacher quality equity requirements and urge states to ensure poor and minority students’ access to teacher quality.

From this perspective, blame for inequalities goes to federal, state, and school district policies—especially teacher-licensing policies and teachers’ union contracts (Hess, Rotherham, & Walsh, 2004)—and other “anti-performance structures” that preserve a “failed system” (Education Equality Project, 2008, 2009). Here, university-based preparation programs are regarded as a barrier in part because they “make excuses” for teachers’ failure to close achievement gaps, despite evidence that teachers and leaders can turn around failing schools (Haycock, 2004). The argument here is for replacing the status quo with “progress-based” rather than “inputs-based” approaches (Educational Equality Project, 2008, 2009), such as: alternate entry routes into teaching; new data systems tracking teachers’ effectiveness, students’ achievement scores, and teacher preparation; revised hiring and assignment practices; rewards connected to effectiveness; and improved mentoring.

The teacher quality gap discourse can be understood in relation to a larger, primarily Democratic agenda for educational equality, reflected in the Education Equality Project<sup>2</sup> (EEP) (2008, 2009), a coalition of civil rights activists and urban educators, including Al Sharpton, Joel Klein, Katie Haycock, and Michelle Rhee. Here school factors are identified as both the root cause of educational inequality and its fundamental solution. Underlying this agenda is a distributive notion of justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003; North, 2006), wherein teacher quality and effective schools are regarded as goods and services that have hitherto been unequally distributed in society. It is important to note, however, that there is little acknowledgement in this discourse that educational inequality could be rooted in and sustained

by larger societal inequalities (Fraser, 2003), manifested in unequal access to health care, early childhood services, housing and transportation, and job development initiatives (Anyon, 2005). There is also little recognition that curricula and educational goals might need to be revised in ways that reflect the values and knowledge traditions of marginalized groups. Rather, a premise of this discourse is that the remedy for inequality is ensuring that everybody has access to the existing system, more or less assuming that those who are currently "unequal" want to be like the dominant group and will be like that group once they have equal access to teacher quality and effective schools. Ultimately, this discourse represents an ideology of liberal democracy (Joshee, 2007) with an underlying view of diversity as something to be overcome or neutralized.

### Discourse #2: Teacher Quality and the Market

A second discourse that is very visible in debates about teacher quality and teacher preparation is what we call "teacher quality and the market," which is part of larger agendas related to educational deregulation and privatization. The market discourse is almost always dressed in the verbal clothing of core American concepts—freedom, choice, individual opportunity, entrepreneurship, and competition. The structure of the argument is this: (1) Teachers are the most important determiners of school success. (2) However, the current system of recruiting, preparing, licensing, and rewarding teachers is not producing the teacher workforce the nation needs (including teachers for high-poverty schools), but its proponents resist reform to preserve their own self-interests. (3) This means the "invisible hand" of the market cannot operate naturally to correct a failing system. (4) A deregulated system based on tight accountability and loose methods is needed to attract new talent into teaching, reward teachers based on performance, and focus on individual student progress.

The market ideology has been prominent in debates about teacher quality and preparation for more than a decade (e.g., Hess, 2001; Thomas Fordham Foundation, 1999). Deborah Stone (1997) characterized the market model of society as a social system where individuals compete for scarce resources and pursue self-interest through exchange of mutually beneficial items. Here, problems requiring collective social action for the greater good are seen as exceptions. From this perspective, the ultimate freedom is the freedom of the market, and change is assumed to occur through informed self-interest, prompted by competition and the prospect of rewards and punishments.

The fundamental tenets and current implications of this ideology are well illustrated in Hess and Petrilli's (2009) analysis of the "wrong turn" of education reform after NCLB and their list of priorities for redirecting reform:

- A school accountability system that emphasizes individual student progress over time, without regard to race
- An accountability system that incentivizes schools to help all students make gains, including high achievers
- Dramatically fewer mandates and a lot more incentives
- Embrace competition, not just choice
- Promote "supply side" solutions and entrepreneurial problem solving (pp. 65–67)



Regarding teacher quality and preparation specifically, advocates of the market discourse champion teacher accountability based on students' achievement (Hess & Petrilli, 2009); elimination of teacher preparation or certification "barriers" at state and institutional levels (Feistritzer, 2005; Hess, 2009); "real" alternate routes into teaching (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007); pay for performance (Walsh, 2007c); and emphasis on individual student progress, not race- or other group-based averages (Hess & Petrilli, 2009).

