2017

TEAC 908E: Critical Conversations in U.S. Teacher Education Policy and Practice—A Peer Review of Teaching Project Benchmark Portfolio

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TEAC 908E: Critical Conversations in U.S. Teacher Education Policy and Practice
A Peer Review of Teaching Project Benchmark Portfolio

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Abstract

Since compulsory school began in the early 1900s, there have been lively and at times intense debates regarding how teachers ought to be prepared. Current debates are particularly pitched as the achievement gap persists and teacher attrition remains high, made more intense by the level of polarization in the country. Debates in the field of teacher preparation, like the country writ large, are often characterized more by heat than light. Given this reality, I opted to use this peer review of teaching opportunity to think about my graduate course as a place where students could practice perspective-taking and dialogue around issues in teacher education policy and practice. There were three goals that guided my re-envisioning of the course: making the course more focused on depth rather than breadth; introducing many different perspectives on the same problem; and creating assessment opportunities that reflected and facilitated my aim of helping my students see the field of teacher preparation as a conversational space, and one that they were a part of.

Keywords: teacher education, dialogic teaching, perspective-taking, podcasting
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Objectives of Peer Review Course Portfolio

I have three objectives for this course portfolio: 1) to share context for the creation and teaching of this new graduate seminar in Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education; 2) to describe the substantive re-envisioning of the course from the first time I taught it in 2013 to the second time I taught it in 2017; and 3) to illustrate, through select student reflections and assignments, how these changes enabled students to better meet the course goals, especially regarding the approach to teach education as a critical conversation.

Participation in peer review of teaching has invited me to consider the differences between my approaches to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. Because I teach secondary English teachers how to teach, my methods in those classes are interactive, research-based, and aimed at modeling the kinds of pedagogical practices I am trying to encourage my preservice teachers to use. While I have generally centralized student-to-student interaction and constructivist learning opportunities in my graduate courses, what I realized in re-envisioning my focal course is that I have excluded some of the most central parts of effective teaching methods in my graduate courses: scaffolding, explicit attention to learning outcomes, and modeling.

Participating in the Peer Review of Teaching program afforded me the time, space, and support to enact the changes I describe in this portfolio, and I believe the course has been much strengthened as a result. What follows here is a discussion of the ways in which I have adjusted my instruction to include these pedagogical moves more deliberately and more consistently.

Description of the Course

The focal course for peer review of teaching project was a graduate course I teach in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Education (TLTE): TEAC 908E, Critical Conversations in U.S. Teacher Preparation Policy and Practice: Teacher Education To What End? Below is the course description:

We are currently living through a pivotal historical moment in teacher education, one that is marked by intense and sometimes vitriolic debates regarding where and how teachers should be prepared. These debates are grounded in some of the most basic questions about teaching and teacher education such as the role for which teachers are prepared, who should prepare them, when and where that preparation should take place, what a program’s curriculum should be, how that curriculum should be determined, and how to evaluate the quality of a teacher’s preparation. These debates around the length, quality, and location of experience become increasingly pitched when we consider the intractable problems of urban schooling, including the dogged persistence of the “achievement gap” (or, as Ladson-Billings corrects, “education debt”) in American schools, when poor kids and kids of color are consistently outperformed by their white, wealthier counterparts on standardized tests; when we see the brutal statistics regarding the attrition of teachers in high-needs urban schools, with almost 50% of teachers leaving within three years; and when we watch the dropout rates for poor and non-white students in American high schools remain unconscionably high.
In this doctoral seminar, we will explore some of these issues as they pertain to teacher education in the United States. Through examining media artifacts, analyzing select books and readings, and engaging in activities and discussion, we will overview the key issues in teacher education, the current context for teacher education in the U.S., the historical development of teacher education, agendas for reform, alternative pathways to teaching, external and internal critiques of university-based teacher education, and the implications of the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). At the core of this seminar will be an ongoing discussion regarding how we might determine the quality of teacher education programs and develop policies at the state and national level to support high quality teacher preparation.

My goal is to help each student find ways to make the course material and course projects meaningful and relevant in relation to their own intellectual and scholarly commitments and curiosities. Finally, I think it is crucial to note the many of the issues that we will discuss in this class have been vigorously and in many cases passionately debated throughout the nation today. Although we all have our own positions on these issues, I hope that we will have the kind of environment in our class where we all feel safe and supported in expressing our points of view, where we stick to discussion of the issues (rather than personal attacks), and where we listen carefully to all points of view.

Context

When I created this course in the spring of my first year as an Assistant Professor at UNL, I had two primary motivations. The first was to create an intellectual space for graduate students to engage in the many debates in the United States regarding how teachers are prepared. The second motivation was to contribute to my department’s repertoire of graduate classes, especially in the Foundations area. Moreover, given that TLTE’s explicit mission is to prepare teachers, the creation of a course focused exclusively on this topic—as a field of inquiry—seemed like an important contribution.

The central goal for this course is to situate the scholarship and work regarding the preparation of teachers in the United States an historical context in order to help students better understand the origins and persistence of central debates in the field: What should teachers know, understand, and be able to do before becoming a teacher of record; Where should the majority of a teacher’s preparation take place?; and How long should that preparation take? And, more recently, What are the different visions or aims for teacher preparation in this country (i.e., the “to what end?” of teacher education)?

Enrollment

The graduate students who take this course are typically doctoral students who are, by default, working as teacher educators as part of their assistantships in the department. As a function of their work with pre-service teachers, these graduate students are often intimately familiar with the challenges of preparing teachers, especially when they use critical, multicultural, and justice-oriented lenses in their work. However, given the solitary and haphazard nature of this work, graduate students are not often attuned to the ways in which their specific struggles and
approaches to preparing teachers—especially related to issues of multicultural teacher preparation, race, social class, and privilege—are parts of a much larger debate regarding teacher preparation. This course, therefore, aims to connect students not only with the historical context of teacher preparation in the country, but also aims to familiarize students to the ongoing conversations and debates around where, how, and to what end teacher should be prepared.

Course Selection

I chose to focus my peer review of teaching efforts on this graduate course for two reasons. The first is that I have not taught this course for four years and wanted to revisit the course with new perspectives, both in terms of content and in terms of student learning goals. In part this was due to what I knew of my students’ learning experience in my 2013 iteration of the course. Although my student evaluations for my 908E course (in 2013) were strong (4.78/5.0), the critiques of the course resonated with my own reflections on what had gone well and what needed improvement. For example, some students shared that they would have liked more feedback and clearer expectations. One student explained (italics mine):

Overall, I can't say how much I enjoyed the course and how much I learned. I wish, though that we had had clearer guidelines for assignments and clearer expectations. I'm not hoping for a rubric or even a "here's what you need to do to get an A" statement, by any means, but slightly more guidance would have been helpful, particularly for those of us who may be less familiar with the conventions of the field or expectations of the department. work that is "consummate with a seminar project" can mean very different things in different contexts. Perhaps receiving more feedback throughout the course of the semester, even just via a short e-mail check-in, regarding our progress in the course, would have helped to alleviate some of these anxieties (Graduate student, TEAC 908E, Spring 2013)

Other students felt the reading load too heavy, made more difficult by the lack of focus on my part. For example, one student explained:

Perhaps it is just my inexperience, but it felt like quite a heavy reading load. While each of the readings individually were good, with so many it was hard to read anything with any kind of depth or attentiveness. Moreover, while I appreciated reading the "media artifacts" and the other varieties of sources we did, having so many separate readings each week felt overwhelming. Just organizing what needed to be read when, felt like a weekly assignment in itself. I also wish we had been able to spend more time readings/ideas, or perhaps engage with them through more informal writing. I often felt as though I'd work hard to each week’s readings and then in class we'd rarely talk about the article or issue that I had focused on. (Graduate student, TEAC 908E, Spring 2013).

As I went into this peer review of teaching experience, I realized that these student critiques provided a useful starting point for reimagining and restricting the course.

The second reason I chose to focus on this particular graduate course related to my own development as a researcher and scholar in teacher education. In 2016, my book, Toward a Framework of Resources for Learning to Teach: Rethinking U.S. Teacher Preparation, was
published by Palgrave Macmillan. Because the majority of this book was written after I taught my (then, new) course on teacher preparation, when I decided to teach my seminar again I realized that my own perspectives and approaches to thinking about teacher preparation has changed substantially. The most significant shift in my thinking related to approaching teacher preparation from a position of critical conversation (rather than as a set of related but distinct “agendas”). Therefore, I knew that when I taught the course again that reorganizing it around these new understandings would be helpful.

