

# WHO SHOULD GUARD THE GATES?

## EVIDENTIARY AND PROFESSIONAL WARRANTS FOR CLAIMING JURISDICTION

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*This article explores empirical and theoretical literature relevant to accreditation of teacher education programs. The lack of substantial research on accreditation makes it impossible to make empirically based claims about the value-added of such processes, including how accreditation processes enhance the professionalization of teacher education. Contemporary scholarship, especially in sociology, also raises questions, especially about the uncritical acceptance of the professionalization movement in teacher education. After briefly reviewing three lines of criticism concerning professionalization, the authors use that literature to “read” both Wise’s (2005) description of the benefits of NCATE’s work and Murray’s (2005) description of TEAC’s role in enhancing professionalism in teacher education. Both authors presume that professionalization is a good; both fail to confront some of the central concerns about the exclusionary practices of professions in their descriptions of NCATE and TEAC. The authors conclude by suggesting that the professionalism movement within teacher education—while important—requires that we encourage and embrace both internal and external forms of criticism.*

**Keywords:** professionalism; professionalization; accreditation

We live in an age of great concern for teacher quality and in which the calls for evidentiary warrants are loud and insistent. Thus, it is not surprising that questions are raised about who should certify teachers and whether—and under what conditions—those certifying agents should be subject to accreditation, the process by which an institution (a college or university) convinces the public and other institutions of its program’s soundness and rigor.

Accreditation procedures within teacher education include those developed by individual states, as well as the National Council for the

Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and, more recently, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). Those procedures can be understood as important elements in the professionalization of teaching. In this article, we explore the evidence available concerning the effects of accreditation, alternative conceptions of professions, and how those alternative conceptions might shape our work as teacher educators, including the mechanisms we use to monitor teacher preparation program quality.

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ACCREDITATION

Historically, communities certified teachers and, thus, no accreditation process was necessary. Each community decided who should be a teacher, and most everyone was primarily concerned with a potential teacher's moral fiber. Gradually, authority for approving teachers shifted from the community's spiritual leader to the state. According to Sedlak (1989), by the 1840s, the majority of U.S. teachers received their teaching certificates from local officials based on their performance on an examination. The first examinations were often short, oral tests given by community members that focused on the candidate's character; these evolved into longer, written examinations that assessed candidates' subject-matter knowledge. Occasionally, a few questions would be asked concerning pedagogy and child development. This certification system—which granted local officials the power to appoint teachers—was sometimes used inappropriately, favoring family relatives or political supporters. Over time, the practice faced growing opposition from the public, state administrators, and teachers, who argued that to raise educational standards, the state had to centralize control over the field by introducing state licensure requirements (Sedlak, 1989).

State departments of education grew rapidly during the first third of the 20th century, and normal schools evolved into teachers colleges (Labaree, 1998). A consensus about what constituted teacher preparation began to emerge within the so-called progressive educational establishment (Angus, 2001; Ravitch, 2000). And teacher certification became increasingly centralized. Frazier (1938, as quoted in Angus, 2001) reports the following data:

To establish common expectations across the system, standards were developed. Professional organizations were formed and re-formed. In 1948, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) was formed from the merger of the National Association of Colleges and Departments of Education, the National Association of Teacher Education Institutions in Metropolitan Districts and the American Association of Teachers Colleges, a department of the National Education Association. In 1952, AACTE, the National Commission on Teacher

Education and Professional Standards, and the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification created NCATE as the central body for accreditation. By 1959, five years after NCATE began accrediting programs, 17 states had included some provision for NCATE accreditation in their reciprocity agreements for teachers moving across state lines. By 1961, NCATE had approved only 342 of the then-1100 teacher education programs nationwide. (p. 32)

Thus, over a century and a half, we shifted from local control to centralization of teacher certification and to increased calls for accreditation of those agencies that certify teachers. The accreditation movement arose as a result of attempts to monitor and enhance program quality, for there have been concerns about teacher preparation quality for as long as there have been teacher education programs (Angus, 2001; Bestor, 1953; Conant, 1963; Koerner, 1963). Especially important to note is that the accreditation process was taken over by the very people—teacher educators—whom some critics blamed for teachers' poor preparation (Angus, 2001). This rise in accreditation, however, begs the question, What evidence do we have that accreditation matters?