In the market discourse, the rhetorical strategy is nearly always to construct the "status quo" as the cause of educational failure, thus making the case for new choices and alternatives. The argument for choice in terms of teacher preparation depends on the prior conclusion that the "status quo," which includes all college- and university-based preparation programs, plus state licensing and certification regulations, is inefficient and ineffective. The groundwork for this conclusion was laid in reports and analyses during the late 1990s and early 2000s wherein teacher education was consistently described as a "broken system" without empirical support, and alternate routes were consistently forwarded as the solution to the problem (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, 2002, 2003). This same conclusion is bolstered by current reports, such as those asserting that university-based teacher education fails to focus on the "science" of reading and math (Greenberg & Walsh, 2008; Walsh, Glaser, & Wilcox, 2006), issued by the National Center on Teacher Quality.

The market discourse on teacher quality is most remarkable not for the positions it holds about the education of diverse populations but for the positions it explicitly rejects. Hess and Petrilli (2009), for example, argue that the uneasy coalition between the Bush administration and civil rights groups and other liberals "led conservative education-reformers to embrace . . . an explicitly race-based conception of school accountability; a focus on closing achievement gaps to the exclusion of all other objectives; [and] a pie-in-the-sky, civil rights oriented approach" (p. 57). This analysis, which describes NCLB's approach to accountability as "obsess[ed] with race" (p. 64) highlights differences between the *teacher quality gap* discourse, described earlier, and the discourse of the market, even though these two agree on some of the solutions (i.e., alternate routes, test-based accountability) to the teacher quality problem and thus have often been on the same side of policy debates. However, the *teacher quality gap* discourse and the *market* discourse have enormous ideological differences as well. The rights-based *teacher quality gap* discourse, which is committed to public education, is intended to insure the common good in the form of equality of school-based opportunities and outcomes. In contrast, the market discourse focuses on the freedom of the market, which depends on everyone pursuing their informed self-interests, which presumably results in what is best for all. Implicit in the market discourse is a notion of educational progress as a matter of private self-interest rather than public trust and a firm belief in "letting the market decide" who gets access to well-qualified and effective teachers.

### Discourse #3: Teacher Quality in a Globalized Society

The discourse we refer to here as "teacher quality in a globalized society" is prominent in many state and federal discussions about teacher quality and preparation and is sometimes present in the language and logic of national professional organi-

zations, accreditors, and other teacher education leaders as well. Its argumentation is as follows: (1) We live in a globalized society with a knowledge economy that requires world-class academic standards and cognitively complex skills for problem solving and decision making. (2) The robustness of the U.S. economy depends on the country's educational achievements, which in turn depend on the quality of its teachers and schools. (3) However, both international comparisons and national assessments indicate that teachers are not teaching to world-class standards, nor producing the labor force needed, particularly in math and science. In fact, large segments of the school population are not prepared for work or higher education, which costs the country in individual productivity and economic growth. (4) Radical changes are needed, including rigorous new standards and assessments for all students, a more effective teaching force, and a drastically revamped system of continuous, evidence-based teacher education.

The steady repetition of this discourse since the release of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) has made the link between quality of teaching and educational achievement, on one hand, and the American values of progress, global leadership, and economic prosperity for all, on the other, appear inextricable and almost self-evident (e.g., Kennedy, 2006). This discourse is the foundation of the rationale for all of the education monies in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) and is replete in statements by the Obama administration and others, as this excerpt from President Obama's 2009 speech to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce illustrates:

America will not remain true to its highest ideals—and America's place as a global economic leader will be put at risk—unless we . . . do a far better job than we've been doing of educating our sons and daughters; unless we give them the knowledge and skills they need in this new and changing world. For we know that economic progress and educational achievement have always gone hand in hand in America.

This discourse is also evident in the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a project to adopt rigorous common standards for high school students across the states, which is being developed by the National Governors Association; Achieve, Incorporated; ACT; the Council of Chief State School Officers; and the College Board.

