

The Relationship between Teacher Education Program Visions and Teacher's Visions:

An examination of three programs

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1. Introduction

Prominent teacher educators have argued that an important part of a strong teacher preparation program is a clearly articulated, shared vision of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005a, Darling-Hammond et al, 2005b). Case studies of exemplary teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 1999; 2006) have found that the programs were built around a common vision of good teaching. Other research suggests that such a vision contributes to program coherence (Author, 2004; Tatto, 1996). A program built around a shared vision promotes clinical work and coursework that reinforce and reflect images of good teaching. In turn, conceptions of good teaching are embodied in a concrete vision which can promote understanding of good teaching and learning among a community of faculty, teachers and teacher candidates.

A growing body of writing and research has shed increasing light upon the role of vision in teacher's development (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2005b; Duffy, 1998, 2002; Author, 2001, 2003, 2006; 2008; Kennedy, 2006; McElhone et al., 2008; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Turner, 2006, 2007; Zumwalt, 1989). My research found that teachers' visions are images of ideal classroom practice that represent a kind of "reach" for them (Author, 2006). Teachers' visions are images of good practice, which guide choices about curriculum and students, motivate and inspire teachers, and direct reflection on practice. Teachers use vision as not only a guide for the future and a motivating image of the possible, but also a means of looking *back* and reflecting upon

past work and purposes. My research also identified three features of teachers' vision—the clarity, range and distance from reality—which were related to teacher's identities and sense of success in their work. For example, with a vision that represents a “reach” but also is within the realm of possibility, teachers can measure progress and experience successes in light of their visions. Yet with a vision that is overly distant or perhaps too broad or ambitious in its range, teachers may struggle—they may not experience enough progress to feel successful.

Yet while attention to teacher's visions has grown, researchers have not yet examined the nature of program visions in teacher education. We do not have empirical research regarding the nature of program visions (the content, the level of specificity, nor the clarity, range and distance), the different types of visions that might inform different kinds of programs, nor the ways in which visions may (or may not) be reflected in the programs. Furthermore, while it seems likely that novice teachers' visions could have some relationship to the visions of their programs, we know little about how program visions interact with the visions and goals of individual teacher candidates.

A larger qualitative study in which I participate, the “Choosing to Teach” project, provided a unique opportunity to examine these questions. Our research project has been examining the ways in which teacher education programs, school contexts and identity formation processes shape new teachers' identity, practice and career commitments through a study of three programs --Day School Leadership Through Teaching (DeLeT), University Teacher Education Program (UTEP), and Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) -- that aim to prepare teachers for specific contexts. We call them “context

specific” teacher education programs. These three programs are designed around a particular type of schools (urban –public, urban – Catholic, and Jewish) with a focus on particular (not generic) students. Because of the focus of purpose of these three programs, I felt they would be possible sites to examine the nature and impact of program vision, and the relationship between program vision and individual teaching visions.

To that end, I examined our data in order to answer three research questions; 1) What is the nature of the program vision in these teacher education programs?, 2) What is the nature of teachers’ opportunities to learn about these visions in these programs? And; 3) To what degree are these program visions aligned with the visions of their graduates?

2. Methods

I used both interview and program data from our larger study to answer these research questions. We conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with 30 randomly selected new teachers drawn equally from the three programs. Participants were first or second year teachers. The interview protocol included, among other things, questions about teachers’ goals and purposes for teaching, images of an ideal classroom, the practices that reflected their visions, as well as their future plans. In addition, we conducted a semi-structured interview with the three program directors to learn about the program vision, the perception of their programs and teachers, and focus groups with faculty members from the three programs to further investigate the nature of program visions as shared by the faculty. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed (see Appendix A, B and C, for copies of protocols). We also collected documents describing programs’ curriculum and purposes.

First, in order to identify the program vision, I analyzed our interviews with program directors, focus groups, and reviewed program materials (program websites, program documents, courses of study and syllabi) searching for statements about the purposes of teachers and teaching, and statements about the program's intended role in the community which it served. In order to identify opportunities to learn in the program, I identified key distinctive features of the program vision and then looked at program syllabi for opportunities to learn about these aspects of the vision. In order to identify and analyze teachers' visions, I coded data from all 30 interviews using ATLAS.ti, for discussions regarding ideal images of teaching, teaching practice as it related to vision, and plans for the future. I also coded data for any discussion of the distance of teachers' visions as they perceived it.

Next, in order to examine the degree of alignment (if any) between program visions and teachers' visions, I looked for key features of program visions in teachers' discussions. I looked in particular for consistencies between program and individual visions; as well as for any absences or gaps. Finally, I looked at the impact of the alignment upon these individuals' developing identities as teachers by examining their discussions of their future plans and their conceptions of themselves as teaching professionals.

3. Findings

3.1 The nature of program vision. A review of program data and interviews with program directors and faculty suggest three key findings. First, these three programs did have

distinct visions. Reviews of program documents suggested that each program had a clearly defined sense of purpose that was articulated in different materials, that was consistent across documents, and that could easily be identified. Indeed, the continual presence of such statements suggested that for these programs, vision was not something that had been developed simply for the purposes of accreditation, but rather, served as a key motivating force in the program. Interviews with faculty also revealed a strong sense of purpose across program members, and a shared understanding of the program vision.

Second, the program data reflected three quite different kinds of visions motivating these three programs:

- a **vision of service** that conceives of teaching as only one of many opportunities to “give back” or contribute to society,
- a **vision of social justice** that conceives of teaching as a direct means of addressing social inequities; and
- a **vision of practice** that focuses upon teaching as a profession that has a knowledge base and set of practices that can be learned and developed over time.