Course Goals

The central goal for my course portfolio was to structure my content and teaching methods so that I afforded students more structured, deliberate opportunities to learn to have critical conversations in the field of U.S. teacher education. Because my previous iteration of the course did not have specific learning goals identified—something I believe both reflected and created a lack of focus for my students—I started my work in the Peer Review of Teaching Project by creating six specific student learning objectives. By the end of the course, I wanted students to be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the major arguments and historical trends related to U.S. pre-service and initial teacher preparation;

2. Identify authors’ central claims, analyze authors’ use and definition of evidence, and map connections – if any—between authors’ affiliations (university, foundation, center, corporation) and their citations, evidence, and arguments;

3. Demonstrate critical and curious engagement with assigned texts (broadly defined) and with one another in writing and discussion;

4. Approach the scholarship and the issues currently being debated in teacher education from a position of critical conversation, where understanding multiple perspectives and viewpoints is understood as a necessary precursor to advancing a formal argument;

5. Collaboratively engage in thoughtful conversations with teachers, parents, community members, teach educators, activists, students, and/or politicians around an issue of importance to you;

6. Consider the preparation of teachers through the larger lens of aims in schooling: Public education to what end? Preparing teachers to what end?

Teaching Methods and Activities

When I first created and taught this course in 2013, my teaching methods and activities largely mirrored the kinds of graduate courses I had taken with a heavy focus on reading, student presentations, and a culminating seminar paper (20-25 pages). This replication of my own
graduate work can clearly be seen in my 2013 syllabus which lays out the following requirements for my students (see Appendix 1)

1) **A focused conceptual and/or empirical inquiry related to the education of teachers.**
   This can be a more in-depth investigation of an issue discussed in class or in your group project, an examination of another issue not addressed in class, a modest research study that you carry out either on something related to one of our teacher education programs at UNL, or a self-study of some aspect of your own practice as a teacher educator. I am open to people proposing alternatives to an academic paper for representing what they have learned in this course project such as a film. I would like to meet with each person outside of class to discuss your individual project and help you design something that is manageable within the framework of a 3-credit course. Collaborative projects are encouraged. If you choose to write a traditional paper—alone or in collaboration with another—aim for 20-25 pages excluding references. This will be due on the last day of class and will comprise 60% of your final grade.

2) **A group presentation** wherein you and two to three of your classmates select a contemporary reform project or issue in teacher education that there will not be time for everyone to study or study in as much depth within the seminar. This will involve the reading of a few additional papers, and/or web site material on the reform project or study, and doing a presentation in class. The presentation of the report will be for 30-45 minutes including discussion. These presentations will be given throughout the last three classes of the semester and will comprise 20% of your grade.

3) **Discussion facilitation, conducted in pairs.** During the first course meeting, you will sign up to facilitate discussion with one other classmate. These facilitations should be 90 minutes long and include the following: a 1-2 page handout synthesizing the major issues and arguments in the week’s reading; some kind of interactive activity that engages the class in deeper thinking and conversation about the issue(s) at hand; and two to three open-ended discussion questions (i.e., ones that allow us to engage different perspectives and do not lead everyone to one “correct” answer) used to catalyze class conversation. These facilitations will be given throughout the semester and will comprise 20% of your grade.

My rationale for these assignments stemmed from my position that a central part of a graduate student’s academic formation should include taking responsibility for presenting course material. In retrospect, however, I realized that I had compromised my own commitment to teaching (through modeling, scaffolding, and facilitating discussion) by off-loading the bulk of the intellectual work to my students who were just beginning to think about policies and practices in teacher education and who would therefore benefit from more guidance on my part.

For example, my rationale for assigning discussion facilitation of reading material was to encourage close reading in the service of helping others understand. While this method of instruction—student-led discussion of material—was well-intended and emerged from a constructivist approach to teaching, I realized that week after week I was not only dissatisfied
with the intellectual rigor of the presentations, but that I was also unsure about whether or not the class was deepening their understanding of the issues in teacher preparation.

Additionally, I worried that I was doing my students a disservice my relinquishing my teacher role to students who were themselves just beginning to learn about the complicated field of teacher preparation. When it came to preparing them to do this work, I had modeled, in writing, the kinds of discussion questions that I wanted to see my students create and enact, but without more scaffolding on my part that kind of model did not suffice. As I radically revised my syllabus for this semester, I decided to eliminate the student discussion facilitation of course material and, instead, I structured the course around three modes of instruction that would be more likely to result in meaningful engagement with the course readings: clear course objectives, deliberate scaffolding, and modeling. The revised syllabus for the course can be found in Appendix 2.

Illustrated Changes to Meet Course Goals & Rationale

After reflecting at length about how I could revise my approach to and enactment of my 908E course, I made many substantive changes to the curriculum as well as my teaching. I made these changes in order to better align what I was asking my students to do with the larger goals I had for the class, specifically around helping them become conversant in current teacher education debates.

Curricular Changes

The first thing I did was pare down the reading requirements. For example, in 2013, I assigned three books, 28 academic articles, and 21 media artifacts. In 2017, I assigned 22 academic articles, and no media artifacts. In addition to being more deliberate about the reading load, I reimagined all of the core assignments from my 2013 course. Instead of a seminar paper, group presentations, and discussion facilitation, students were required to complete these three assignments:

1. **Podcast (via This American Life) exploring an issue/topic in teacher preparation.** (60%) Many of you are likely familiar with the National Public Radio show, *This American Life*, hosted by WBEZ Chicago’s Ira Glass ([http://www.thisamericanlife.org/](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/)). This semester, you will be exploring the essential question of the course—*teacher education to what end?*—through a **15-20-minute, two- to three-act podcast modeled after This American Life (TAL)**. In groups of three, you will work to identify a topic and theme—just like *TAL*—that helps us think about the major ideas, themes, and questions of the course. This project is predicated on deliberation and discussion within your group as you make decisions about the subject of your podcast, division of labor, connection to the essential question, etc. In this way, creating the podcast provides a meta-cognitive experience for thinking about and participating in smart, nuanced, and informed conversations regarding teaching, teacher education, and the purpose of schools.
1. **Weekly notebooks and class participation. (30%)** Each week you will be required to upload a *one-page, single-spaced, critical reflection* to Canvas. I simply call these “notebooks.” Notebooks can span a range of topics, but should attend, on some level, to course material, discussions, connections you see between the readings, and burning questions or critiques. Each week, I will read and comment on your writing. I will also assign each person a peer reviewer, so you will also be responsible for commenting (through Canvas) on that person’s writing. In this sense they are fundamentally dialogic. These notebooks will help catalyze lively and engaged class discussions as well as allow me to take a weekly “pulse” on how people are taking up the readings. **In-class participation:** Writing the weekly notebooks will enable you to come to each class having already engaged with core ideas of the texts. My hope is that discussion will be lively, informed, and really aimed at developing greater understandings of both the individual text at hand as well as the way that it connects to other texts, ideas, and discussions. Participating in class means more than just talking; it means listening and posing questions, too, both in large and small group discussions. It means being aware of talk time as well. Specifically, we will be working regularly in small group discussions to identify and consider the following aspects of each week’s reading(s):

- What is the author’s central claim?
- What counts as evidence in this article/report/brief? Do they cite peer-reviewed research? Policy briefs? Self-reported data on their own work?
- What are their institutional and/or corporate affiliations? Who is cited?

2. **Op-Ed piece. (10%)** The third requirement (10% of your grade) is to write a 500-1000 word essay modeled after an Op/Ed piece that is found in local and national newspapers on any issue that we have addressed in class. You should identify the issue and then take a position on the issue and defend it. **During the second to last class session on April 17, you will bring ten copies of your Op-Ed for discussion.** On this day, we will share our Op-Eds with the class and select one to respond to in class (in writing).