The globalized society discourse uses a "story of decline" (Stone, 2002) to construct the educational status quo as both the cause of the current deterioration of the country's international standing and the major obstacle to change (e.g., National Center on Education and the Economy, 2006; Vagelos, 2006). From this perspective, business as usual at schools of education is constructed as part of the problem of national economic decline. Specific solutions to the problem of teacher quality and preparation include systematic state-level data systems that link student data with data about teacher effectiveness and teacher preparation, alternate pathways into teaching, teacher residency programs, training teachers to use data for continuous improvement, national assessment of teacher candidates, accreditation standards dependent on student outcomes, explicit teacher training in practices focused on cognitively complex material, quality supervision during clinical experiences, and state and institutional policy decisions about teacher preparation programs and pathways based on evidence about outcomes (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Duncan, 2009a, b, c; National Academy of Education, 2009; Wineburg,

2006). All of these proposed solutions to the teacher quality problem zero in on outcomes and accountability for students' learning.

Some of the new outcomes and accountability emphases of professional organizations such as NCATE and AACTE, which have long been regarded as "the establishment" of teacher education, reflect the global society discourse. These new directions may be understood, at least in part, as efforts to align with the powerful globalization discourse that dominates many policy debates and the now firmly entrenched system of accountability that is driving it. These efforts may also be seen as what Penny Earley (2000) once described as avoiding being "cast as a culprit" in the larger phenomenon of lower scores on international competitions.

Interestingly the global society discourse (Discourse #3) is often linked with the rights-based teacher quality gap discourse (Discourse #1) we described earlier in this chapter (e.g., Duncan, 2009a; McKinsey & Company, 2009; National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve, 2008). The braiding of these two discourses results in a message about diversity that goes something like this: Everybody in America, including the nation's increasingly diverse population, has the right to a good education and to high-quality teachers; these rights must be fulfilled so that everybody is prepared for work and is thus able to contribute to the nation's economic health. We would note, however, that what is missing from this discourse is emphasis on access to high-quality teachers as a human right and access to a rich and cognitively complex curriculum as an essential ingredient for deliberative participation in a democratic society. Like the teacher quality gap discourse, then, the ideology underlying the globalized discourse is consistent with capitalism and competitive individualism. This ideology has been critiqued for its focus on the economic need for an educated (and thus competitive) workforce, rather than a focus on education as a fundamental human right in a democratic society. Perkins (2004) uses the term *corporatocracy* to refer to the alignment of business, government, and financial interests and institutions and contrasts this with democracy. Building on Perkins, Sleeter (2009) argues that corporatocracy is aimed at consolidating global economic power for the benefit of the elite and is thus antithetical to the fundamental principles of democracy. We return to these ideas in the next two sections of this chapter.

#### **Discourse #4: Teacher Quality and Professional Teacher Education**

Like all of the discourses so far, the "teacher quality and professional teacher education" discourse is wrapped in language and concepts that resonate with certain aspects of the American tradition—excellence, high standards, equal opportunity, and the capacity of educated professionals with special expertise to solve problems in specific areas of social life. The basic argumentation is this: (1) Teachers are central to school success, with professional preparation and certification among the strongest correlates of teachers' effectiveness. (2) However, current policies and practices disproportionately place the least well-prepared teachers in high poverty and minority schools and classrooms. (3) This exacerbates achievement gaps and also contributes to the mediocre performance of American students on international comparisons. (4) Radical revisions in professional and governmental policies

regarding preservice teacher preparation, certification, licensure, and ongoing development will redress inequalities, particularly distribution of teacher quality.

Although it has deeper roots, this professionalization discourse grew out of the 1980s education reform movement, especially the emphasis on standards, and was instantiated in the alliance of multiple professional organizations seeking a common system of performance-based standards for teacher preparation, licensing, and certification. As Linda Darling-Hammond's (2007) words illustrate, the current professionalization discourse has important similarities to both the rights-based discourse of the teacher quality gap (Discourse #1) and the standards- and accountability-based discourse of the globalized society (Discourse #3):

To substantially improve both educational quality and equality in the United States, a comprehensive approach is needed. We cannot remain a first class power in the new world that is emerging around us simply by calling for higher achievement and establishing more tests. We need to ensure that resources for education are adequate in every community, that curriculum and assessment support the kind of transferable learning that matters in the 21st century, and that investments in teaching produce highly skillful teachers for all students. This policy agenda must be approached systemically at the federal, state and local levels if it is to succeed. (p. 329)

What the professionalization discourse (Discourse #4) shares with the teacher quality gap discourse (Discourse #1) is the position that students from diverse groups (e.g., children of poverty, minority students, special education students, English language learners) cannot achieve to high standards without reasonable opportunities in the first place, including access to teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Although there are other differences, the major dividing line here is that at the heart of the professionalization discourse is a definition of teacher quality as professional preparation and full certification prior to the point when teachers become the teacher of record in K-12 schools (AACTE, 2009a; NCATE, 2008). In sharp contrast, Discourse #1 (teacher quality gap) constructs teacher preparation and certification as not only *not* essential to teacher quality, but in fact, barriers to it.