Finally, the data suggested that the programs emphasized either one type or a mix of these visions to a greater or lesser extent (see Table 1). For each the emphasis was distinctive, and seemed to have a consistent relationship with the visions, career plans and developing identities of their graduates.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

3.1.1 Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE)

3.1.1.a. *Vision.* The program vision of Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) focuses clearly upon teaching as service. The program director emphasized that faculty want students to think about the program not exclusively as a “teacher formation” program but

more broadly as contributing to the Catholic community through education. ACE emphasizes teaching as an opportunity for young people to engage in service in Catholic communities, through teaching in under-resourced Catholic schools. As program materials explain, the program is designed to give teacher candidates the chance to make a “real difference in the lives of your students” through “[teaching](#), [community](#), and [spirituality](#)”: “ACE teachers are motivated by a sense of service to others and a desire to work for the common good.” ACE conceives of teaching as an important way to serve the Catholic community, in particular, to work with underserved populations. Furthermore, ACE promotes a vision of candidates developing a long-term commitment to the Catholic community with an understanding that students will either aim for eventual leadership in education or become advocates for Catholic education in other fields such as law or journalism.

This vision is guided by a conception of *who* the teacher is--in ACE, a good teacher serves as a moral and spiritual guide, modeled on Jesus as the archetypal teacher. Good teachers model ethical thinking and practice as good Catholics. According to the program director, the program vision also focuses upon a development of shared approaches to curriculum planning, so that students have a “common language” about planning and teaching. However, the focus of the program vision rests heavily upon who the teacher is as a person and the role they play in children’s spiritual and ethical formation.

3.1.1.b. Opportunities to Learn. Analysis of the syllabi suggested that the opportunities to learn in the program were consistent with the program vision. Teachers had substantial

opportunities to explore the concept of the teacher as moral agent and to reflect upon and pursue their own spiritual growth. They had a strand of courses and experiences in which they were supported in thinking about their development as Catholics and in thinking about their role in helping form and develop future Catholics. Almost every syllabi reviewed addressed the role of the teacher in a number of ways, suggesting that this topic received strong emphasis in the program.

However, there were fewer opportunities to think about the development of learning on the part of students. Even the course on child development focused heavily upon the role of the teacher. For instance, the first topic for a writing assignment in the course was “How is the teacher a moral agent in the classroom?”¹ The course syllabi noted that the purpose was to help students learn the importance of developmental theory and research for effective teaching as well as to integrate moral issues into classroom planning.

Teacher education students are required to write three papers which included a summary of key empirical findings from the readings; a discussion of how the findings influence their pedagogy and teaching practice; and one the implications of for teachers’ own professional development. While clearly there was some focus upon learners in this course, there were no assignments that required ACE teachers to follow a student throughout the course of a day, to write a case study about a student, to interview a student, or to use some of the pedagogical strategies that many teacher educators now use to help prospective teachers understand the perspectives and lives of children, middle schoolers or adolescents. On the other hand, these opportunities to learn are consistent

¹ All ACE teachers (elementary, middle and high school) take this course on development and moral education.

with the vision of the program of teaching as service, which focuses squarely upon the role of the teacher and the opportunity for teachers to provide a service for their community.

3.1.2. Day School Leadership Through Teaching (DeLeT)

3.1.2.a. Vision. Brandeis University's Day School Leadership Through Teaching Program (DeLeT) program focuses upon a vision of teaching as a practice that should improve student learning, as well as a vision of teaching as service to a the Jewish community. DeLeT, a relatively new program in existence since 2001, has been developed specifically in order to prepare new teachers of general and Judaic studies for the elementary grades in Jewish Day Schools. According to program documents, DeLeT's mission is to help new teachers "build effective Jewish day schools" by "shaping the minds and touching the hearts of children." The program aims to teach teachers how to "help young people develop their Jewish identities and teach them the values and customs that give meaning to being Jewish." Ultimately, the DeLeT program is designed to help support students in Jewish Day Schools "form integrated identities as they study and experience their dual heritage and responsibilities as Americans and Jews" and also work towards the development of "teacher-leaders" who may ultimately play a role in the reform of Jewish Day Schools.

The DeLeT vision of good teaching sits within this context of developing teacher leaders for Jewish Day Schools. Program documents explain that content, students and inquiry sit at the center of good teaching. Good teaching is collaborative and wedded to content

(whether it be Jewish studies or general studies). Good teaching is also shaped by knowledge of one's students; good teaching relies upon a deep understanding of development through careful observation and assessment of children. Finally, good teaching has the aim of creating a classroom learning community, infused with Jewish experiences and values.

3.1.2.b. Opportunities to Learn. As with ACE, the opportunities provided by DeLeT to learn about the vision were consistent with the vision. For instance, every year, the program director leads a course strand in the program called the "Jewish Journey" in which novice teachers have opportunities to consider and reflect upon about their growth as Jews and as Jewish teachers, as well as to engage in practices that might contribute to additional deepening of their own personal growth. One of the assignments in the course is to take on a new practice related to their own Jewish identity. Some students have chosen to begin saying a daily prayer, while others have chosen to start reading an Israeli newspaper.

At the same time, there are also substantial opportunities in the program to learn about learners and development. Students are asked to write a child case study over the course of a semester, while in other courses, some of the major assignments include developing a portrait of a successful learner, and examining samples of student work. Even in the course on student's Jewish journey there are days devoted to addressing children's spiritual growth and considering age-appropriate and moral questions about the curriculum, such as "when is it appropriate to talk to students about the Holocaust?"

There are also repeated opportunities to learn about particular classroom strategies and practices (Grossman et al., 2009, 1999; in press). For example, in the English Language Arts methods course, students are asked to use a number of assessments of students' reading and writing abilities, such as spelling inventories and running records. They are asked to reflect upon their use and draft progress reports for children—activities very close to the kinds of work they would be doing in their classrooms as full time teachers.² The variety of these opportunities to learn are consistent with the program's vision of teaching as service as well as of teaching as practice. Students seem to have opportunities to learn about both aspects of the vision of teaching.

3.1.3. Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP).