In addition to revising the central assignments in the course to better match my goal—critical conversations in teacher education—I used backwards design to re-imagine my course. Using the central question from my own research in teacher education, “Teacher Education To What End?”, I reconstituted the class around six related but distinct goals and linked in-class activities and larger assignments directly to those goals. (Table I).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Objectives</th>
<th>Course Activities</th>
<th>How will I assess this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the major arguments and historical trends related to U.S. pre-service and initial teacher preparation.</td>
<td>In-class discussion</td>
<td>Weekly notebooks (uploaded to Canvas and peer-reviewed by me and a classmate)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Small group activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guest lecture by historian James Fraser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify authors’ central claims, analyze authors’ use and definition of evidence, and map connections – if</td>
<td>Stations activity</td>
<td>Weekly notebooks (uploaded to Canvas and peer-reviewed by me and a classmate)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Mapping the Terrain”</td>
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<tr>
<td>any—between authors’ affiliations (university, foundation, center, corporation) and their citations, evidence, and arguments.</td>
<td>activity</td>
<td>Reading students’ “Mapping the Terrain” charts to assess understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrate critical and curious engagement with assigned texts (broadly defined) and with one another in writing and discussion.</td>
<td>In-class discussion</td>
<td>Weekly notebooks (uploaded to Canvas and peer-reviewed by me and a classmate)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Small group discussion and informal free writing</td>
<td>Podcast assignment</td>
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<td>Op-Ed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approach the scholarship and the issues currently being debated in teacher education from a position of critical conversation, where understanding multiple perspectives and viewpoints is understood as a necessary precursor to advancing a formal argument.</td>
<td>In-class discussion</td>
<td>Podcast assignment</td>
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<td>Mapping activities</td>
<td>Op-Ed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guest lecture by author and scholar Ken Zeichner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboratively engage in thoughtful conversations with teachers, parents, community members, teach educators, activists, students, and/or politicians around an issue of importance to you.</td>
<td>In-class analysis of Op-Ed writing</td>
<td>Op-Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of instructor’s model Op-Ed</td>
<td>Podcast assignment</td>
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<td>Guest lecture by activist scholar and dean, Maureen Gillette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider the preparation of teachers through the larger lens of aims in schooling: Public education to what end? Preparing teachers to what end?</td>
<td>Aims activity. (Scenario: teaching English for success on a test vs. teaching English for critical citizenship.)</td>
<td>Podcast assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-class discussion</td>
<td>Weekly notebooks (uploaded to Canvas and peer-reviewed by me and a classmate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I

**Pedagogical Adjustments**

Finally, as I re-envisioned my course, attended much more carefully to my own teaching practices, especially when it came to scaffolding instruction and modeling assignments. Yes, I wanted to be student-centered and constructivist, but this did not mean that I should background myself in the class as I largely did in 2013. And so in my 2017 iteration of the course, I
deliberately enacted the kinds of teaching practices that defined my teaching as a secondary English teacher as well as the kinds of practices I modeled and taught with my preservice secondary English teachers at UNL.

Scaffolding

The first shift in my teaching practices related to scaffolding. In 2013, I had begun the semester by explaining—primarily through lecture—how a predictable set of professional organizations, think tanks, venture philanthropists, and university scholars interacted with and argued over the central questions in teacher preparation. In 2017, rather than telling my students about the tensions and debates in the field, I engaged my students inductively. The first way I did this was through stations where they interacted with short texts around an issue in teacher education. With each text, I asked them to consider the following questions:

- What do you notice about the language that is being used in this piece?
- What claims are being made?
- How is teaching conceived of?
- How is good teaching measured?
- How is university teacher preparation being described?

After they had visited all five stations, they I asked them to predict the central themes and issues we would be studying throughout the semester. This assignment can be found in Appendix 3.

The following week, I asked students to build on their nascent understandings of the course themes through a mapping activity (see Appendix 4) This entailed assigning small groups one of several stakeholders in teacher preparation—the Carnegie Corporation, the NewSchools Venture Fund, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)—and having them learn about that group through their website. I offered a set of questions to guide their searches:

- What does this group do? Where do they operate in the US?
- How is the work of teaching described? What is the knowledge base?
- “Who We Are”; corporate partnerships; Board of Directors. Any and all observations about language used, tone, purpose, etc.
- What links are there between the groups? What names come up a lot? Orthodoxy? Heterodoxy? Border crossers?

These activities helped me actualize my pedagogical goals by shifting my focus toward student inquiry and student learning.

Modeling

A second shift in my teaching methods involved modeling the work that I was asking my students to do. Because weekly writing (“notebooks”) was a requirement for my class, I shared a model notebook I had written. We discussed the moves I made as a thinker in order to make explicit the line I was walking between personal reflection and textual analysis. The requirement
of a 500-1000 word Op-Ed provided a second opportunity for me to model what I was asking them to do. In March of 2017, I wrote and published an Op-Ed in the Lincoln Journal Star so that I would be able to speak to this unique writing process. I brought hard copies of the published Op-Ed into class and together we analyzed the arguments and rhetorical moves of the piece. I was able to explain the invisible aspects of this writing—the word choice I switched up at the last minute, the place where I softened by tone, the paragraph where I included a nod to the Nebraskan reader—in order to surface the rhetorical choices I had made when writing this piece for publication.

**Student Learning**

As outlined in the previous sections, I re-envisioned this class around six central goals for my graduate students and created three core requirements—weekly papers (“notebooks”), an Op-Ed, and a 20-minute group podcast project—all aimed at giving students an opportunity to develop competence around these outcomes:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the major arguments and historical trends related to U.S. pre-service and initial teacher preparation;

- Identify authors’ central claims, analyze authors’ use and definition of evidence, and map connections—in any—between authors’ affiliations (university, foundation, center, corporation) and their citations, evidence, and arguments;

- Demonstrate critical and curious engagement with assigned texts (broadly defined) and with one another in writing and discussion;

- Approach the scholarship and the issues currently being debated in teacher education from a position of critical conversation, where understanding multiple perspectives and viewpoints is understood as a necessary precursor to advancing a formal argument;

- Collaboratively engage in thoughtful conversations with teachers, parents, community members, teach educators, activists, students, and/or politicians around an issue of importance to you;

- Consider the preparation of teachers through the larger lens of aims in schooling: Public education to what end? Preparing teachers to what end?

While the results of the UNL course evaluation for 908E (4.78/5.0) indicate that most students had positive experience in class, I am well aware that these measures do not necessarily reflect what students learned. In order to provide a snapshot of my students’ learning throughout the graduate seminar, I share examples of student work from the courses three categories of assessment (notebooks, Op-Eds, and final Podcast project). In these examples, I point out the places where students demonstrated a solid understanding of the learning goals (listed above). These examples also include my feedback to the student in order to highlight, on a meta level, how the concept of conversation and dialogue expressed itself in my feedback to students. Taken
together, these snapshots are intended to provide a window into the learning—often messy and non-linear, as you will see—of my students in 908E.

**Notebooks**

Over the course of the semester, each student was required to write 11 short papers on the week’s reading(s). Generally between 600-800 words each, these notebooks were intended to give students space to think through, challenge, or connect the ideas and arguments from the week’s reading to larger conversations and questions of the course. In addition to writing these weekly papers, students were also required to give peer feedback (randomly assigned through Canvas) to one person. The nine (9) students in this graduate seminar had a 100% completion rate. These were graded on a completed/not completed scale.

Julie’s notebook is representative of the work students turned in each week. In the excerpt below, I italicize the places where Julie demonstrates genuine engagement with one or more of the learning outcomes of the course.

“I liked how the readings this week seem to fill the space between the two ‘sides’ of the teacher education issue. I appreciated Levine’s concrete examples of both exemplary and non-exemplary program elements. This was a nice change from the some of the sweeping (unsubstantiated) generalizations of the Walsh and Gastic readings. The Levine examples in the policy report also built upon the research-focused review we read by Darling-Hammond. I still find it surprising that there are teacher ed programs that exist without strong opportunities for practice. . . . He also seemed to argue that accreditation is next to meaningless. I’d like to talk more about this. I can see how his findings might be used as ammunition for deregulation. He positions himself as an educator, but he is also on the board of Relay? This didn’t mean much to me until I read the next article! Wait…. I was a little “woo-ed” by Levine until I read Zeichner. Now I am feeling like he was not as transparent as he could have been. Although I suspect his intent was not smoke and mirrors, his report has become the “go-to” source to support alternative teacher ed programs.”

Julie is making several important moves in her notebook. She is connecting the political dots when she realizes that one of the authors is on the Board of Directors for a teacher preparation reform that we had critiqued in class (Relay Graduate School of Education). This realization prompts her to think more critically about his position as an author and the agenda he might be implicitly supporting.

In her feedback to Julie’s revelation that the author is on the Board of Directors, Grace writes, “I can't remember if he mentioned this in the article, but knowing this certainly changes the way we look at his findings.” In Julie’s notebook and Grace’s response, we see that students are critically examining who the author is, what his affiliations are, and what that might suggest about his ideological agenda.
Op-Eds

Given the emphasis on critical conversations in teacher preparation, I required that each student write and revise a 500 to 1,000-word Op-Ed that could be, if the student wanted, sent out for publication. (As mentioned in the previous section, I wrote and published an Op-Ed in the Lincoln Journal Star as a way to model this process). Students wrote on a wide range of issues, including the defunding of community colleges in Nebraska, school choice and its negative effects on Catholic schooling, and educational activism in the time of Betsy DeVos. Students brought in complete drafts of their Op-Ed three weeks before it was due. I dedicated an entire class to having students workshop their work, integrate feedback, and begin the revision process.

In the section below, I share an excerpt of Corinne’s Op-Ed followed by my feedback to her.