The professionalization discourse (Discourse #4) is also somewhat similar to the globalized society discourse (Discourse #3), in the sense that both emphasize rigorous standards, the need for a more effective teaching force, and accountability for student-learning outcomes (AACTE, 2009b). Again, however, the differences are important. As we noted earlier, the globalization discourse uses a narrative of national economic decline to cast "traditional" teacher education and certification as major culprits. In contrast, the professionalization discourse uses what Stone (2002) calls a "story of control," which suggests possibility and hope rather than despair to cast radically improved teacher preparation as part of the solution to the achievement gap and the problem of global competition (Cibulka, 2009). This means that all teachers need strong and coherent preparation (as well as ongoing professional development) centered on content knowledge, pedagogical and assessment skills, supervised fieldwork in schools organized for learning, and theoretical as well as practical understandings of the relationships among culture, language, and learning (AACTE, 2009b; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; NCATE, 2008). The professionalization discourse also shares certain ideas about diversity as an asset with Discourse #5 (social justice), which is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

It is important to note that the professionalization discourse has been marginalized in state and federal policy discussions in part because of its insistence that all teachers must be professionally prepared *prior to* their work with school students. This constructs alternate routes into teaching, which are now permitted in nearly all of the states, as a problem rather than a solution to the teacher quality problem and thus flies in the face of all three of the dominant policy discourses discussed so far, which champion alternate routes. More important, perhaps, the professional discourse has been marginalized because of its prevalence in AACTE and NCATE, professional organizations that are associated with teachers' unions, the National Education Association (NEA), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Although for somewhat different reasons, in all three of the dominant state and federal discourses, teachers' unions have consistently been constructed as a root cause of the teacher quality problem because they presumably support the status quo, obstruct rather than support reform, and interfere with the functioning of the market. This creates a major tension for the profession since it is trying to be aligned with two discourses, one of which (globalization, Discourse #3) generally casts preservice teacher preparation as a culprit and the other (professionalization, Discourse #4) casts it as a solution.

#### Discourse #5: Teacher Quality and Social Justice

Discourse #5, "teacher quality and social justice," is based on the core American values of respect for differences, equal opportunities for all, and democratic participation. The argumentation goes like this: (1) There are significant disparities in the distribution of educational and other resources to minority and low-income students and their white, middle-class counterparts. (2) In addition, long-standing policies, practices, and systemic structures—including traditional curricula and school norms as well as health care and employment policies—privilege dominant groups and disadvantage others. (3) Inequities in distribution of resources and lack of recognition of the knowledge traditions of minority groups run counter to the democratic ideal, which depends on widespread participation and deliberation. (4) Thus, part of the job of teaching is enhancing students' learning and life chances by building on their resources and allying with others to challenge school and societal inequities.

This social justice discourse grows out of the civil rights movement and various critical perspectives on education and society writ large. A central premise is that diversity is an asset—not a deficit—in students' learning, a perspective that has been reflected in AACTE and NCATE positions since the 1970s.

Although the social justice discourse (Discourse #5) shares the goal of challenging inequality with Discourse #1 and Discourse #4, there are important differences. The argument of Discourse #1 (the teacher quality gap) is that poor and minority students—who enter school "behind" (Peske & Haycock, 2006)—need high-quality teachers to raise their achievement levels within the existing accountability system. From this perspective, diversity can be seen as a kind of deficit, existing curricula and teaching goals are fine as they are, and what is needed is to make sure everybody has access. From a social justice perspective, however, these premises have been critiqued as untenable because, as Joyce King (2006) suggests, "equal access to a faulty curriculum" (p. 337) does not constitute justice.