3.1.3.a. Vision. The initial quote viewed on the website of the Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP) program captures the emphasis of the program upon a vision of social justice: “Be the change you wish to see in the world (Gandhi).” The Urban Teacher Education Program, a new teacher education program developed at the University of Chicago in 2003, was created to prepare teachers specifically for urban schools and promotes a vision of teaching that can foster greater equity and opportunity for students, in particular, those in Chicago public schools. Program materials also reveal a strong vision of teaching as a practice that helps develop and extend student learning.

Documents explain that, “Chicago UTEP prepares teacher candidates to become successful instructors in challenging urban elementary schools. Our candidates receive a

² Indeed, recently, some teacher educators have begun to argue that these kinds of practices and strategies should be at the center of teacher preparation curriculum and in fact, should be the basis of all coursework and clinical work (Ball, et al., in press, Grossman et al., 2009, in press).

strong theoretical understanding of the foundations of education in an urban context, develop expertise in pedagogy and subject matter, and gain experience over two years of clinical work with children under the guidance of mentor teachers and University staff.” (University of Chicago, 2007)

The program conceives of good teaching in urban schools as culturally-relevant, and informed by specific, practical teaching strategies such as learning to ask thoughtful questions and balanced literacy. The program’s emphasis upon practical strategies for teaching urban children is evident across all materials and documents regarding the program. The program materials repeatedly mention pairing the study of learning theory with helping candidates enact specific frameworks and curricula. Building on the University's tradition of Socratic inquiry, the program vision also emphasizes the importance of students learn how to ask children thoughtful questions--one of the cornerstones of instruction that develops children's critical thinking and creative problem solving skills.

3.1.3.b. Opportunities to learn. The opportunities to learn in the program reflect the dual emphasis of the program upon both a vision of social justice and a vision of practice. In relationship to the vision of social justice, the students have multiple opportunities to consider what it means to be an urban teacher and to learn about the achievement gap as well as to understand and affirm their commitment to urban schooling. For instance, in the “soul strand” of the program, students focus in particular upon their own identities as urban teachers and their own cultural development in relationship to that of their students.

Yet at the same time students also have opportunities to learn about the vision of practice. In their course on human development and learning, UTEP students must write a child case study. They spend the first part of the course preparing to conduct observations, learning about how to look at student work, how to non-judgmental ways and how to capitalize on student strengths. Sessions in the course address specifically how what teachers learn from observing can help them in their teaching practice: “you will make use of your observations and your understandings of child development and student learning to brainstorm about effective practices for your student.”

As another example, in their course on children with special needs, students not only learn about different exceptionalities but they are asked to think concretely about working with particular children with a specific special need. For instance, they have to write a paper about instructional interventions they used with a student. They must address how successful the strategies were and to suggest additional strategies and interventions that could be used with similar children in the future. These kinds of assignments suggest that the teacher candidates in the UTEP program have opportunities to try out and rehearse the kinds of practices and strategies they will eventually be engaging in as full time teachers (Grossman et al., 2009). At the same time, other assignments suggest that students also have opportunities to reflect upon and develop an understanding of what it means to teach for social justice—so that students ultimately have opportunities to learn about both of the program visions.

3.2 Teachers' Visions

3.2.1 ACE Teachers. Consistent with the aims and goals of the ACE program, virtually every ACE teacher (10 of 10) mentioned religious purposes in teaching, and, also consistent with the program, many of the ACE teachers' discussions had a strong service emphasis. For instance, one teacher said: "I feel like my mission in [teaching] is to help other people so that they can help other people." A second said that she had gone into teaching as a way to help advance the Catholic community: "... it advances our community, it advances our society, and those are all things that are really important to me. As she sees it, it is critically important for young people to continue to live Catholic lives and to become leaders in the Catholic community:

I see the church in need of ... good, strong, solid role models. Part of me worries that people aren't stepping up to the plate as much as we should in order to make sure that our culture and our people survive and continue. And so ... if I can ensure that there are going to be 33 7th graders that are going to be willing to become leaders [or] at least carry the principles of a Catholic education on down the line... that that for me is my goal.

Many ACE teachers felt supported by and excited about belonging to a Catholic community of educators and noted that this was a critical aspect of participating in the program—a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves—they saw themselves as contributing to an important mission:

... I think about the 180 other teachers that are in ACE that are with their kids ... there's just something powerful knowing that there are this many young Catholics out there working and striving to instill values in .. these children. I am a part of a bigger picture ... a part of .. Catholic religion and Catholic education.

When asked about the overall aims and goals, ACE teachers in this sample often spoke about influencing the spiritual and personal lives of their students. For instance, a number

of teachers said they focused upon helping students make good decisions, and on helping children develop purposeful lives:

...if there is a path that a student is taking right now, I hope to influence that path enough to where that student will make a change that's going to better their lives. I hope to somehow influence those decisions as much as ... possible to where he would make a different decision that would better his life.

I felt like I was going to be someone in these kids' lives who they could learn from, that they could see was trying to be a good Catholic, trying to make moral decisions, and trying to do the best that she could and that they could learn from that.

These ACE teachers, consistent with the program vision, conceived of good teaching as a process by which one influences and molds children—helping youth lead moral, spiritually guided lives. They envisioned good teachers as models for children the process of leading lives as good Catholics.

For some of the ACE teachers in this sample, however, questions seemed to surface when they were asked about their visions of good teaching in the classroom. Several ACE teachers said that they did not necessarily know what they wanted to achieve as a teacher and several did not answer the question right away. This surprised us as the ACE teachers were very articulate in many areas about their commitment and work. Yet some of them seemed to be unsure about what to say in response to the question about their vision of good teaching, as did this teacher: “Oh, boy. I don't know. I guess, I hope to, like, make a difference for these kids somehow. Another responded by talking about learning in general:

What do I hope to achieve by becoming a teacher-- I-- I'm not really quite sure. I think life is a learning process and I think you're always learning new things and I

like constantly learning new things. I don't know if I necessarily want to achieve anything.