## THE EVIDENCE FOR ACCREDITATION

The literature on accreditation is most often informational: Most published articles describe the process of participating in an accreditation review and/or feature recommendations for other institutions as they prepare for reviews (e.g., Barnette & Gorham, 1996; Black & Stave, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Coombs & Allred, 1993; Elliott, 1997; Gorrell, Kunkel, & Ossant, 1993; Samaras et al., 1999; Troutman, Jones, & Ramirez, 1997; Wilkerson, Searls, & Uprichard, 1993). Others present arguments in support of NCATE (e.g., Gardner, Scannell, & Wisniewski, 1996; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Wise, 2005) or TEAC (e.g., Murray, 2000, 2001, 2005), whereas others suggest or explain changes in the goals of accreditation (e.g., Dill, 1998; Elliott, 1997; Graham, Lyman, & Trow, 1995; Tom, 1999). There is little empirical research on the impact of accreditation. In one review of that literature, we (Wil-

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son & Youngs, 2005) found only two relevant studies.

Goodlad (1990) and his team made visits to 29 teacher education institutions during 1987 to 1988, spending 10 to 14 researcher days per site. They surveyed faculty and students, reviewed documents, and interviewed students, faculty, and administrators. The researchers reported that in higher education, teacher education was the field most affected by outside forces, especially state agencies. In Goodlad's view, this has eroded the curricular autonomy of teacher preparation programs. Heads of teacher education programs, more or less resigned to circumstances beyond their control, are reactive, commonly adjusting their curricula to conform to the most recent list of state requirements. Furthermore, Goodlad claimed that the current system of state dictates of teacher education curriculum have a "stultifying impact" on program improvement. In effect, the state focus on regulation tended to lower program quality. (If this is true, the subsequent sharp increase in regulation—on both the national and the state levels—does not bode well for improving teacher education.) Finally, the researchers reported that NCATE was seen as important by regional institutions, less so for flagship and major public and private universities and private liberal arts institutions.

Gitomer, Latham, and Ziomek (1999) analyzed data for all individuals who took the SAT or ACT between 1977 and 1995 and who took Praxis I and/or Praxis II between 1994 and 1997. The study reported that passing rates on Praxis I and II were higher for those who had attended NCATE-accredited institutions than for those who attended institutions not accredited by NCATE. (Because TEAC did not exist at the time of this research, there were no comparative analyses across types of accreditation possible.)

Thus, research is nearly nonexistent on the value-addedness of accreditation. One study suggested that NCATE approval was associated with higher-quality graduates (as measured by Praxis I and II); the other study suggested that NCATE approval was important to institutions in an inverse relationship to their size and status. These two studies do not pro-

vide a basis on which to make claims about accreditation's effects.

Certainly, one complicating factor is that the accreditation processes used by both NCATE and TEAC continue to change. NCATE, not surprisingly given its longer history, has responded to several waves of criticism. Its last major redesign occurred in the 1990s when it responded to suggestions for change from its parent organization, the AACTE, and other sources (see Gardner et al., 1996). Current work involves exploring what kinds of publicly credible, professionally responsible assessments are and might be used across institutions to track prospective teacher learning over time (see NCATE, 2003). This ever-shifting landscape of accreditation makes it difficult to conduct timely, relevant research.

In addition to this churning, there is also a concern about the relationship between internal and external purposes of accreditation. Graham et al. (1995) argued that internal accountability should focus on teaching and learning and address whether an institution is meeting its own standards. In contrast, in their view, external accountability should involve audits of the internal review procedures used by institutions of higher education. The purpose of these audits should be to determine whether the institution has in place procedures and practices enabling it to understand and address its own weaknesses. According to this argument, if teacher tests used by states or the federal government do not measure the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teacher preparation programs hope to develop in graduates, then such external forms of accountability are not aligned with internal accountability. The authors suggest that misalignment can undercut educational quality.