Pledging Allegiance in the English Language Learning Classroom

On August 10, 2012, a change to Rule 10 was voted in with unanimous approval from the Nebraska Board of Education, requiring that each public school in every Nebraska public school district establish a set period during the day "during which pupils will be led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in the presence of the flag of the United States of America, in grades kindergarten through twelve." Rule 10 does contain the condition that "[p]upil participation in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance shall be voluntary," allowing students to exercise the right to stand silently or remain seated during, but insisting they "respect the rights of those pupils electing to participate."

This has morphed into LB 308 and LB 155.

Even with the condition for students to opt out of the Pledge, nearly five years later, Nebraska classrooms have a big problem surrounding this sanctioned heightened patriotism.

In my feedback to her, I try to help her focus her central argument about why LB 308 might negatively affect English Language Learners (ELLs) in Nebraska.

Hi, Corinne,

I have read your original op-ed and then this one (several times) and my main thought is that you have several (related) arguments packed into this one piece: the Pledge, your ELL students, the current political climate (of fear), and LB 308. The most compelling thread I see here is your question about what it means to be American, especially for your students who are largely immigrant/refugee. I wonder if you could cut out the part about the pledge and get right to the problematic LB 308. What are these legislators and supporters of the bill hoping this will accomplish? What problem is it addressing in LPS? It looks innocuous enough, after all, one could say, we live in America and it should be a point of pride. The issue you bring up about the need for a more critical engagement with the question of patriotism is really, really important and one that I think would really provide a center of gravity to the piece. This paragraph (pasted below) gets to what I think is the heart of the piece. You write:

This is a time for rich discussion and critical analysis, to look at the reality of current events and know that no nation is made great simply by teaching its citizenry that is what
it is. Greatness comes through equity and empathy, not through fear, paranoia, and committees such as the one proposed in LB 308.

The underlying assumption of this bill is that patriotism should look one certain way, which is to say that it should be ticker tape parades and flags. Your students’ precarious position in this country and the fear they experience with ICE raids, a wall, etc. might be concrete way for you to think through the ways in which this bill will get really complicated really fast. The bill assumes a one-dimensional, uncontroversial interpretation and enactment of Americanism; you know—as a teacher, a traveler, and an ELL instructor—that the topic of Americanism (and the mandating of a particular expression of Americanism) is deeply fraught. It always has been.

So perhaps making that the main point of inquiry would be a way to focus the piece. . .

Let me know if you want to chat about this over the weekend!

Lauren

In Corinne’s Op-Ed draft, she is trying to find a way into the conversation about legislation regarding patriotism. My comments to her are aimed at helping her hone her central argument so that her engagement with policy-makers, educators, and parents is more streamlined and pointed.

Podcasts

The podcast project was the biggest and most important assignment of the semester. Students worked in self-selected groups to identify and issue that they wanted to pursue for their podcast. In order to prepare them for this project, I brought in clips from education-related This American Life podcasts and together we analyzed the genre of the podcast. We listed the conventions we could identify in the podcasts including the register of the host (informal and aimed at a popular audience), the placement and selection of music, the use of evidence (experts, normal citizens, etc.), and the use of Big Questions to drive the podcast. After we did that, students began to interview people, transcribe those interviews, code interviews for themes, and learn the technology to create the podcast. About one month before the end of the semester, I had students generate the criteria for the podcast rubric. I used their criteria to create the final rubric (see Appendix 5)

In the section that follows, I share an excerpt from one of the four group podcasts, italicizing the places where students demonstrate their grasp of one or more of the six course goals. After the excerpt, I include my written feedback and assessment on Karen and David’s podcast.

Karen and David—Social Justice: Diversity in the Teacher Workforce


D: And I am David. Today our podcast considers the current perception that we have teacher shortage in the United States. Do we? And if so, what does this have to do with social justice? Well, it depends on how you look at it. Let’s begin with a brief overview the current student and teaching population in the US. Currently, about 82% of teachers are White and we also know that women outnumber men in teaching by a large margin. It’s also important to compare the
demographics of our teacher population with the demographics of the students they teach in their classrooms each day. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, just 51% of students identified as White in 2012 and the projection is that that percentage will drop to 46% by 2024. These statistics alone may cause us to wonder about the potential implications for social justice, but let’s dig deeper into this “so-called” teacher shortage just a little bit more. It turns out that many of the school districts that need teachers are in low-income communities with high percentages of students of color. Teaching positions in these schools, for many reasons we won’t go into here, do not tend to attract as many candidates from the mostly White, female teaching pool. Additionally, research has found that many teachers that do end up teaching in these schools don’t stay for long. This phenomenon has been referred to as the “leaky pipeline”. So, in a way, the U.S. does need more teachers. But critics have argued that we don’t just need more teachers, but certain teachers, who are ready to go into these underserved communities. So, who are these would-be teachers and where do we find them? How do we prepare them to teach? And how are they uniquely suited to fix the leaky pipeline? This podcast addresses this issue through interviews with a current pre-service teacher and an education professor at a local university.

2:27

Act One: Arlicia

K: So let’s talk about our first question. Who are these teachers and where do we find them? I would like to introduce you to Arlicia, or Arli for short. Arli is in the elementary education teacher education program at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Arli identifies herself as black and was eager to share with me her own stories of schooling and her thoughts about being a student of color in a teacher education program. She grew up in Omaha, Nebraska and says although most of her teachers were white, her two favorite teachers were black. First she told me about her second grade teacher Mr. Stevens…

*I went to school in North Omaha so ya know there's a lot of black students but not a lot of black teachers, except one male teacher that was black...my second grade, I remember him 'cause me and my brother both had him and he was very...like a caregiver at school that you really don't have as much...ya know like.. He really took kids under his wing like they were his own. um...he used to say "At school I'm yo' mama an' yo daddy". So, that was really him. He pushed me. I remember one time... (fade out)*

K: Next, Arli told me about Mrs. Johnson who was Arli’s 5th grade teacher and who had been one of the first black teachers in Arli’s school.

*She um... just from little things she always pushed me. At the time I said, mom I do NOT like her she always want me to do extra! She wants me to do extra work, but she really pushed and wanted me to be in the Challenge Program and I really didn't push myself cause school came naturally to me so I could just get by with this, and not, you know, I'm good, but it was a challenge program in the fifth grade so she's the one that actually started that uphill for me.*

K: Mrs. Johnson had an impact on Arli’s academic performance that has stayed with her even in college. Sadly, Arli also shared that Mrs. Simpson passed away last year. It is not surprising that both of Arli’s favorite teachers share her racial identity. In a review of research on the academic performance of minority students, Ana Maria Villegas and her colleague Danné Davis, both from Montclair State University, found that students of color are more often successful in classrooms with same-race teachers or when they are exposed to a staff of teachers that is racially and ethnically representative of the student population. But, why? What is it that makes the different? Arli had dozens of teachers to choose from, why did these two stand out? Have we answered our
questions about who are the teachers we need to teach and how are they uniquely suited? It almost seems too easy – Recruit teachers of color, assign them to teach students who look like them – boom – problem solved. Or is it more complicated than that? David finds out more for us in Act 2.”

Feedback for Karen and David

This is a terrific podcast, Karen and David. You do an artful job integrating statistics, snippets of interviews, and central arguments from readings. Your transition, for example, at 4:40, was perfect: it links the story about Arli with the bigger picture in terms of diversity in teacher preparation. And, at 5:08, you link it right back to the larger (big) question re: teachers of color. John’s interview compliments and complicates the first act in exactly the right ways (i.e., ”Navajo kids need Navajo teachers, period). I am struck by how well you layer this podcast, especially when you integrate John’s experiences with demographic changes in Compton. EX: "That's what white folks used to say about OUR families!” His point regarding "transracializing" is a good way to assign a concept to the thing you are discovering in the podcast. The link from John’s interview into the larger issues you are exploring in terms of multicultural teacher education (11:28 is) very effective: So how do teacher prep programs inspire this transracialization? In Act III, you transition nicely into Georgia’s interview where you think more institutionally about what we can do to recruit more teachers of color. And then looping back to Arli at the end is not only a great way to bring symmetry to the podcast, but it also leaves another question in the listener’s mind around what kind of cultural (linguistic) assimilation we expect (even when we don’t say that explicitly). "Are you ready to be changed?"-- PERFECT ending. Outstanding job, Karen and David. This left me with lots of new thoughts and ideas around my own practices in teacher preparation. Thank you for all of hard work on this project. Your commitment-- both to the project and to the central questions you explore--is so clear. May I use this as an exemplar in the future? 60/60

Karen and David’s podcast deftly integrated the scholarship from the course, student voices, faculty perspectives, and larger issues of diversifying the teacher workforce. My feedback and grades for the other three groups can be found in Appendix 6