This teacher remarked that he did not necessarily focus upon curriculum but rather upon life lessons and other big ideas: "When I think of teaching these kids, I am not necessarily [thinking about] the curriculum but there's so many other life lessons that these kids need to be taught and I think that's important. I think it's very fulfilling for me internally."

When pressed, another teacher emphasized service and how she saw herself as helping people help others—a vision of the domino effects of service:

I would think that the opportunity to form and mold and have this like impressionable experience on another student is just like invaluable. I don't know.... when I applied to ACE ... I felt like I had something to share that was pretty sound and that could be passed on to somebody else. And I don't know. I- I feel like my- like my mission in this is to help other people so that they can help other people.

Consistent with the aims and goals of the ACE program, many ACE teachers in this sample considered roles in educational leadership as their ultimate aim.³ They did not plan to stay in teaching very long, but rather envisioned taking on an administrator or principal role in a Catholic school in the future. Indeed, six of the ten ACE teachers planned to stay in teaching less than five years and almost all mentioned plans to remain in education but pursue some administrative role. Only two of the ten ACE teachers articulated plans to stay in teaching for more than ten years—in other words, considered teaching as a career (one anticipated teaching 8-10 years; the other, 20 years).

³ It is worth noting, however, that this research reports teachers' plans for the future, not their actual behavior. See Tamir, E. (2009) for an analysis of teachers' retention, and commitments to teaching versus leadership, drawing upon data from these set of 30 interviews.

The ACE teachers in this sample, consistent with the program vision, described clear goals and aims for children that focused upon shaping their personal growth and development, and providing support and guidance. At the same time, also consistent with the program vision, they did not emphasize particular curricular, intellectual or learning goals. They did not focus upon the role those goals could play in children's decision making or personal development, nor upon particular pedagogies geared to the students they were teaching.

3.2.2. DeLeT Teachers. Consistent with the program vision of service, almost all DeLeT teachers in this sample (9 of 10) described having goals related to fostering their students' Jewish identity, including both spiritual goals and a sense of belonging to the larger Jewish community. For instance, one DeLeT teacher said:

I partly want to do this, and I wouldn't say "in service" to the Jewish community, but it is where I want to put my effort and where I hope that a lot of the benefit will accrue to the Jewish community.

DeLeT teachers also talked about building Jewish identities, and emphasized helping students feel a part of Jewish community:

... it's the idea of continuity and ... wanting to have kids have a Jewish identity, wanting to be a person who can pass that on and teach that to kids ... so that then they'll be the next generation and on and on.

Relatedly, some DeLeT teachers talked about being "role models" in the Jewish community: "I think that kids need strong role models in order to grow up into the kind of human beings that we want them to be, and I think that as a teacher you can have incredible influence and I like to think that I'm making a difference....so it's pretty

fulfilling.” Even one teacher who said she had initially avoided teaching in a Jewish setting ultimately felt convinced by program faculty that sharing her Jewish background and knowledge was a very important contribution she could make:

[The director of DeLeT persuaded me that] ... I have a wealth of Jewish knowledge that just wouldn't be used if I was in a public school setting... I thought about it for a while and I think that it's been like more influential that I'm in a Jewish school rather than just a regular school.

These DeLeT teachers described a vision of teaching that focused both upon subject area knowledge and Jewish values. As one teacher reflected, she wanted not only to teach English, but also to do it in a setting that reflected her own religious values—and those aims hold equal weight for her:

... the way I was taught in those subjects made me love them and made me want to go in that direction. ...and to be able to do it in a Jewish setting feels good too, because ... that's part of my identity. So I want to teach kids to be all those Jewish values that I was talking about and to be Jews ... but I also want to teach them to be readers and writers...

Another teacher talked about the satisfaction of being able to connect big ideas in the curriculum to Judaism and children's background:

It is exciting to be able to teach American history and to say, but where- what was happening to the Jewish people then? I think that is really fascinating. What was happening to your grandparent, to your great grandparent? And everything is connected to who you are, and it is very close to home, and it is real.

At the same time consistent evidence emerged in these interviews of a vision of practice. DeLeT teachers' visions also tended to involve specific curricular “moves” or strategies that they would use in planning or enacting curriculum. For instance, this teacher explained that when she plans her curriculum she always takes into consideration her students' prior knowledge and how it might shape their learning:

... my first thing that I do when I sit down is I try to, you know, do all those things that DeLeT asks you to do, like think about the kids' understandings, and think about—like I think it really has influenced my way of thinking, and my way of really taking the time to really plan.

A fourth DeLeT teacher described her vision of good teaching as informed by careful observation of children paired with purposeful curriculum planning in which the goals of instruction are clear to the teacher and made explicit to the children:

[My vision of good teaching involves] listening to the children, watching the children, and comparing my observations of the children with my co-teacher To try to really understand what's going on with each individual child, and then thinking about what needs to be done to meet their needs and challenge their interests. And then I think also in terms of planning teaching around goalsso any unit that we're doing, my first step in understanding and planning [is to determine] what are the real goals here...and ... I think it's also important for the children to know [the goals as well].

It seems particularly striking that some teachers describe their visions in terms of consistent, regular practices. Phrases like: “that is something I always hold with me”; “I stop and say to myself all the time”; “ so any unit we are doing, my first step is...” suggest that these teachers have a vision of good teaching that involve a set of practices that one engages in over and over again as part of the work. It seems possible that their teacher identity is made concrete or embodied in these specific practices. They may imagine or believe that good teachers enact these practices, and use these strategies—and if they imagine them and enact them—they themselves are [or will become] good teachers.