In an investigation of how institutions of higher education responded to their students' high failure rates on the Massachusetts teacher tests, Ludlow, Shirley, and Rosca (2002) found that the public disclosure of their graduates' failure prompted a wide range of institutional responses. At the most besieged institutions with the highest failure rates, prospective teachers were offered test-preparation workshops

(ranging from 2 to 24 hours in length), faculty were offered professional development to realign their courses with the examinations, new courses were offered, the alignment of the state curriculum standards for K-12 students and the teacher tests was emphasized in methods classes, and prospective teachers were encouraged to study middle and high school textbooks to enhance their subject-matter knowledge. At less-threatened institutions, prospective teachers were offered orientation sessions or workshops on test preparation, and at-risk prospective teachers were offered extra support. Although some responses might have led to program improvements, only research can tell us that, and in this case, we do not know whether this response led to improved teacher education or compromised program quality.

In general, a reading of the research concerning accreditation suggests that we know little about the effects of such processes on teacher quality. And, clearly, if we believe that accreditation matters, it behooves us to plan and conduct careful research that will illuminate its effects. At the same time, a narrow and unrestricted race toward professional “progress” and “effectiveness”—whether it is based on “professional consensus” or “objective scienticism”—may hold significant perils that our professional community ought to consider. We explore those issues by reflecting on the articles by Murray (2005) and Wise (2005).

## A MEDITATION ON MURRAY AND WISE

In a chapter titled “Who Guards the Gates?” James Bryant Conant (1963) wrote,

The [education] establishment is overly defensive; it views any proposal for change as a threat and assumes that any critic intends to enlarge its difficulties and responsibilities while simultaneously undermining its ability to bear them. In short, there is too much resentment of outside criticism and too little effort for vigorous internal criticism. In some instances, I found the establishment’s rigidity frightening. (p. 40)

At first blush, reading Frank Murray’s (2005) explication of TEAC—its origins and purposes, intentions and goals—and Arthur Wise’s (2005) explanation of why NCATE meets

professionalization goals whereas TEAC undermines them, we worried that history is simply repeating itself and that the education establishment—of which we education professors are members—is still rigid, still hypersensitive to criticism, and still defensive.

But that seemed too simplistic a response, and so we asked ourselves, What else might be going on here? We turned to the literature on professions—a topic explored thoroughly and variously by sociologists, economists, historians, anthropologists, and educators alike—to interpret our colleagues’ positions.

## *Professionalism, Autonomy, and the Promise of Serving the Public Good*

Professionals like to see and promote their practice as one that is mainly about serving the public good. Hence, in the case of education, educators proclaim their concerns for the “future of our children,” the “health of our democracy,” or the “prosperity of our nation.” This rhetoric is seen by many professionals as profoundly reflecting the *raison d’être* of their practice, indeed, their existence. When a profession takes on such an enormous responsibility, they argue, professional (not personal) autonomy becomes a necessity. Having autonomy allows professionals to consider alternatives and provide the best answers; professionals make these decisions based on codified knowledge, a common set of procedures to identify problems, consensual agreements regarding “best practices,” and the use of professional judgment in the face of inevitable uncertainty. Ideally, the goal of professional judgment should involve maximizing the public good, even if economic, social, or political pressures suggest otherwise. In other words, a professional must enjoy a certain degree of autonomy if the public wants to benefit from his or her humble service. Abbott (1988) explains,

Early work on professionalization had rested on the functional assumptions. . . . It attributed the collegial organization of professions to their positions as experts. The “asymmetry of expertise” required the client to trust the professional and the professional to respect both client and colleagues. These relations

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were guaranteed by various institutional forms—associations, licensure, ethics codes. (p. 5)

Pels (1995) further illuminates the normative perspective that permeates this functionalist approach. “The classical functionalist view disseminated by Durkheim, Spencer, Tawney, and Parsons,” he argues, “emphasized positive characteristics such as institutionalized expertise, democratic control over knowledge and technology, and a collective ethos of disinterested public service” (p. 81).