Both Discourse #4 (professionalization) and Discourse #5 (social justice) explicitly reject a deficit view of diversity. Rather, the assumption is that teachers must utilize students' cultural resources to build new knowledge and skills and broaden the curriculum (e.g., Lee & Ball, 2005). For example, teachers must incorporate the "funds of knowledge" of local communities and cultural groups (e.g., Moll, 2009), build on the language skills and identities of English learners (e.g., Brisk, 2007), and assume a "capacity framework" regarding students with special needs (El-Haj & Rubin, 2009). Discourses #4 and #5 both assume that a central purpose of schooling is the preparation of all students for democratic participation (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Sleeter, 2009; Villegas, 2008; Villegas & Davis, 2008).

Although the social justice discourse converges in many ways with the professionalization discourse, it is important to note that the former also critiques the latter's notion of a universal knowledge base and its inadequate acknowledgement of the structural and systemic forces that perpetuate inequities. This excerpt from Christine Sleeter (2009) captures some of the major ideas underlying the social justice discourse (Discourse #5):

Social justice in teacher education can be conceptualized as comprising three strands: (1) supporting access for all students to high-quality, intellectually rich teaching that builds on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, (2) preparing teachers to foster democratic engagement among young people, and (3) preparing teachers to advocate for children and youth by situating inequities within a systemic socio-political analysis. . . . Reflected in the first strand above, teachers must be able to teach such children effectively so they can master that [dominant] culture . . . the culture of power must also be critiqued, particularly for processes by which oppressive relationships are perpetuated. All of this must involve dialogue—the second strand—in which those who occupy positions of privilege—including teachers and teacher educators—learn to listen to, hear, and work with those who do not.

A similar social justice discourse is threaded throughout the teacher education section (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008; MacDonald & Zeichner, 2008; Richert, Donahue, & LaBoskey, 2008; Sleeter, 2008; Westheimer & Suurtamm, 2008) of the *Handbook of Social Justice in Education* (Ayres, Quinn, & Stovall, 2008).

One way to understand the social justice discourse is in terms of its contrast with the Education Equality Project, noted in our discussion of Discourse #1 (the teacher quality gap), and its consistency with the widely disseminated "Broader Bolder Agenda" (BBA) (2008), a primarily Democratic coalition of social scientists, educators, and policy experts, including Helen Ladd, Pedro Noguera, Tom Payzant, and Richard Rothstein. BBA explicitly rejects NCLB-type accountability frameworks because they work from false premises: that school factors are the major reason for low achievement and that policies targeting standards, testing, and teacher quality can overcome the impact of poverty. Instead, BBA argues that a bolder approach is needed that focuses on teacher quality and other school reforms at the same time it targets early childhood, antipoverty, and health programs and also incorporates new ideas about assessment and accountability.

The social justice discourse has been critiqued because of its supposed preoccupation with social goals, its failure to account for achievement, and its obsession

with ideology (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). As such, it is marginalized in many of the current major discussions about federal and state policy related to teacher quality and teacher education. Its marginalization is also related to the fundamental inconsistency between education where the bottom line is economic growth, on one hand, and education where the bottom line is democratic participation, on the other (Sleeter, 2009).

### TEACHER QUALITY-TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY: LOOKING ACROSS THE DISCOURSES

Understanding policy as discourse is a powerful theoretical lens for unpacking co-existing, and often competing, ideas about “the problem” of teacher quality and teacher preparation in the United States as well as how diversity is constructed as part of that problem. As our analysis indicates, different discourses about teacher quality reflect different ideas, ideals, and worldviews at the same time that they differently assign blame and praise regarding the problem of teacher quality and thus advocate specific strategies and solutions. A discourse lens helps to explain why certain discourses are prominent while others are marginalized as well as how diverging discourses are at certain times sutured together but at other times explicitly split apart. This lens also helps to reveal how relations of power and the exercise of power influence policy within the complex and continuously changing education policy landscape. Below we offer several concluding points that cut across the discourses.

#### Teacher Quality as Common Ground

At this political and policy juncture, it is almost a truism to say that teacher quality is an essential ingredient—if not the central determining factor—in students’ achievement and other school outcomes. Part of the reason this claim seems so thoroughly self-evident at this time is that it has been so consistently and frequently repeated over the last decade by policymakers, pundits, researchers, and policy influencers from all points across the political spectrum. This is evident in the countless reports and public statements that begin with some version of the mantra, “teachers matter.”