Student Survey on Course Goals

In April of 2017, I distributed an anonymous student survey through Qualtrics to gain insight into how my students perceived their own learning in regards to the main goals for the course. I have represented the results in the table below. The numbers represent students (there were nine students in the class; all nine completed the survey).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Outcome</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Optional Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through this course, I have developed an understanding of the major arguments and historical trends related to U.S. pre-service and initial teacher preparation.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>I have learned more about how education and teacher induction is situated politically, economically, and historically now than I have in all the years of my education and teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through this course, I have learned to identify authors’ central claims and their use and definition of evidence.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Though some readings were dense, weekly reflective writing and discussion helped me to understand authors' claims and connections between and among authors and arguments. I think this skill was necessary for the course, but I like to think I'd largely developed this skill beforehand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through this course, I have learned to map connections – if any—between authors’ affiliations (university, foundation, center, corporation, etc.) and their citations, evidence, and arguments.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Periodic visual mapping and contextualizing lectures/discussions really gave me a holistic understanding of the field. I have definitely learned this, but still am not sure I could do it independently. I relied upon professor guidance and expertise a great deal. I was definitely shown the importance of mapping connections, particularly with the scholarship we investigated, and I hope to use this skill in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout the course, I have demonstrated critical and curious engagement with assigned texts (broadly defined) and with others in this course both through writing (and peer review of notebooks) and discussion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Because this course has been so engaging, it has been enjoyable for me to really think reflectively, critically, and collaboratively.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through this course, I have learned to approach the scholarship and the issues in teacher education from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Many perspectives were introduced, so I am much more aware of perspectives--and therefore better able to consider-- around teacher induction and education than I was before this course.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through this course, I have been encouraged to engage in thoughtful conversations with teachers, parents, community members, teach educators, activists, students, and/or politicians around an issue that is important to me.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Though our final project encouraged interviewing people from various walks of life, the course itself was set up around the voices in the room and in/behind the texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through this course, I have learned to consider the preparation of teachers through the larger lens of None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments (Optional):
This course and its teaching methods have helped me evaluate my own teaching and pedagogical motivations. Course lectures and classes were thoughtful and modeled authentic, intentional, and effective teaching practices. Sometimes philosophically overwhelming but extremely useful for self-awareness as teacher and thinker and for understanding the complexities of teaching and teacher education.

I was challenged to think critically about the ways in which we prepare teachers and read educational policy in general. I have been greatly impacted as a future scholar by this course. Primarily in asking myself not only about the aims (to what end?) of education, but also by asking where the views of other scholars/policy makers are coming from or are connected to (to which beginning?).

I think you did a commendable job of organizing the scholarship in a way that the learning built upon itself and grew the reader's understanding in a logical and systematic way. All instruction seemed careful and deliberate and yet room was left to entertain student questions and requests for additional information. I wish this course could be modified for a required professional development session for everyone in the district--teachers, admin, and LPSDO folks.

Planned Changes

Overall, I was very happy with the way that this course went. The overhauls I made resulted in better learning for students and more meaningful engagement with the central issues and debates of the field. That said, there are several things I will change the next time I teach the course.

Notebooks

This semester, I did not choose to grade the weekly notebooks; rather, I gave feedback on the ideas in the notebooks and simply marked it as complete. There were many notebooks I read over the course of the semester that left me wondering how well the student had read the assigned texts (or if they had read at all). Additionally, there were some students whose writing was rough and whose grammar and usage were problematic. Next time I teach this course, I will create a rubric for what these notebooks should include and look like. Then, I will write a notebook that is intentionally problematic and use this with my students as an opportunity to read and assess the writing with the rubric. After I am sure that they understand what I am looking for, I will begin the weekly writing assignments and will grade them each week based on the rubric that they have already used on my writing. I believe this will raise the stakes in terms of this weekly writing assignment.

Op-Eds

This was my first time assigning an Op-Ed in a course. I will certainly do it again, but I will make sure to give my students more examples of well-written Op-Eds—from across media outlets and political perspectives—so that they see the many ways writers choose to convey their
thinking about a particular issue. I will also generate a rubric for this assignment (I did not have one this year) and like the notebook rubric I discuss above, I will use this rubric on an Op-Ed so that I can make my assessment/evaluation process explicit to my students.

**Podcast Project**

Next time I teach this course, I will make sure that the rubric my students and I created this semester is included in the syllabus. This will give my students a much better sense, from the start, about what I am looking for in this project. I will continue to require that students interview at least two people for their podcast and that they transcribe those interviews. Next time, though, I will carve out more time to use the transcriptions as an opportunity to think about analyzing data. When students complained to me this year about how much of their data was left on the proverbial cutting room floor, I realized that this was very much like the dissertation writing process. And so I think there is a unique opportunity here to mentor graduate students in research and data analysis. Finally, I would like to find an audience for this podcast project (other than the class itself).

**Summary and Overall Assessment of Portfolio Process**

Participating in this Peer Review of Teaching process has been an excellent experience. Teaching is important to me on personal and professional levels, and I often feel like the number of changes I want to make outweigh the time I have to make those changes. This process afforded me time and space to really think about my teaching practices. More than this, having opportunities to meet with faculty from around the university and talk about teaching and problems of practice made me feel more connected to my colleagues in other departments. I am grateful to Jody Kellas, Eve Brank, Courtney Hillebrecht, and Sarah Karle for their support and leadership. I am also grateful to my fellow peer-review-of-teaching colleagues for their good ideas and wonderful support. Finally, I am grateful to my amazing graduate students in TEAC 908E whose openness to this project was much appreciated.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Spring 2013 Syllabus

TEAC 908E
Seminar in Teacher Education:
Debates, Issues, and Policies in U.S. Teacher Education
Spring 2013
Mondays 5:00-7:50
HENZ 35
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Dr. Lauren Gatti
Office: 61E Henzlik
Telephone: 402-472-6385
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: lgatti2@unl.edu

Course Description and Goals

We are currently living through a pivotal historical moment in teacher education, one that is marked by intense and sometimes vitriolic debates regarding where and how teachers should be prepared. These debates are grounded in some of the most basic questions about teaching and teacher education such as the role for which teachers are prepared, who should prepare them, when and where that preparation should take place, what programs’ curriculum should be, how the curriculum should be determined, and how to evaluate the quality of a teacher’s preparation. These debates around the length, quality, and location of experience become increasingly pitched when we consider the intractable problems of urban schooling, including the dogged persistence of the achievement gap in American schools, when poor kids and kids of color are consistently outperformed by their white, wealthier counterparts on standardized tests; when we see the brutal statistics regarding the attrition of teachers in high-needs urban schools, when almost 50% of teachers leave within three years; and when we watch the drop out rates for poor and non white students in American high schools remain unconscionably high.

In this doctoral seminar, we will explore some of these issues as they pertain to teacher education in the United States. Through examining media artifacts, analyzing select books and readings, and engaging in activities and discussion, we will overview the key issues in teacher education, the current context for teacher education in the U.S., the historical development of teacher education, agendas for reform, alternative pathways to teaching, and external and internal critiques of university-based teacher education. At the core of this seminar will be an ongoing discussion regarding how we might determine the quality of teacher education programs and develop policies at the state and national level to support high quality teacher preparation.

My goal is to help each student find ways to make the course material and course projects meaningful and relevant in relation to their own intellectual and scholarly commitments and
curiosities. Finally, I think it is crucial to note the many of the issues that we will discuss in this class have been vigorously and in many cases unproductively debated throughout the nation today. Although I and all of you have our own positions on these issues, I hope that we will have the kind of environment in our class where we all feel safe and supported in expressing our points of view, where we stick to discussion of the issues and avoid attributing personal motives, and where we listen carefully to all points of view.

Course Requirements

There are three core requirements for this class.

4) A focused conceptual and/or empirical inquiry related to the education of teachers. This can be a more in-depth investigation of an issue discussed in class or in your group project, an examination of another issue not addressed in class, a modest research study that you carry out either on something related to one of our teacher education programs at UNL, or a self-study of some aspect of your own practice as a teacher educator. I am open to people proposing alternatives to an academic paper for representing what they have learned in this course project such as a film. I would like to meet with each person outside of class to discuss your individual project and help you design something that is manageable within the framework of a 3-credit course. Collaborative projects are encouraged. If you choose to write a traditional paper—alone or in collaboration with another—aim for 20-25 pages excluding references. This will be due on the last day of class, April 22, and will comprise 60% of your final grade.

5) A group presentation wherein you and two to three of your classmates select a contemporary reform project or issue in teacher education that there will not be time for everyone to study or study in as much depth within the seminar. This will involve the reading of a few additional papers, and/or web site material on the reform project or study, and doing a presentation in class. The presentation of the report will be for 30-45 minutes including discussion. These presentations will be given throughout the last three classes of the semester and will comprise 20% of your grade.