In keeping with the mission of the program to develop teacher-leaders, the DeLeT teachers also imagined themselves becoming leaders in their schools. For instance, this teacher envisioned herself having an impact that moved beyond her own classroom to the

school. She felt that she was perceived by other members of her school as “changing the culture” and felt energized by that:

I can impact a lot more than just my classroom, and I was saying ... people in the teacher [lounge] all the timewill always make a comment like “Oh the DeLeT fellows,”... “They're changing the culture of the school.”

Another teacher talked about how she was sharing ideas from the program with her school, and how her ideas seemed to be affecting her colleagues:

I feel like I've brought so much to the school, because of DeLeT...always talking about the big idea, always talking about backwards planning, always talking about the final assessment, like since day one. And now I'm noticing that they're talking about those things.

Even while one DeLeT teacher mentioned that while she was less sure about how a young teacher could be a leader, she described a real connection to the notion of developing a leadership role and considered it a personal goal:

One of DeLeT's missions or values is ... leadership ...I don't totally understand how we're supposed to become leaders as young teachers, but I think that's something I would want to do.

Indeed, these teachers were planning to remain in the classroom—and even when considering leadership roles, they were thinking about them in the context of classroom teaching as opposed to more formal traditional leadership roles. Of the DeLeT teachers, the majority in our sample planned to remain in the classroom long-term, and also talked about eventually becoming teacher-leaders in their schools. 9 of the 10 we interviewed said they would stay in teaching more than 5 years. Four of the DeLeT teachers said they saw teaching as their chosen career. In sum, the interviews with the DeLeT teachers in this sample provided evidence for both types of visions that seem to undergird the program—a vision of service and a vision of practice.

3.2.3. UTEP Teachers.

Consistent with UTEP's vision of social justice, all 10 of the UTEP teachers in this sample talked about social justice and social change. For instance, this teacher explained:

.... I recognized the need and the inequality that existed in not just urban schools, but rural schools too. As the type of person I am I just can't sit back and let it happen.

Another teacher maintained that "I think my commitment is to change the school system as it is right now, at least the Chicago public school system, and you can't really do that unless you understand the situation of the teachers, of the students." A third teacher reflected:

I would say it was mainly what I felt was my commitment to social justice, ... just feeling like I need to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

Many of the teachers in this sample also talked about visions of teaching in ways that were consistent with the UTEP vision of practice, emphasizing on practical strategies for teaching urban children. UTEP teachers provided detailed descriptions of the teaching they envisioned being most effective in supporting children's literacy development. For instance, this UTEP teacher's description of a typical day suggests multiple strategies to help children learn to read:

You would see many lessons so lessons that are about 20 minutes...., where there is a concept that's taught and modeled. So I would show the students what they needed to do or the elements of the skill or the concept and then they would practice it with partners or in groups. And as they would be doing that I would be going around and sort of checking in with the groups, "Do you understand what's going on here?" "Can you two work together to see if you can explain it to one another?" Really directing the students more towards each other for the learning to build, and then sort of giving them a push when they need it. I would also do... guided reading which is a time when I bring ... small groups of students together ... for reading a text that is geared towards those particular students' needs in reading.

As another example, another teacher provided specific strategies and approaches she used to help her special needs students become engaged in reading:

... I try to do a lot of read-alouds, both fiction and nonfiction, so that I can expose them to new authors or new ideas that they might be interested in. When I see a kid pick up something, I find ten more books about that thing.

Again, as with the DeLeT teachers, UTEP teachers used language that suggested that these practices were part of their visions of good teaching—and that these strategies are ongoing, repeated practices that one engages in. UTEP teachers said things like, “I try to do a lot of...”; or “you would see many lessons.”⁴

UTEP students were not only fluent in discussing their strategies to help students learn to read as illustrated above—but also, almost all of the UTEP teachers (8 of 10) described visions that encompassed culturally relevant strategies for teaching urban children. As this teacher said:

One of the most important things in a classroom and in teaching is, like I said before, choosing materials that are culturally relevant to the students ...in hopes that it will create more interest.

As another example, this UTEP student talked about her attempts to make her curriculum culturally relevant and connect it to her students’ own experiences and lives, yet not making assumptions about them and their backgrounds:

try to design curriculum around the students’ lives and the students’ background and I speak Spanish And I also try never to tell the students who they are, or

⁴ It is possible, in fact, that these phrases function as a sort of “linguistic signal” for the kinds of consistent practices teachers imagine themselves engaging in as part of their visions of good teaching.

pretend to know anything about that.... the whole philosophy of UTEP is to be responsive to what the children are telling you what they want to learn.

Several teachers felt that their visions of social justice, however, were so distant that it was difficult to feel as if they were making progress on them. One teacher, for instance, felt the program frontloaded issues of curriculum and classroom management and teaching the subject areas that the program vision of social justice was dealt with later. She felt that this compromised her ability to make gains on her vision of social justice — it was just too far away:

[Social justice] feels like it's there as that final frontier.When you learn how to teach math, when you learn how to discipline the kids, when you learn all this other stuff, *then* you can do social justice. So it's always there, it's in all our brochures, and we work stuff around it sometimes, but it's always the last thing on the agenda.

On the other hand, most teachers seemed to feel that the program's focus upon teaching and subject matter strategies was important and useful. This UTEP teacher explained that while “the biggest reasons” she entered the program was because of its vision of social justice, she was beginning to appreciate the need to start by focusing upon her classroom:

... in the beginning of the program I realized that there is a lot more to teaching, to being a good teacher.... I cannot just focus on what is happening outside when I have my own classroom because I have to be the good teacher that I want to be.... this is what I need to do first, be a good teacher in the classroom, make that difference in the classroom, and then also try and think of ways that I can make a difference outside of it.

At the same time, however, this teacher's discussion seems to suggest that she sees making a difference in the classroom as somewhat unrelated to making one outside the classroom. Yet UTEP in fact promotes a vision of social justice and teaching as being deeply interrelated—not that one needs to accomplish first one and then the other.