All of the discourses we analyzed in this chapter assume that teachers—and teacher quality—matter, and all of them assume that there is some essential connection between teacher quality and students’ learning and other school outcomes. However, although teacher quality may appear at first glance to be a single concept, it is not. In fact, across the five discourses are widely differing views about what is or is not encompassed in the term *teacher quality*. Implicit in Discourse #2 (teacher quality and the market), for example, is the (supposedly) simple and straightforward definition of teacher quality as the ability of teachers to raise students’ test scores. In contrast, although Discourse #1 (the teacher quality gap) is also grounded in test-based evidence of students’ learning, it specifically includes teachers’ qualifications in its notion of teacher quality, especially teachers’ subject matter knowledge credentials and their years of teaching experience, but at the same time, it specifically excludes teacher preparation in “traditional” college- or

university-based programs from this definition. Again, in contrast, Discourse #4 (teacher quality and professional preparation) assumes a definition of teacher quality that encompasses an array of teachers' credentials, experiences, certification status, and classroom performance and, most important, preservice teacher preparation grounded in a rich and multidisciplinary professional knowledge base. These and other variations in meaning notwithstanding, the notion of teacher quality can appear to be—and sometimes is regarded as—common ground in policy debates and controversies, which makes certain powerful alliances possible. At other times, however, fundamental discrepancies in the meaning of the term *teacher quality* are immediately surfaced, which results in the polarization of various constituencies and makes coalitions unlikely.

### Core American Values

One of the most interesting things our analysis reveals is that despite major differences in underlying ideologies and specific policy recommendations, each of the five discourses we identified comes to the policy table dressed in the verbal garments of core American values and traditions. This apparent paradox is possible because the nation has more than one set of core values—even though some of these are inconsistent with one another—and also because what are sometimes taken to be single concepts really have multiple meanings. For example, Discourse #3 (globalized society) is wrapped in the verbal clothing of world leadership, competition, economic prosperity for all, and the steady march of Western progress, all of which are dear to Americans. Along somewhat different (but simultaneously somewhat similar) lines, Discourse #2 (teacher quality and the market) appeals to freedom, choice, competition, individual progress, and free enterprise, ideals that are also at the forefront of national consciousness. On the other hand, Discourse #1 (the teacher quality gap), Discourse #4 (professional preparation), and Discourse #5 (social justice) all wear the verbal attire of equality, fairness, justice, and civil rights, although Discourse #1 completes the outfit with progress-based assessment measures, Discourse #4 completes it with professional performance, and Discourse #5 emphasizes societal redistribution and social recognition. Appealing to core American values is a rhetorical strategy as old as American politics itself; however, overlapping interests and the multiple meanings of values-oriented language sometimes make for unexpected coalitions and divisions around issues of teacher quality and preparation.

### Constructions of Diversity

Within the five discourses, diversity is constructed in a variety of ways, some of which are made much more explicit than others. Discourse #1 (teacher quality gap), for example, focuses explicitly on inequalities in the distribution of teacher quality to schools with large numbers of poor students and students who are members of minority racial groups. Here, equality is defined as "same," and inequality is just the opposite. Thus it is assumed that the problem of inequality will be resolved when diverse school populations have the same access to teacher quality as do those in majority populations. As we noted earlier, from the perspective of this discourse, the emphasis is not on changing the existing arrangements of schooling (e.g., cur-



riculum, instructional goals, and accountability measures) but rather making sure everybody has the same access to the existing arrangements.

In contrast, Discourse #2 (market) explicitly rejects race-based notions of accountability and eschews efforts to ensure equal opportunities based on racial and other kinds of diversity. Rather, Discourse #2 emphasizes individual progress, based on the assumption that societal change is the result of all persons pursuing their own informed self-interests. Discourse #3 (globalized society) defines the problem of diversity in terms of the increasing numbers of school students (especially those in poor and minority schools) who are not prepared for work or tertiary education, which threatens the economic prosperity of the nation and its ability to compete in the knowledge economy. Here diversity is constructed as a problem that interferes with the robustness of the economy in a globalized society. On the other hand, solving this problem by making sure that diverse groups have opportunities to be taught by high-quality teachers is regarded as not only good for individuals, who will then be able to find a place in today's work force, but also good for the economy.