6) Discussion facilitation, conducted in pairs. During the first course meeting, you will sign up to facilitate discussion with one other classmate. These facilitations should be 90 minutes long and include the following: a 1-2 page handout synthesizing the major issues and arguments in the week’s reading; some kind of interactive activity that engages the class in deeper thinking and conversation about the issue(s) at hand; and two to three open-ended discussion questions (i.e., ones that allow us to engage different perspectives and do not lead everyone to one “correct” answer) used to catalyze class conversation. These facilitations will be given throughout the semester and will comprise 20% of your grade.

Course Policies

- Attendance and Participation: Regular attendance and participation are expected. Participation includes reading texts before class meetings and coming prepared with
questions, connections, and comments to stimulate class discussions. If for some reason you are unable to be in class, you should contact me via email before class meets. More than one absence may result in a lowered grade.

- **Academic Integrity:** “Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. To further serve this end, the University supports a Student Code of Conduct which addresses the issue of academic dishonesty.”

- **Diversity:** “The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is committed to a pluralistic campus community through Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.”

**Class Community**

As we all know from our long, long careers as students, class community matters. There are a few things, in my experience, that help build a class community that is positive, intellectually vigorous, playful, and challenging. The first is that people come to class having read the required texts and materials. Coming to class prepared to engage not only enriches our conversations, but also exposes more perspectives and ideas. Related to this is the notion that we all deserve respect. This manifests itself through attentive listening and curiosity about each other’s perspectives. Finally, I know that a three-hour class at the end of a Monday is a tough one. Food helps. I will distribute a sign-up sheet for snacks during the first class. Exemplary cooking and baking may or may not be factored into “participation” for the class. Just kidding.

**Required Texts**


*The Fraser book is available through Amazon. It is a long book that is due January 21, so I would suggest ordering it as soon as possible so that you have time to read it thoroughly.*
Schedule of Weekly Topics, Media Artifacts, Readings, and Speakers

Session 1: January 7
Introduction to Seminar: Mapping the Questions of Teacher Education

Session 2: January 14
Current Context of Teacher Education in the United States

Media artifacts:


Required Readings:


Zeichner, K. (2003). The adequacies and inadequacies of three current strategies to recruit, prepare and retain the best teachers for all students. Teachers College Record, 105(3), 490-515 (This was also published in K. Zeichner Teacher education and the struggle for social justice. New York: Routledge).


Session 3: January 21
The Historical Development of Teacher Education

Required Reading:


Session 4: January 28
Agendas for Reform: The Professionalization Agenda

Media artifacts:

**Required Readings:**


**Session 5: February 4**

The Deregulation Agenda

**Media Artifacts:**


**Required Readings:**


**Session 6: February 11**
Internal and External Critiques of College and University-Based Teacher Education

**Media Artifacts:**


**Required Readings:**


*Read the standards, rationales and indicators for the NCTQ National Study of Teacher Preparation Programs. [http://www.nctq.org/p/edschools/approach.jsp](http://www.nctq.org/p/edschools/approach.jsp). We will discuss this national ranking project in class.

**READ THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL CENTER FOR TEACHER QUALITY (NCTQ) REPORTS:**


*Session 7: February 20—WE WILL MEET WEDNESDAY OF THAT WEEK RATHER THAN MONDAY.*
Alternative Pathways to Teaching: “Teach for All”
*Guest lecturer: Professor Daniel Friedrich, Teachers College*


**Other required Readings TBA**

**Session 8: February 25**
Alternative Pathways to Teaching: Teach for America and KIPP
*Guest lecturer (via Skype): Beth Sondel, University of Wisconsin, Madison*

**Media Artifacts:**


http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/some-scary-training-for-teachers/2012/07/25/gJQAzXYJAX_blog.html

U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee Hearing on Alternative Certification, July, 2012. *(Note: Please allot time to view this in its entirety. It is 90 minutes.)*

http://edworkforcehouse.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=105

**Required Readings:**


**Session 9: March 4**
The Social Justice Agenda
**Media Artifact:**

Groups will be assigned different reading sets. We will decide upon these in the previous class (February 25).

**Reading Set A:**


**Reading Set B:**


**Reading Set C:**


Session 10: March 11
Preparing Teachers for Urban Classrooms

Required Reading


Session 11: March 18
NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

Session 12: March 25
Accountability Debates in Teacher Education

Media Artifacts:


Required Readings:


(PDF of Zeichner is forthcoming)


Session 13: April 1
Growing Attention to the Clinical and “Practice-Based” in Teacher Education

Media Artifacts

Lemov, D. TBA

Required Readings


**Session 14: April 8:**
Group Presentations

**Session 15: April 15**
Group Presentations

**Session 16: April 22 (Final projects due)**
Group Presentations

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**SOME POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR GROUP PROJECTS/ COURSE PAPER**

**The Characteristics of Effective Teacher Education Programs**


**Renewing Teacher Education Programs**


**The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**

A national certification of advanced teaching competence. ([www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)). Here is a link to studies on the NBPTS on their website ([http://www.nbpts.org/resources/research/browse_studies](http://www.nbpts.org/resources/research/browse_studies)). Here is the link to the National Academy of Sciences report on the NBCTS. The pdf. Download is free- [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12224](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12224)


**Research in Teacher Education.**


**Making Teaching Practice the Focus of Teacher Education.**


**Research on Alternative Pathways into Teaching**


**Reforming Teacher Education through Professional Development Schools**


Community-Based Learning and the Development of Culturally Responsive Teachers.


Social Justice Oriented Teacher Educator Self-Studies


Obidah, J. (2000). Mediating boundaries of race, class and professional authority as a critical multiculturalist. Teachers College Record, 102(6), 1035-1060.


**Teacher Residency Programs**

http://www.utrunited.org/-
Chicago

http://www.bostonteacherresidency.org
Boston

http://www.philaedfund.org/ptr/
Philadelphia

http://michaelmassiah.x7hosting.com/teaching_learning/utr/index.asp-
NYC (Hunter College)

http://thenewservice.wordpress.com/2009/12/13/trattc/
NYC-(Teachers College)

http://cehs.montclair.edu/academic/cop/nmutrp.shtml
Montclair State.


**Announcement of Grant to Study Residency Models.**


http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/creating-sustaining-urban-teacher-residencies-new-way-recruit-prepare-retain-effective-


http://www.ncate.org/public/HighlyQualifiedTeachersUrbanSchools.asp


Howey, K. (September, 2007). *A review of urban teacher residencies in the context of*


Preparation Teachers to Teach English Learners


UTEACH

A university teacher education program based in a college of arts and sciences.

http://www.utexas.edu/cola/progs/uteach/

The National Teacher Corps


The Holmes Group/Holmes Partnership


**Teacher Performance Assessment**


**Teach for America**


**Subject Matter Knowledge for Teaching:**


APPENDIX 2: Spring 2017 Syllabus

TEAC 908E
Seminar in Teacher Education
Critical Conversations in U.S. Teacher Preparation Policy and Practice:
Teacher Education To What End?
Mondays 5:00-7:50
Henzlik 204
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Dr. Lauren Gatti
Office: 61E Henzlik
Telephone (office): 402-472-6385
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: lgatti2@unl.edu

Course Description and Goals
We are currently living through a pivotal historical moment in teacher education, one that is marked by intense and sometimes vitriolic debates regarding where and how teachers should be prepared. These debates are grounded in some of the most basic questions about teaching and teacher education such as the role for which teachers are prepared, who should prepare them, when and where that preparation should take place, what a program’s curriculum should be, how that curriculum should be determined, and how to evaluate the quality of a teacher’s preparation. These debates around the length, quality, and location of experience become increasingly pitched when we consider the intractable problems of urban schooling, including the dogged persistence of the “achievement gap” (or, as Ladson-Billings corrects, “education debt”) in American schools, when poor kids and kids of color are consistently outperformed by their white, wealthier counterparts on standardized tests; when we see the brutal statistics regarding the attrition of teachers in high-needs urban schools, with almost 50% of teachers leaving within three years; and when we watch the dropout rates for poor and non-white students in American high schools remain unconscionably high.

In this doctoral seminar, we will explore some of these issues as they pertain to teacher education in the United States. Through examining media artifacts, analyzing select books and readings, and engaging in activities and discussion, we will overview the key issues in teacher education, the current context for teacher education in the U.S., the historical development of teacher education, agendas for reform, alternative pathways to teaching, external and internal critiques of university-based teacher education, and the implications of the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). At the core of this seminar will be an ongoing discussion regarding how we might determine the quality of teacher education programs and develop policies at the state and national level to support high quality teacher preparation.

