Reforming Urban Teacher Education: SB 2042 Implementation Five Years Later

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Introduction

In October 2002, the multiple and single subject credential programs at a large urban Los Angeles Basin California State University campus, were approved as Early Adopters of the SB 2042 Professional Teacher Preparation Program. These programs resulted from a complex and multi-faceted process of change supported and influenced by reform initiatives at the regional, state and national levels over approximately a 15 year period. Often, these initiatives were complementary, providing resources and insights enabling strategic and profound transformations in the conceptualization, design, and implementation of teacher education. At other times, they were contradictory, causing programs to be modified in the midst of scale up, or dismantled.

The omnibus legislation to overhaul teacher preparation, passed in 1998, Senate Bill 2042 (Chap. 587, Stats.1999), mandated five critical attributes of teacher preparation: (a) multiple pathways, (b) the same accreditation standards for all pathways, (c) alignment of teacher preparation standards with the State-adopted K-12 academic content standards, (d) a two-tiered credential structure consisting of teacher preparation completed at an IHE or district program and an induction program.
completed while employed, and (e) a summative teaching performance assessment for teacher candidates.

The Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Preparation Programs (2001) created by a panel of stakeholders and approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) required teacher educators to modify their programs in the following conceptual ways: (a) candidates must be prepared in their content area in alignment with the K-12 Academic Content Standards, (b) candidates should be prepared in specific content pedagogy which is evaluated in a reliable and valid assessment, (c) candidates must be given multiple opportunities to learn and perform the competencies described in the standards, and (d) articulation must occur with professional teacher induction programs. In addition, the new standards incorporated other legislation concerning technology and English learners, as well as previous requirements for health and special needs population. This content was divided into two levels of responsibility: theory and practice at the teacher preparation level and implementation at the induction level.

An analysis of the process that occurred at this urban, diverse, public university may be considered a case study to illustrate resources for and constraints against teacher education reform. Factors that mitigated this transformation include:

◆ The school’s and department’s mission to support the quality preparation of reflective urban teachers provided clarity of vision and urgency for action. Inherent in this mission was the marriage of quality and equity, a subject of intense dialogue among teacher educators.

◆ Candidates in the program reflect the diversity of local public schools, thereby strengthening the diversity goal while underlining in an immediate fashion the perils of high-stakes testing in diverse multilingual populations. A significant number of these candidates had experienced difficulty in norm-referenced high-stakes tests previously established in California as part of teacher credentialing.

◆ Public universities, like public schools, can often garner grant funds to conceptualize, plan and pilot transformations in models and practices; yet in the long term, they have undependable revenue streams to maintain reforms once implementation has begun.

This article situates this case study in the historical context of teacher reform in the United States, analyzes the state process of reform within the national context, outlines the regional endeavors that enabled much of the reform at this institution, and studies the transformation process from the perspective of a particular faculty and department. Where we are today in 2005, is not where we anticipated being in 2000.
We thought the following would occur: First, we envisioned an articulated continuum with multiple entry points at each stage of teacher preparation: undergraduate and or subject matter education, professional teacher preparation and induction. Second, we expected that IHEs and school districts would be collaborative partners sharing data and teacher preparation tasks. Third, we envisioned a rich complex teaching performance assessment created by the faculty to reflect our conceptual framework and meet the needs of our diverse teacher candidates. Fourth, we hoped for reasonable funding to support the additional requirements of the new credential. In fact, policy decisions taken to reconcile colliding views of teacher reform at the state and national levels, as well as economic difficulties in California rearranged the original architecture of the Learning to Teach Continuum and the Teacher Performance Assessment from the outset.

Did the implementation of SB 2042 hold true to the intent of reform proposed? Did other powerful reforms unforeseen in the original premise come forth? What obvious benefits did the transformation bring with it? What unintended consequences have become apparent? Is this a sustainable system? What might the future of teacher education look like in the next five years? Will these changes support higher K-12 student achievement?

State Process of Teacher Education Reform within the National Context

The last two decades witnessed unparalleled support of and concern for teacher quality and its connection to student achievement in California (Olebe, 2001), generally promulgated by the publication of disturbing data indicating that California public school students scored below national median scores as revealed for instance in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (available at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/) or by international scores from studies like Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) (available at http://ustimss.msu.edu/) The state suffered from a critical and growing teacher shortage as well (available at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/). The policy response, SB 2042, intended to reform and unify three component parts of teacher education—subject matter preparation, teacher preparation, and induction—in an articulated, accountable system that was linked to public school students’ achievement.