The importance of professionalism to democracy and the public good continues to be a widely accepted idea among professionals and, recently, among some social scientists as well. Among those who invigorated this romantic interpretation of professionalism is the prominent French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1999; see also Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), who vigorously argued for the autonomy of professionals—including scientists and journalists—from the excessive power held by the corporate and political arenas. Others, like Krause (1996), have argued that the strengthening of the nation-state and of corporate capitalism during the 20th century has gradually weakened the power of professions to secure their autonomy. As a result, he argues, the public is exposed to increased state oppression and corporate exploitation. The public good, enhanced by professionals and their careful work, is threatened.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Professions: Power, Exclusion, and Market Closure***

But the idea of professional expertise and its concomitant wise judgment has been the target of much criticism over the years. Three major critical perspectives bear mentioning.

Neo-Weberians argue that professionals tend to monopolize their work environment and its associated benefits, thus increasing social inequality. This criticism is based on a conflict perspective that views the social reality as a place where individuals and groups struggle to gain control over various kinds of resources (Weber, 1952). Among and within professions, then, there is a constant tension between “insiders” (the professionals who want to act as gate-

keepers and restrict access to prevent oversupply) and “outsiders” (those who cannot overcome the obstacles erected by professionals and, therefore, are denied the benefits associated with membership). Collins (1990) argues that “instead of merely responding to market dynamics . . . occupations attempt to control market conditions. Those which are especially successful are the ones which we have come to call the professions” (p. 25). Professions look to secure and preserve their privileges from the instability of the labor market and possible competition of other professions by surrounding their work with social rituals and turning their everyday practice into one that generates sacred symbols (Abbott, 1988; Collins, 1990). Education and credentials are among the social rituals that establish public legitimacy, which, in turn, enables professionals to follow practices of market closure and exclusion of nonmembers (Collins, 1990).

Interestingly, similar insights were developed through the theory of public choice, although the concerns of the writers in this tradition were different from those of the neo-Weberians. Whereas the concern for the neo-Weberians was over the exclusion of unprivileged groups and the accumulation of power in the hands of the few, the concern for the public-choice writers focuses on the reduced productivity of public systems due to the inefficiencies associated with systems that do not follow free-market rationale (Tullock, Seldon, & Brady, 2002). Public-choice economists might agree with neo-Weberian sociologists that teaching—as a public profession—pushes to implement policies that (on the surface) argue to benefit society but that (in essence) serve first and foremost to preserve and secure private privileges of the profession and its members. Criticisms like these have been aimed at teacher unions and professors of education for years, with those critics accusing the “educational establishment” of being responsible for the poor quality of teachers, the insufficient number of professionals in urban schools, and the overall lack of productivity in the system. Furthermore, many recent critics of the educational establishment (e.g., Ballou &

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Podgursky, 1998, 2000; Finn, 2001; Hess, 2001, 2003; Hess, Rotherham, & Walsh, 2004) believe that the solution to the inherent failures of public education is privatization through the introduction of market-based mechanisms: When an open market exists, social structures and self-serving groups with excessive power tend to diminish and the system's productivity and efficiency flourish.

To sum up, the two latter approaches share the conviction that the social space is being excessively controlled and maneuvered in the service of professionals (neo-Weberians) or of public employees (public choice). Because the teaching profession follows both definitions, it is flawed, according to its critics; it uses its excessive power to push issues in and off the agenda of policy makers, it attempts to influence the policy-making process to achieve favorable results for insiders, and when unpopular reforms are enacted, it controls implementation, thereby diminishing any "evil" intent of those unpopular reforms.

A third line of criticism highlights the fact that modern forms of professionalism are oppressive in nature. These forms of professionalism base claims of power on the capacity to transform theoretical and abstract knowledge into valid practices of intervention. This claim is closely attached to the rise of science as the salient, legitimate, valid source of practical knowledge in our time. Many view the link between the two as one that provides the promised path to linear progress and advancement. This hope was first reflected in the idea of enlightenment, when scientific advances and accumulation of knowledge were believed to be the means that would free humans from the oppression of religiosity and absolutism of monarchs. As years passed, the benevolent power of knowledge has been challenged over and again, especially by the Frankfurt School and postmodernist writers (cf. Foucault, 1965; Horkheimer, Adorno, & Cumings, 1972). In the case of professionalism, critics argue, professional knowledge should be understood as a social construct, one that is never objective and always reflects society's power structures. As such, professional, power-full practice, instead

of simply providing a cure to our problems, can also exacerbate and magnify them.