Indeed, good teaching directly contributes to social justice by opening doors for children, creating new opportunities, developing networks and by leveling the playing field for children. The words of this teacher do suggest that at least this particular graduate may not necessarily fully understand the relationship between the two visions promoted by UTEP.

One of the most difficult challenges UTEP teachers worried about -- maintaining their vision and their idealism—may in fact be related to their lack of understanding the relationship between these two visions. One teacher explained:

... my first year in the program with our senior year all the students were very idealistic about what they were doing... everyone was very, very excited about the work. (Yet) I think it's like a slow decline as we move through the program. One of my colleagues said ... it just seems like there's so much working against us. We might even feel it more because we know exactly what we're working against.

Another UTEP teacher was uncertain how long she would stay in teaching because she felt so many advances had to occur in order for the socio-political climate to change as she envisioned. She wondered if she might seek a different position in education or politics in order to have more impact, noting that she felt almost as if she was working too hard against the tide;

And in Chicago public schools, I feel like I'm ... swimming upstream almost, and that in order for there to be like a really big shift in social differences that more has to change that's the kind of thing that wears people down..... maybe in the long-term I'm not going to stay in the classroomsomething more has to happen where I'm either training teachers or I'm a principal or I'm a legislator or I just give up entirely ... because I feel like so many things have to be different.

It is certainly likely that this sense of discouragement results from a deeper understanding of the reality of urban schools, paired with these novice teachers' recognition of the

distance between their vision for their students and the current reality. At the same time, it may also be important to note that the teachers may not see themselves making any progress towards the quite challenging vision of social justice even while they may actually be making progress on it while attaining the vision of practice.

In sum, the UTEP teachers in this sample provided ample evidence that their thinking and aims and goals for teaching were consistent with the program vision of social change. In addition, their thinking and aims also reflected an understanding of particular pedagogies that reflected the vision of practice. Interestingly, however, there was evidence that some teachers did always see the direct relationship between those two visions. The teachers' interviews also suggested that, while they had clear visions of teaching, their visions of social change might be less so.

Finally, the UTEP teachers were somewhat less confident about their future plans in teaching than the DeLeT teachers. While the same number in UTEP planned to stay more than 5 years (9 of 10), only two of them said they saw teaching as their "career." While the UTEP teachers are placed in more challenging and charged contexts, it still seems interesting that the UTEP teachers were less optimistic about their plans to stay in classroom teaching because they seemed so well prepared.

4. Discussion

Recent research highlights consistencies across different kinds of teacher preparation pathways and programs (Boyd et al., 2009) revealing that most programs reviewed

differed only in the sequence and timing of coursework, suggesting a tendency towards conformity in teacher education programs. Yet this research points to some of the ways in which programs can differ quite considerably. These three programs have distinct visions of teaching that are clearly articulated in their program materials, in their opportunities to learn, and further, are clear in their graduate's discussions of their own visions. In particular, this research identified three quite different types of visions motivating these programs, and found that each program emphasized either one of them or a mix of these types of visions in unique ways.

This research further suggests that visions can matter deeply to program design, purpose and structure. The visions of these programs can be seen reflected over and over again on multiple levels. Not only do the visions emerge consistently in program materials and in the discussions of program faculty, but they also are seen repeatedly in the shape and design of the curricula and learning opportunities and in the discussions and thinking of their graduates. For these three programs, the program visions were far from empty statements of mission that had little relationship to practice or daily work; rather, these visions are embedded in the programs influencing them in ways that are substantive and deeply meaningful.

At the same time, the examination of the alignment of program vision and teachers' vision suggests that the ways in which program visions vary –by type of vision; as well as the range and distance -- can have an impact upon the kinds of visions the teachers in these programs develop. First, the *type* of vision matters. All of the ACE teachers had a

strong vision of themselves as a moral and spiritual guide in the classroom, consistent with the program vision of service. At the same time, a number of them were much less detailed and specific about their classroom practices with urban children. The lack of specificity around classroom practices seemed to be correlated with ACE teachers' career plans. ACE teachers' plans to leave the classroom earlier and go into administration are quite consistent with the ACE vision: a vision of teaching as service can in fact be enacted in a number of settings and not simply classrooms. Thus it may not be surprising that more ACE teachers in our sample said they wanted to become Catholic school administrators.

The DeLeT and UTEP teachers expressed a strong vision of practice, also consistent with the visions of their respective programs. More of these graduates had a well articulated sense of their classroom teaching practice and what they were aiming for, and, in turn, many imagined themselves remaining in teaching long-term. It may be that if such a vision involves repeated, ongoing practices, it may help reinforce one's sense of identity as a teacher. In relationship to a program with a strong vision of practice, and substantive opportunities to learn about it, these new teachers have both concrete understandings of the kinds of practices they can enact, which allow them to begin to develop a purposeful identity as a teacher with plans to remain in the classroom.

Second, the *range and distance* of the vision matters. It may seem surprising at first, in light of their focused preparation, that some of the UTEP teachers expressed discouragement and concern about the possibilities of effecting change on a broader basis

particularly if they were able to understand the relationship between their teaching and issues of social justice. The DeLeT teachers, while clearly in different contexts, did not seem to express the same concerns. Perhaps the DeLeT teachers' visions were at a comfortable range for new teachers – not too distant from reality to feel unrealistic but enough of a stretch to feel challenged. It is possible that the DeLeT teachers were more likely to recognize successes and gains because they could assess their work against a clear, closer vision, while the UTEP teachers, measuring their gains against much broader and more distant social visions, were not as frequently able to experience such progress.

Finally, the opportunities to learn matter. While this may seem commonsense, it is important to note that when features of the program visions were emphasized in the program curriculum, those features were in turn, clearly reflected in teachers' discussions about teaching.