As we have shown, both Discourse #4 (professionalization) and Discourse #5 (social justice) explicitly reject a view of diversity as deficit, which is implicit in the first three discourses. Instead, Discourses #4 and 5 construct diversity as an asset, emphasizing that quality teaching means building on all students' diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources in order to develop new knowledge and skills and respond to specific learning needs. In addition, Discourse #5 directly challenges the current system, making it clear that better access to a faulty curriculum and universal application of a flawed sense of educational purpose to which many social groups have not contributed in the first place is not the solution to problems of inequality and inequity.

### **Coalitions, Culprits, and Relations of Power**

It is important to note that although the five discourses we discuss in this chapter are identifiable and distinctive, they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, some strands of certain discourses are at times braided and intertwined with strands of other discourses that share some, but not all, of their assumptions and conclusions. The braiding (but also unbraiding) of these discourses reflect the recent history of education policy writ large, which features not only unprecedented policies but also the emergence of unprecedented formal and informal coalitions, compromises, and strategizing for expediency. For example, Discourse #2 (market) has tenets that are fundamentally inconsistent with the civil rights orientation of the teacher quality gap (Discourse #1). These differences notwithstanding, certain strands of these two discourses, especially praise for alternate routes into teaching and blame for university-based teacher education and teachers' union policies, have been braided together in many debates about teacher preparation with highly effective results. On the other hand, these two discourses may also be deliberately unbraided, as we indicated in our discussion of Discourse #2, if and when it becomes clear that their coalition requires too many compromises and concessions from one side and not enough political payoff.

Along somewhat different lines, it is important to note that the rights-based orientation of Discourse #1 (teacher quality gap) and the knowledge economy theme of Discourse #3 (globalized society) share a fundamental commitment to public

education, while Discourse #2 (market), which is aligned with larger privatization agendas, does not. However, all three of these discourses emphasize accountability and outcomes, and all three reach some of the same conclusions about who is to blame (e.g., teachers unions, current state and federal policies) and who should be praised (e.g., alternate routes, state-level data systems linking students, teachers, and teacher education programs) when it comes to teacher quality. This helps explain why these discourses are prominent in federal- and state-level debates and why their proponents have sometimes formed powerful alliances.

As we noted in our discussions of some of the discourses, a powerful motivator for political maneuvering around policies related to teacher quality and preparation is avoiding being cast as a "culprit" in whatever framing of the problem has gained ground, or, on the flip side, casting one's opponent as a culprit in order to marginalize a viewpoint. This is part of what explains the gradual shift in teacher education's higher education and professional communities toward evidence- and accountability-based standards for accreditation and licensure. It also helps to explain the brouhaha surrounding President Obama's choice for Secretary of Education, in which Linda Darling-Hammond was cast as culprit and painted with the brush of "status quo/antireform," despite more than two decades of crusading for change in schools, licensing and certification standards, and teacher preparation programs.

### Teacher Quality and Teacher Education: The Politics of Policy

Throughout this chapter, we have taken an explicitly political perspective on policy by assuming that ambiguity, conflict, and competing goals are inherent in human societies. From this perspective, politics is a "creative and valued feature of social existence" (Stone, 2002, p. x) and the "process by which citizens with varied interests and opinions can negotiate differences and clarify places where values conflict" (Westheimer, 2004, p. 231). This view of the politics of policy is quite different from the view that "being political" about teacher quality and teacher education is equated with being partisan and is, thus, a barrier to understanding or to improvement. From our perspective, it is impossible to debate teacher quality-teacher education policy while remaining politically neutral, value free, and outside of larger debates about educational goals and means.

To the contrary, our analysis in this chapter makes it clear that policy debates about teacher quality and preparation are inherently and unavoidably political. Whether made explicit or not, these debates involve the negotiation of conflicting values and ideologies about teaching and learning, curriculum, difference and diversity, accountability, individual and group progress, the role of schooling in democracies, the relationship between education and national economic health, and the persons and structures that govern and regulate all of these.

### NOTES

1. There are multiple branches within this approach, and various analysts draw upon diverse theoretical traditions, some of which are related to controversies surrounding post-structuralism. These issues are not within the scope of the discussion here.

2. Arne Duncan was an original signatory of this agenda; he is also a signatory of the Broader, Bolder Agenda, which is discussed under Discourse #5. Duncan was the only signer of both of these documents.

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