These criticisms help us see that the idea of a direct link between professionalism, public good, and social progress is not as simple as it might seem. Professions also carry the burden of being self-serving, exclusionary, and oppressive. They talk about their mission to serve society, while focusing on fortifying their privileges. These two contradicting approaches emphasize the ambivalent/ambiguous nature of professions, which might serve public interests but, at the same time, might attempt to better its members. Pels (1995) conceptualizes professions as "Janus faced": the concept of professional autonomy "came to display an intrinsic duplicity or duality in which good and evil, functional necessity and dysfunctional domination, appeared to conspire closely" (p. 81). Although there is reason to believe that on some occasions, the public is better served by a professional entity rather than being solely exposed to the political and economic interests of state administration and business community, professionals, at the same time, must protect that public from the dangers of the profession's power and monopoly.

### ***Rereading Murray and Wise***

From the perspective of contemporary scholarship, then, both Murray and Wise can be seen as making a professionalism argument. (Although Wise may very well disagree with us on this point, we chose not to focus our comments on that issue; it will distract us from other, more compelling aspects of this debate.) Here, we focus instead on how the authors' different approaches to professionalism raise questions important for all teacher educators to consider.

Arthur Wise (2005) argues for a "classic" vision of professions and professionalization: "The foundation of a strong profession is a shared body of knowledge, based on research, and public confidence that professionals are fit to practice" (p. 319). That knowledge is codified, transmitted, and controlled by the profession; professionals use it in making sound, rea-

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sonable judgments in the face of uncertainty. The professionalization agenda depends on collective action within the community. Using this frame, he demonstrates how NCATE has used these principles as a theory of action for the greater good—the greater good of teacher educators, K-12 teachers, parents, and children. According to Wise, TEAC eschews these principles: Its board is not representative of all relevant stakeholders; it allows individual institutions to propose their own standards. In compromising the professionalization “commandments” of standards, alignment, unity, and the like, Wise argues that TEAC undercuts the efforts of others to professionalize teaching: “TEAC’s position that teacher preparation units should be free to determine the standards for what is taught is not just a different philosophical approach or a matter of academic freedom. It is the very rejection of the concept of profession” (p. 325).

Wise’s passions are palpable, almost evangelical: Do we care about teaching as a profession (or not)? Do we honor the work of hard-working teacher educators? Do we join forces against those who would undermine professionalism (and therefore student learning)? He embraces, unquestioningly, a set of goods: consensus building, alignment, codified knowledge base, standards, and the integration of professional and state standards, to name a few. He invokes as warrants an alphabet soup of educational-establishment acronyms: the National Academy of Education, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, and the standards of the professional associations—National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of the Social Studies, and the like.

This stance invites a neo-Weberian and public-choice criticism that raises questions about market closure, monopoly, exclusion, inefficiency, and overall lack of productivity. Let us consider a few of these. Wise presents the standards developed by various professional organizations as sacred symbols: Those standards are to be trusted; they represent best prac-

tice and (verified) knowledge. But Murray reminds us that not everyone agrees with the wisdom and legitimacy of those standards. There is actually quite a lot of impassioned debate about the warrants for claiming that one or another standard is a valid representation of what we know or what we should do. The National Council of History Education is horrified with the standards of the National Council of Social Studies. The standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics are routinely and roundly criticized by mathematicians and others. Critiques of state and national standards have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *The Economist*, as well as in education-specific publications like *American Educator*. Although some critiques come out of “conservative” organizations (e.g., Murray notes the Fordham Foundation’s criticisms), criticisms of and questions about standards are not limited to one sector of the population. And given the widespread and very public viewing of those critiques, no one could miss them.

Wise does not acknowledge most of this sometimes-raucous debate and presumes that we (read here the insiders to the educational establishment) “know” what and how teachers should teach and how teacher education programs should prepare those teachers. This dismissal of criticisms could be understood as part of the struggle to control the professional jurisdiction of teacher education. From this perspective, accepting criticism may harm those in power, exposing their incapacity to provide good professional solutions to the work-related problems of professionals. In the case of teaching, ideological beliefs play a major role in escalating the nature of the struggle. The struggle ceases to be simply over monetary resources; it is about educational perceptions, values, goals, and identities.