5. Implications

While this is a qualitative research study focused upon a small number of preparation programs--and in their focus upon specific contexts they may be different from many teacher preparation programs--there are several broader implications for teacher preparation design that can be drawn. There are also questions this research raises that may be particularly important for further study. First, because this research reveals the multiple ways in which vision informs and guides these programs, this study suggests paying attention to the role that vision may play in other kinds of teacher education programs, not simply those that are “context-specific.” While these are unique programs

in some ways, this study points to the potential value in and importance of developing and clarifying program visions as part of program design and structure.

Second, because the *type* of vision promoted seemed to either contribute to or impede a growing sense of identity as a classroom teacher in these programs, it suggests other programs might consider the type of vision they wish to promote as well as what they hope for their graduates. If programs have a strong vision of service, graduates may conclude that they can fulfill that vision in a variety of ways—not all of which involve teaching. One can have a vision of service and still accomplish that vision even if one switches careers. And, as commonsense would suggest, it seems important for teachers to develop a clear vision of practice in order to begin to develop an identity as a classroom teacher. The programs with strong visions of practice had graduates who could imagine themselves carrying out that vision as classroom teachers and, eventually, even as teacher-leaders.

Yet these findings also raise interesting questions about the adequacy of a vision of practice on its own. Among these three programs, I did not find one that promoted only a vision of practice. The programs I studied paired a vision of practice with another vision that had a broader range. Is a vision of practice (on its own) sufficient to sustain a new teacher over the long haul? Or do teachers also need some other broader purposes, such as those reflected in a vision of service or social justice, to help them maintain their commitment?

This research also complicates such questions by pointing to the particular challenges of a distant vision. If a program's vision of teaching is too distant, teachers can also become discouraged. Novice teachers may not have a sense of how their classroom work with individual students connects to larger social purposes. They might also feel overwhelmed by the gap between what they are aiming for in terms of broad social change, and what they are currently experiencing in their local context. I am not arguing that teacher educators should avoid promoting visions of social change or visions of what schools could be—but rather, contend that we need to give new teachers a sense of what progress on those large agendas might look like (and how their work in schools is related to that larger agenda). In particular, we also may need to provide a sense of what some of the smaller steps might be to help them make some progress towards their ideals, so that new teachers can recognize progress and have the experience of being successful. It is possible that this may mean something different from providing new teachers with the strategies and practices they need in order to be successful in promoting student learning. Because even those teachers in UTEP, which seems to provide substantial opportunities to learn that are grounded in practice, felt discouraged at times, this research suggests that while those opportunities to learn are critical, teachers may need something more to keep them going as well. In my research with individual teachers, I refer to these visions as “episodic visions” –a vision that encompasses extraordinary moments and ordinary days. I found that teachers with episodic visions are better able to work through the inevitable frustrations and discouragement from setbacks and disappointments that can sometimes accompany the daily routine (Author, 2006).

Finally, because this work reveals substantial variation in the nature of visions that can animate programs (that reflect quite different conceptions about the role and purposes of teaching and even the nature of good teaching) this examination raises questions about the nature and type of vision promoted by other programs. For instance, are these three kinds of visions the only types of visions motivating teacher education programs in the U.S., or are there other types of visions? Do some types of programs tend to be guided by certain types of visions and what impact do those visions have upon their structure and the identities and future plans of their graduates? For instance, it may be possible that the vision of a program aimed at preparing teachers for urban schools might be quite different from one preparing teachers for rural schools, however, it is also possible that the visions are quite similar. It may also be that visions may vary by pathway (early entry or college-recommending). Or, while the visions may be similar, the ways that the programs actually help teachers learn about the goals and purposes of the programs are quite different. It further points to questions for comparative research: What visions animate programs in other countries and what purposes and conceptions inform them? How do those visions shape program design?

Finally, while this study looked at a small sample of programs and teachers, drawing on interview data about their future plans but not their actual behavior, it seems possible that the nature of the vision of programs may create a sense of identity and larger purpose for new teachers that could be particularly important to sustaining commitment to teaching over the long haul or, on the other hand, to depleting commitment. But we need to know much more about this relationship between vision and commitment. In an era in which

we continue to search for ways to recruit and sustain teachers over time, it seems critical that we understand more about the ways in which program visions and teachers' visions work together to either support or discourage teachers from continuing to choose to teach.

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Table 1. The Three Programs: Visions and their Distinctive Features

<u>Program</u>	<u>Type(s) of Vision</u>	<u>Distinctive Features</u>
ACE	Vision of service	Service to Catholic community Teacher as moral guide Catholic practices and thinking Eventual leadership in Catholic Education Curricular frameworks
DeLeT	Vision of service Vision of practice	Service to Jewish community Strong content knowledge Learner-centered pedagogy Integration of general and Judaic studies Teacher leadership
UTEP	Vision of social justice Vision of practice	Social justice Commitment to improvement in urban settings Culturally relevant pedagogy Classroom practices appropriate for urban settings Balanced literacy as a particularly important practice

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

DECISIONS TO TEACH

1. Tell me about your decision to teach.
 - a. How did you arrive at this choice?
 - b. Why is teaching important to you?
2. Is there something about your personal beliefs or values or religious beliefs that influenced your decision to teach in any way?
 - a. C: Did your being Catholic influence you in any way?
 - b. J: Did your being Jewish influence you in any way?
 - c. U: Did anything else influence you [draw on answer to Q1]

Possible Probes: childhood, childhood environment, own schooling, family

3. What did/do you hope to achieve by becoming a teacher?
4. Have you ever considered other career directions, aside from teaching?
5. How long do you think you'll stay in teaching?

DECISIONS TO TEACH IN CATHOLIC, JEWISH, PUBLIC URBAN SCHOOLS

1. Tell me about your decision to teach in a Catholic/Jewish/Urban school.
2. Can you see yourself teaching in another kind of school? Please explain.

TEACHING PRACTICE

Next, I'm interested in learning more about your teaching.