My goal is to help each student find ways to make the course material and course projects meaningful and relevant in relation to their own intellectual and scholarly commitments and curiosities. Finally, I think it is crucial to note the many of the issues that we will discuss in this class have been vigorously and in many cases passionately debated throughout the nation today.
Although we all have our own positions on these issues, I hope that we will have the kind of environment in our class where we all feel safe and supported in expressing our points of view, where we stick to discussion of the issues (rather than personal attacks), and where we listen carefully to all points of view.

**Course Objectives**

There are several core objectives I have for your learning, and the course requirements and assessments are aimed at enabling your ability to meet these. By the end of this course, I would like for each of you to be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the major arguments and historical trends related to U.S. pre-service and initial teacher preparation.

- Identify authors’ central claims, analyze authors’ use and definition of evidence, and map connections – if any—between authors’ affiliations (university, foundation, center, corporation) and their citations, evidence, and arguments.

- Demonstrate critical and curious engagement with assigned texts (broadly defined) and with one another in writing and discussion.

- Approach the scholarship and the issues currently being debated in teacher education from a position of critical conversation, where understanding multiple perspectives and viewpoints is understood as a necessary precursor to advancing a formal argument.

- Collaboratively engage in thoughtful conversations with teachers, parents, community members, teach educators, activists, students, and/or politicians around an issue of importance to you.

- Consider the preparation of teachers through the larger lens of aims in schooling: Public education *to what end?* Preparing teachers *to what end?*

**Course Requirements**

In order to maximize the learning experience for all, you will be asked to:

- Actively read all texts and come prepared to discuss in class;
- Contribute to large and small group discussion;
- Complete weekly written work and final podcast project (and accompanying reflection);
- Attend all class sessions. There will be one break during each class session.

There are three core requirements for this class.

1) **Podcast (via *This American Life*) exploring an issue/topic in teacher preparation. (60%)**

Many of you are likely familiar with the National Public Radio show, *This American Life*, hosted by WBEZ Chicago’s Ira Glass ([http://www.thisamericanlife.org/](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/)). This semester, you will be exploring the essential question of the course—*teacher education to what end?*—through a 15-20-minute, two- to three-act podcast modeled after *This American Life* (*TAL*). In groups of
three, you will work to identify a topic and theme—just like TAL—that helps us think about the major ideas, themes, and questions of the course. This project is predicated on deliberation and discussion within your group as you make decisions about the subject of your podcast, division of labor, connection to the essential question, etc. In this way, creating the podcast provides a meta-cognitive experience for thinking about and participating in smart, nuanced, and informed conversations regarding teaching, teacher education, and the purpose of schools.

Starting with the third class session, you will have approximately 20-30 minutes each week to meet with your podcast group. I encourage you to be creative here. Podcasts might include interviews with teacher educators, politicians, activists, and/or reformers. The primary criteria is that your podcast explicitly and creatively represents conversations about pressing topics and issues related to the preparation of teachers in the U.S. and highlights multiple perspectives and arguments related to teacher education and educational equity.

*You will receive more information on this project at the end of January, including assessment parameters, podcasting help, and model podcasts from previous graduate seminars.

2) **Weekly notebooks and class participation. (30%)**

Each week you will be required to turn in a one-page, typed, single-spaced, critical reflection. I simply call these “notebooks.” Notebooks can span a range of topics, but should attend, on some level, to course material, discussions, connections you see between the readings, and burning questions or critiques. You should bring two hard copies to class—one for me, and one for a classmate. The following week, each of us will return your notebook with our comments and thoughts on it. In this sense they are fundamentally dialogic. These notebooks will help catalyze lively and engaged class discussions as well as allow me to take a weekly “pulse” on how people are taking up the readings. Please hang on to all of your notebooks (from me and your classmate).

In-class participation: Writing the weekly notebooks will enable you to come to each class having already engaged with core ideas of the texts. My hope is that discussion will be lively, informed, and really aimed at developing greater understandings of both the individual text at hand as well as the way that it connects to other texts, ideas, and discussions. Participating in class means more than just talking; it means listening and posing questions, too, both in large and small group discussions. It means being aware of talk time as well.

Specifically, we will be working regularly in small group discussions to identify and consider the following aspects of each week’s reading(s):

- What is the author’s central claim?
- What counts as evidence in this article/report/brief? Do they cite peer-reviewed research? Policy briefs? Self-reported data on their own work?
- What are their institutional and/or corporate affiliations? Who is cited?

3) **Op-Ed piece. (10%)**

The third requirement (10% of your grade) is to write a 500-1000 word essay modeled after an Op/Ed piece that is found in local and national newspapers on any issue that we have addressed
in class. You should identify the issue and then take a position on the issue and defend it. During the second to last class session on April 17, you will bring ten copies of your Op-Ed for discussion. On this day, we will share our Op-Eds with the class and select one to respond to in class (in writing).

**Grading Scale**

- A+ 99-100
- A 94-98
- A- 90-93
- B+ 87-89
- B 84-86
- B- 80-83
- C 70-79
- F Below 70

- **Attendance and Participation:** Regular attendance and participation are expected. Participation includes reading texts before class meetings and coming prepared with questions, connections, and comments to stimulate class discussions. If for some reason you are unable to be in class, you should contact me via email before class meets. **More than one absence may result in the deduction of one or more percentage points in your participation grade.**

- **Academic Integrity:** “Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. To further serve this end, the University supports a Student Code of Conduct which addresses the issue of academic dishonesty.”

- **Diversity:** “The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is committed to a pluralistic campus community through Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.”

**Required texts**


*The book is available for free in digital form and is uploaded on Canvas. If you prefer physical copies of books, you can purchase a soft cover edition for $25 by following these steps:

1. Go to [http://link.springer.com](http://link.springer.com) and create an account.
2. Now go to UNL libraries page and input “SpringerLink” in the search. (It might prompt you to login to your UNL account if you are not logged in).
3. The search for SpringerLink on the UNL library page will bring you to a page where there is a list of links. Click on the “Resource” link (it has a black and white globe next to it). This will bring you to SpringerLink. Logon if you are not already.
4. Type in the name of the book. Click on the MyCopy softcover edition link.


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**Weekly Schedule**

*Asterisks indicate that the text is uploaded to Canvas.*

In addition to the texts outlined here, I will be handing out or accessing via the internet at the start of class media artifacts that discuss pertinent issues related to preparing teachers. This will be from newspapers, television, and/or magazines. I also invite you to select and share media artifacts that relate to our course and the conversations we are having about teacher preparation.

**Class 1: January 9**

**Key Issues in Teacher Preparation, Introduction to course**

**Required Reading:**


**Class 2: January 23**

**Current Context of Teacher Preparation**

**Required Readings:**


Class 3: January 30  
Historical Perspectives on Preparing Teachers

Guest speaker: Jim Fraser will be skyping with us from 6:00-7:00 pm. Please be prepared with questions and comments.

Required Reading:
NB: You will be separated into groups for Fraser’s book, each group focusing on a specific section.


Class 4: February 6  
The Professionalization Agenda in Teacher Education

Required Readings:


Class 5: February 13  
Deregulation Agenda

Required Readings:


Class 6: February 20
External and Internal Critiques of College and University-Based Teacher Education

Required Readings:


Class 7: February 27
Alternative Routes to Teaching

Guest speaker: Ken Zeichner will be Skyping into class

Required Readings:


Class 8: March 6
Social Justice Agenda: Race, Social Class, and Language Diversity in Teacher Preparation

Guest speaker: Maureen Gillette, Dean of Seton Hall College in New Jersey, will be Skyping into class


**Class 9: March 13**  
Social Justice Agenda: Democratic Teacher Education and the Role of Community in Preparing Teachers

**Required Readings:**


**Class 10: March 27**  
Teacher Residency Programs and Context-Specific Teacher Preparation

**Required Readings:**

Gatti, L. and Zeichner, K. (In preparation). A critical analysis of the urban teacher residency phenomenon: Beyond the elixir. (Will be sent to you in March).