Associated with his commitment to “the standards,” Wise also highlights NCATE’s wholesale embrace of consensus building across diverse stakeholders. Two concerns could be raised here. First, consensus building is not inherently a “good,” especially if one is try-

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ing to develop a normative view. Consensus building is a critical tool for democratic deliberation, but creating high standards for teacher education quality ought not be democratic. If professional work requires specialized knowledge and skills, then decisions about standards for accreditation need to grow out of expertise, not egalitarianism, a specific group's narrow interests, or making peace among multiple specific groups' respective narrow interests. Granted, Wise also emphasizes the importance of research-based results, but he repeatedly notes how critical consensus-driven processes are to NCATE's professionalism agenda.

Finally, although NCATE includes an impressive list of stakeholders, neo-Weberian critics would remind us to ask about who is excluded. Perhaps the most conspicuous contemporary example of consensus that is easy for teacher educators to see as exclusionary might be the American Board for the Certification of Teaching Excellence (ABCTE). One remarkable feature of the creation of the ABCTE is that it has used the same tools of professionalism: Using a rational, consensus-building process, the ABCTE involved developing standards; reviewing existing state, local, and professional organization standards; reading educational research; and using the standards to create a set of assessments and a certification process (i.e., alignment). To wit, the process involved the same catechism of professionalism that Wise invokes. Furthermore, the actors come from the same domains of the educational system: teachers, principals, educational psychologists, foundation staff, and college of education faculty. Yet some in the educational establishment have reacted in horror to this new organization. Why? In part, theories of professionalism would argue, because it has excluded many of "us" and included organizations that are not embraced by NCATE: the Core Knowledge, Milken, and Fordham foundations, for example. Wise emphasizes NCATE's inclusiveness. It behooves us to remember that no matter how wide NCATE's embrace, significant people and organizations are nonetheless excluded.

Frank Murray's description of TEAC takes a different approach to professionalism. TEAC

has been established to provide a "scientific" vision to the accreditation process of the teaching profession. As such, when describing TEAC's accreditation process, Murray makes wide use of terms like *evidence*, *standards*, and *academic audit*. The profession, according to TEAC, should consist of "members . . . who ground their actions in scholarship and evidence and who are willing to trust the evidence in their decision making" (Murray, 2005, p. 308). TEAC attempts to reestablish teacher education programs as sites of scientific exchange, where rigorous "academic" processes are taking place, where policy and decisions are made under a close rational process of evaluation informed by evidence, and where

evidence must meet the standards scholars have established for evidence so that there is no doubt about what currently is in doubt, namely, whether teachers have the knowledge, disposition, and skill that their academic degrees indicate and that their state license requires. (Murray, 2005, p. 308)

Indeed, TEAC sounds like a terrific process by which teacher educators could begin to redress the weaknesses in the research base of teacher education (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Grossman, 2004; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

However, in light of the scholarship on professionalism, we ought to consider some related issues. First, assuming we (temporarily) accept Murray's claim that the TEAC accreditation process reflects a process of scientific inquiry, what of the perils of science? Can we count on a scientific process to provide better processes in accrediting programs and certifying teachers? It can be easily argued that the "products" (teachers) of this scientific process, as well as the categorization and evaluation mechanisms that are used to certify them, reflect a process sociologists call the social construction of reality. That is, both the accreditation processes and the "science of education research" are social constructions in which social agents reflect in their actions social, political, and cultural structures of power and hegemony embedded in our society (Rosen, 2004). As a result, scientific accreditation is framed under a rather narrow vision, dictating how teachers should act in class, how



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they should behave with students or parents or peers, what sorts of knowledge they should possess, and what dispositions and skills they would be expected to hold. Although it is true that TEAC is less prescriptive than NCATE, we would be naïve if we thought that this increased flexibility means that the hegemonic structure that dictates NCATE prescriptions is not apparent in TEAC as well, albeit in a more concealed form. Gramsci (Boggs, 1976), the Italian sociologist, argued that our common ideas, the things we consider to be natural and obvious, turn out to be the most sophisticated forms of oppression (hegemony) that can most powerfully constrain our capacity to be liberated (e.g., the assumptions that scientism equals linear progress and that human enlightenment is considered by many to be an axiomatic truth. These people are “caught” unguarded by concealed ideologies that dictate their perceptions, without being able to consider their drawbacks).