1. What is your image of good teaching?
2. If I were to observe you in your classroom, what would I see you doing that fits your image of good teaching?
3. How does being a teacher fit with how you see yourself as a person?
 - a. C: How does being a teacher fit with your being Catholic?
 - b. J: How does being a teacher fit with your being Jewish?
 - c. U: How does being a teacher fit with your commitments to social justice?

TEACHER EDUCATION

Now let's talk about your teacher education program.

1. Did/Does your teacher education program have an image of good teaching in a Jewish day school/Catholic school/Urban school?
 - a. How would you describe that image?
 - b. How did you learn about that image in your program?
2. How does that image fit with your own vision of good teaching?

Let's talk about the relationship between the teacher education program and your work as a teacher.

3. In what ways has the program influenced your classroom teaching?
 - a. Can you be specific?
4. In what ways has the program influenced your interactions with your students?
 - a. Can you be specific?
5. In what ways has the program influenced your interactions with the teachers in your school?
 - a. Can you be specific?
 - b. Who are your important colleagues?
6. In what ways has the program influenced your views of parents, students and the community in which you teach?
7. In what ways has the program influenced your definition of yourself (or how you see yourself) as a teacher?
 - a. Can you be specific?
8. J: In what ways has the program influenced your sense of yourself as Jew?
C: In what ways has the program influenced your sense of yourself as a Catholic?
U: In what ways has the program influenced your sense of yourself as someone teaching as a means of achieving social justice?
9. Did/Does the program's philosophy or mission fit with your own values and beliefs? In what ways? Are there ways in which it doesn't fit?
 - a. J: Did/Does the program's stance toward Judaism fit your own view of Judaism? In what ways does it fit? Are there ways in which it doesn't?
 - b. C: Did/Does the program's stance toward Catholicism fit your own view of Catholicism? In what ways does it fit? Are there ways in which it doesn't?
 - c. U: Did/does the program stance towards social justice fit your own views?

SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Let's talk about the school in which you work.

1. What is the image of good elementary school teaching promoted by your school?
 - a. How do you know?
2. In what ways does your school enable you to teach that way?
3. Does the school's image of good teaching fit with your image of good teaching??
4. Does the school's philosophy or mission fit with your own values or beliefs? How does the fit or lack of fit affect you?
 - a. J: Does the school's image of Judaism fit with yours? In what ways does the fit or lack of fit affect you as a Jew?
 - b. C: Does the school's image of Catholicism fit with yours? In what ways does the fit or lack of fit affect you as a Catholic?
 - c. U: Does the school's image (the school you are currently placed in) of appropriate urban education fit with yours? How does the fit or lack of fit affect you?
5. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me or any questions I can answer for you?

APPENDIX B. Program Director Interview Protocol

Vision of good teaching

1. We're interested in understanding better the kind of teaching you are trying to foster.
 - a. Who on your staff can best articulate this vision of good teaching?
 - b. Is there something in writing that describes this kind of teaching?
 - c. Where in the program do students encounter this vision of good teaching?
How do you help students get inside this vision of good teaching?
 - i. Where if at all do students see this kind of teaching practiced?
 - ii. Where do they work the knowledge and skills to teach in this way?
 - iii. How do you assess their learning?
2. Who else should we talk to about the program's vision of good teaching, where students learn about it and where they learn to enact it?

Context

3. In part this is a study of "context-specific" teacher education. So the first thing we

would like is how your program defines the school context it is preparing students to teach

in (relevant adjectives: urban, public, catholic, jewish) schools?

4. Where in the program do students learn about this context?

5. Are there specific courses or seminars where this is focal? Where they learn

a. About the students?

b. About their families? their communities?

c. About teaching in this kind of school?

d. About the challenges of teaching in this kind of school?

6. Who is the best person to talk about how the field placements (including internship) work and contribute to this goal?

7. Where in the program (or how?) do you work on the challenge of majority teachers teaching poor, minority students?

8. Whom should we talk to about this matter of preparing students to teach in urban elementary schools? what it means, what students need to learn, what the challenges are, etc?

Identity

9. We are also interested in how programs help students form their identity as teachers or as teachers in urban schools?

a. If we wanted to learn more about this issue of program impact on teachers' identity, who would we talk to? What aspects of the program should we study?

Career aspirations

10. What does the program expect its graduates to do? In other words, what career aspirations do you have for your graduates?

11. Where do students learn about what the program wants them to do or hopes they will do when they finish the program?

12. Where would you like to see your graduates in 5 years? Beyond that?

APPENDIX C. Focus Group Protocol

Ideal Teacher

1. What is your image of an "ideal [ACE/DeLeT/UTEP] graduate" ?

2. If you think about a ten year time span, can you describe two possible career trajectories that would fit your program's image of an ideal graduate's career?

Program Vision

3. How would you describe the kind of teaching your program is trying to help graduates learn?

In other words, would you say your program has a *particular vision* of good teaching?

Probe if we hear different visions: It sounds like we are hearing some different visions of good teaching. Would you say that the program doesn't necessarily have one vision of good teaching but that there are many visions of what good teaching is in the program?

Follow up probe if we hear the same visions: Are there some minority views or different views here?

4. Is this a vision of good teaching for any context or good teaching in a [Catholic/Jewish/urban] environment?

Context-specific Preparation

5. I know that [program] is preparing teachers for urban public schools. What are some of the most important things you want your students to know about that context?
6. Where are the most important places in the program where students learn about that context and about teaching there?
7. What makes this "[Catholic/Jewish/urban]" teacher preparation?

Leadership/School Change

8. What role do you see your graduates playing in school change?
9. [if leadership hasn't come up] What kind of leadership roles do you see your graduates playing?

Professionalism

10. In the past several decades there has been a push to professionalize teaching by establish more rigorous standards that help define the professional practice of teaching. In what ways is your program responding to these pressures?

Probe: Do you use the language of professionalism? What does it mean in this context?

Key Program Ideas

Another challenge most teacher education programs face is limited time. Given this constraint, what are the things you *most* want to make sure your students learn?