**Class 11: April 3**  
Practice-Based Teaching and Teacher Education


**Class 12: April 10**  
**Teacher Preparation To What End?**


**Class 13: April 17:**  
**Op-Eds due in class. Bring two printed copies. (10% of final grade)**

**Policy Context: Looking Ahead**


**Class 14: April 24—Last Class**  
**Podcasts due**
**APPENDIX 3: Stations Activity**

**Key Issues in Teacher Preparation—Getting situated**

As you read/view/listen to the artifacts, please consider the following things:

- What do you notice about the language that is being used in this piece?
- What claims are being made?
- How is teaching conceived of?
- How is good teaching measured?
- How is university teacher preparation being described?

| What should go into a teaching degree? | All Things Considered (NPR) September 2009  
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Education entrepreneurs funded by the New Schools Venture Fund  
http://www.news schools.org/blog/urban-teacher-center | |
| National Council for Teacher Quality (NCTQ)  
http://nctq.org/dmsView/Easy_As_exec_summary | |
| American Enterprise Institute (AEI)  
“Grade inflation for education majors and low standards for teachers” by Cory Koedel (2011) | |
| Arne Duncan, former Secretary of Education  
“We teacher preparation: Reforming the uncertain profession” (2009) talk at Teacher College  
“An open letter to America’s college presidents and education school deans” (2016) on Brown Center Chalkboard from Brookings Institute | |
“Arguments about teacher education are predicated on assumptions about what teachers should do in school and who they are. Assumptions about teachers are predicated on assumptions about the purposes of school. Americans do not agree on this fundamental issue” (Wilson & Tamir, 2008, p. 925).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does this group do? Where do they operate in the US?</th>
<th>How is the work of teaching described? What is the knowledge base?</th>
<th>“Who We Are”; corporate partnerships; Board of Directors. Any and all observations about language used, tone, purpose, etc.</th>
<th>What links are there between the groups? What names come up a lot? Orthodoxy? Heterodoxy? Border crossers?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) (<a href="http://www.kipp.org">http://www.kipp.org</a>)</td>
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<td>NewSchools Venture Fund (NSVF) (<a href="http://www.newschools.org">http://www.newschools.org</a>)</td>
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<td>National Council for Teacher Quality (NCTQ) (<a href="http://www.nctq.org/siteHome.do">http://www.nctq.org/siteHome.do</a>)</td>
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<td>American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) (<a href="http://abcte.org/">http://abcte.org/</a>)</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.caepnet.org">http://www.caepnet.org</a></td>
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<td>Carnegie Corporation of New York (Education Grants)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.carnegiefoundation.org">https://www.carnegiefoundation.org</a></td>
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<td>Teach for America (TFA)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.teachforamerica.org">https://www.teachforamerica.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant competition</td>
<td>Locate on DOE website</td>
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### APPENDIX 5: Podcast Rubric

**Final project: Podcast (60% of semester grade)**

Names of Podcast members:

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<tr>
<th>COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transcript is verbatim, complete, neatly organized/presented, and has timestamps for each “Act.” It also includes a correctly formatted, APA-style reference page that includes the 3-5 sources that were drawn upon from the semester. Link to podcast, group members, title of podcast, and length of podcast are all included at the top of the first page.</td>
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<tr>
<th>FRAMING THE ISSUE</th>
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<tr>
<td>The podcast situates the listener within the field of teaching and teacher education. Jargon, when needed, is defined and put into layman’s terms. The central issue for the podcast is clearly laid out, is compellingly framed, and is made relevant to the general public. The Big Question(s) are evident to the listener and the selected interviews and the scripted transitions and commentary help to complicate and clarify the Big Question that the podcast engages. References to scholars/scholarship, when made, are appropriate and useful.</td>
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<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION AND FLOW OF PODCAST</th>
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<tr>
<td>The podcast is organized to smoothly bring the listener from one part of the podcast to the next. The interview excerpts that are selected for inclusion are appropriate, add to the overall argument/theme of the podcast, and are placed in conversation with other voices within the podcast, texts and ideas from class, and/or current events related to teacher education, teaching, and schools.</td>
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<th>LENGTH</th>
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<tr>
<td>Podcast is approximately 15-18 minutes. 20 minutes is the max and 13 minutes is the minimum before points are deducted.</td>
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<th>TECHNOLOGY</th>
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<td>The composition of the podcast is smooth and does not interrupt the listener’s experience. Music—of whatever kind—is woven in when appropriate. Sounds from interviews (classroom bells, noises from the interview space) are included deliberately and add to our experience (rather than distract).</td>
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<th>AUTHOR’S NOTE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Each person has included/handed in their own 1-2 page (single-spaced) author’s note. This author’s note should be reflective, analytical, and, when necessary, explanatory. Unless there is something about the podcast that really needs explanation, please don’t spend much (if any) time explaining. My main purpose here is to have a clearer sense of what you learned about teaching and teacher education, schools, and/or this process of identifying and exploring an issue of your own choosing as it relates to the course. You should conclude your author’s note with your suggested grade for the podcast and for the course overall. Please include a brief rationale for each.</td>
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## APPENDIX 6: Narrative Assessment for Podcast Groups

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<tr>
<th>Podcast Group</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Karen &amp; David</td>
<td>(In portfolio)</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben &amp; Jackie</td>
<td>&quot;Education to what end?&quot; -- not sure that this title accurately reflects the content of your podcast. I really like how you start the podcast with the newscast about LB630 in Nebraska. 1:35-- Why charter schools? -- this is a solid preview of your central questions as well as what will happen. The historical perspective you offer is very helpful, as is the list of the 7 states that have not adopted charters. The woman from the charter school cites access to resources and personalization--these are good examples of why some charters would be attractive. But this school in CA is not the norm. I wonder if and how this kind of school could exist in Nebraska. 7:20 (Ben)-- So how are teachers in charters prepared? What are admin looking for? The woman from the charter explains that a love of kids and a resilience are really central to her hiring decisions. (9:00) Strong content knowledge, passion for subject, heart for kids and doing &quot;whatever it takes&quot; to help kids succeed, receptive to feedback-- characteristics of prospective teachers. &quot;Investment&quot; in teachers-- I found this really interesting, especially since it is very much business language. I appreciate the connection between Harry Wong and Doug Lemov--(Jackie, I LOVE how you jump in with the author's name here) to Labaree's piece on the trouble with ed schools. The follow-up here, though, feels a little disjointed to me. You mention Rachael as an example of a teacher who felt like she had no control, but I am not sure how that supports what you are saying about investing in teachers. What is the bigger argument here? How does what these charter school admin are saying about teachers mesh with what you know about teacher preparation? Can programs prepare the kinds of teachers that this charter wants but do so for public schools?</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen and Beth</td>
<td>The use of Obama's speech is a good way to frame your podcast and set up the concern at the center of all debates around college readiness: teachers. (NB: Arne is pronounced AR-nee). Your transition into Labaree's arguments (around changing people) is a good way to get into your central question: What makes an effective teacher? Dr. X’s perspectives are really interesting and focus almost entirely on the relational, which is super important, but it does not address teaching content or student learning. &quot;The art of teaching&quot;= your natural personality + human relations skills. &quot;The science of teaching&quot;= assessments, preparation, questioning techniques. When I listen to his anecdote about learning an instrument, I wonder if this answers the question around being effective. Being better than you were does not mean that you are effective. Act II: When Bill says that &quot;If you want teachers to be experts, you model expertise.&quot; This seems to me to be circular. What would this mean in practice in terms of preparing teachers? How does this relate to teacher efficacy? Bill’s point about identity is an important one. As narrators of the podcast, I was wanting you to engage this point: what does identity and professionalism relate to your central concern (what makes an effective teacher?). Is Bill suggesting that when someone</td>
<td>55</td>
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makes the shift to a professional identity then they are more effective? I think that Linda Darling-Hammond would have something interesting to weigh in on here, too. (I am thinking of her work on professionalization). Is being a teacher different from being an EFFECTIVE teacher? Can a program produce a ton of teachers but not produce effective teachers? I think that's what I keep getting stuck on as a listener!

Corinne, Anne, and Jenny

Emily's story is very powerful. (And familiar. When I went into teaching, my mom told me to "stop wasting my talents."). The student's perspective re: teachers vs. doctors is perfectly placed and does a nice job, along with Groene's email, of setting up the problem. Act I: Anne’s point that she is the least professional of her siblings is poignant and the interview with a "real" professional (Amber) really drives the point home. "What does it take to be a professional?" This question is effective because it not only loops back to the EQ of the podcast, but also because it is a deceptively complex question that helps us see how thorny this topic really is. "Ultimately, Amber has me thinking about induction" -- this is a good transition into Jess's section on teacher preparation. Jessica's TFA experience is a way to show how the reforms at play in NE have a particular common sense around selectivity and professionalism.

The teachers who come after complicate the conversation around professionalism and how that related to university preparation and learning on the job. Jess, your point (when Emily is talking) about the identity shift is really important and one that is VERY hard to know how to address when it comes to preparing teachers for this work. 16:50: Can a teacher ever truly be prepared? . . . Is one of these pathways more professionalizing than others? These are very important questions and they do a nice job of linking the larger issue question of teacher professionalism to the question of pathway. The last part about taking a breath is unexpected and therefore provocative. There is so much urgency when it comes to education. The idea that slowing down might be something that is helpful is interesting. Finally, ending with the students' voices and the question "do teachers do that?" is PERFECT.

One thing I wondered about is why you decided to leave out some of the literature we read on professionalization (I am thinking of Linda Darling-Hammond's work on teacher performance assessment and the National Board Certification we read about early in the semester).