Thus, the “rigorous” and rather “autonomous” practice of TEAC in which faculty decide how to create a competent teacher, theoretically, has the potential of being creative, experimental, and liberating, whereas, in fact, TEAC operates under social, political, and ideological structures that tend to foster conservative approaches that favor of status quo as well. There is no way around this catch-22. Science can be potentially liberating, but in many cases—and especially in an environment where intellectuals are gradually losing their political and symbolic power—scholars (in this case, teacher educators) tend to be more conservative and are less likely to challenge the social order. Invoking the mantle of science can obscure but not erase it. Thus, we are left with the question, To what extent does the intellectual environment in teacher preparation programs allow rigorous criticism of current practices? This is a question we all need to consider.

## CONCLUSION

The simplest “read” of the articles by Murray and Wise is that because the two accreditation organizations are working toward very similar aims and are part of the same profession,

NCATE and TEAC reflect insider politics. This view casts a cynical shadow on the passionate professionalism rhetoric of Wise, for it suggests that his stance is an attempt to silence a threatening opponent and secure the inside monopoly that NCATE has worked so many years to develop and sustain.

Ours is a more hopeful read. Conant (1963) noted a lack of vigorous criticism within the educational establishment. And so another read of the articles resonates with Murray’s plea that TEAC and NCATE lay the foundations for a unified accreditation system. TEAC and NCATE might share certain goals, but they have quite different assumptions—about what we know, about who should participate, and about how we should be held accountable. Those differences allow for more-impassioned (and perhaps, by association, vigorous) internal criticism. Whereas Wise sees this as a threat to professionalism and the public good, recent scholarship on professionalism offers a different view. Perhaps sustaining those differences and using them to intentionally increase internal criticism would enhance our professionalism and the public good.

Even with that internal criticism, it also behooves us to take a more critical stance toward the professionalization agenda within teaching and teacher education. The educational establishment is regularly accused of being alternatively defensive or dismissive, myopic or imperialistic. Scholars of professionalism would predict such accusations, for any attempt to create a profession raises legitimate questions about exclusion, power, and monopolies. In building a profession, we have to exclude: Not everyone possesses expertise relevant to teaching and teacher education. But we have to be wary of excluding people who have the right to be included. This seems especially dicey in a field like teaching, where the boundaries between insiders and outsiders are necessarily blurred. Our colleagues in the physics department are teacher educators when they teach undergraduates in general education or as physics majors or minors. We might not think to include those colleagues in decisions about teacher education. But we should, along with

mathematicians, historians, and psychologists—even when they are, and maybe especially if they are—critical of the value-added nature of our work. Being more inclusive of legitimate insiders helps us sustain the spirit of the internal criticism.

And we need to invite external criticism as well if we want to build a profession that maximizes the advantages of expertise and minimizes the dangers of excessive power. We are in luck on this point. Because teaching is the most public of professions, there are many outsiders who feel that they understand teaching even though they themselves are not teachers and may, therefore, lack relevant expertise and insight. Nonetheless, these outsiders have strong opinions about what it takes to teach well, about how teachers ought to be prepared, and about who should guard the gates. We are of the mind that Conant (1963) was right to worry about our allergy to criticism (see also Grossman, 2004). A healthy appreciation and appetite for such criticism is the only way that we can be sure—as professionals—that we are vigilant about attending to the Janus-like character of all professional work. As a helping profession, we have the obligation to do no harm. Opening ourselves up to criticism (internal and external) can only help make good on that moral, and professional, commitment.

## NOTE

1. We do not mean to suggest that Krause or Bourdieu have a romantic view of professions as altruists. For them, professionalism is both a public and a private good.

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