The California New Teacher Project (CNTP) (1988-1992) and its successor the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program, situated teacher preparation reform in the developmentalist
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tradition by creating a body of knowledge using teachers as researchers. These teachers constructed a conceptual understanding of the evolution of teaching expertise that became the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) (Whittaker, Snyder, & Freeman, 2001). The assessment system created for the BTSA program, the California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST), which regarded teacher development as complex, dynamic, and holistic, and utilized teacher observation protocols, teacher inquiry-oriented reflection, and student artifacts as assessment instruments in its comprehensive assessment portfolio.

While there was an attempt not to privilege any particular pedagogical bias in California, there was a clear political conflict between proponents of teacher education reform that favored the professionalization of teaching and teacher education and those who preferred the deregulation of teacher education and a reduction of the role of teacher education institutions mirroring at the state level a debate occurring at the national level (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). Nationally, professionalization adherents advocated for rigorous national standards and teacher performance assessments that would standardize the teaching profession much in the same way as the Flexner Report lead to a standardized medical curriculum (Flexner, 1910). In contrast, deregulationists held that the regulation of teaching by state policies and the monopoly held by colleges of education has led to teacher shortages by discouraging talented individuals and has changed the focus of schooling from academic to social goals. In brief, they support deregulating the teaching profession by disenfranchising institutions of teacher education and licensing bodies.

At first blush, it would appear that the forces of professionalization won the day since the state established academic content standards and professional teaching standards. It is noteworthy, however, that this reform evolved from a program that was school district-based and driven; and responsibility for the professional clear credential was removed from teacher education units and placed primarily under the aegis of professional induction programs established in school districts. Arguably, SB 2042 changed the locus of control from university-based teacher education to school districts, county boards of education, licensing bodies, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), and policy bodies, the California Department of Education (CDE). This is not a complete dismantling of university-based teacher education, but certainly a step toward breaking its monopoly.

For teacher educators at the program level it was pivotal that this set of standards and its assessment system derived from the practice of
beginning and mentor teachers participating voluntarily in CNTP and then BTSA. During this period, many beginning teachers gained considerable experience in the classroom as interns or emergency permit teachers before completing a preliminary credential. This new teacher support system was then linked in a backward fashion to teacher preparation programs without further empirical studies. Teacher educators and teacher education researchers worked in these programs, but teacher education candidates in student teaching programs were not included in research studies.

A reasonable concern therefore is that the bar for acceptable teaching performance may very well be unrealistically high for a candidate completing a one-year student teaching program, in contrast with a candidate from a two-year university or district intern program. In addition, another deficiency created by this unmediated backward linkage was a professional teacher education faculty largely unprepared to serve as supervisors and assessors in a reflective inquiry based teacher performance assessment similar to CFASST. Capacity building had occurred in school districts with coaches, support providers and mentors involved in BTSA but this training was expressly restricted to BTSA participants.

Local Reform Initiatives in the Los Angeles Basin

Participation in Los Angeles basin teacher education reform initiatives enabled the teacher education department at the urban CSU to build capacity that would later be used to scale up to full SB 2042 implementation. The first was Design for Excellence: Linking Teaching and Achievement, 1997-2003, (DELTA), a Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project strategic initiative to support student achievement by changing professional development to support collaboration and support among teachers to improve instructional practices (Herman & Baker, 2003). The second was the creation of a Professional Development School (PDS) for Emergency Permit Teachers, 1993-2004. Table 1 compares the two projects.

Whereas DELTA focused on the creation of infrastructures to facilitate the reform work, the PDS project focused on students, curriculum, instruction and assessment. The new curriculum was organized in phases that unfolded to meet the developmental needs of new teachers. Each phase had one principal goal for the preparation of new teachers and three or four performance and content standards aligned with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP). The program was a deep and layered model of preparation in which knowledge and skills built upon each other by design. This holistic, developmental curriculum was the precursor to the curriculum that would be developed for SB 2042.

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The evaluation plan for the project included a candidate performance assessment that enabled the program to experiment with models of assessment that would mediate instruction and provide candidates important information to improve their classroom and academic performance. In order to measure increases in instructional proficiency, baseline, mid-year, and end-of-year assessments of credential candidates’ teaching practices were conducted through classroom observations. The instrument utilized was a modified version of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession, which focused only on Engaging and Supporting Students in Learning, Classroom Organization, Planning Instruction, and Assessing Student Learning geared to the range of beginning teacher proficiencies. Scoring on the rubric ranged from 1 to 4, with 4 being the

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highest. As a whole, the credential candidates’ teaching improved steadily throughout the year. By the third observation, the ratings were over 3 for each standard (Vital Research, 2001).

This PDS model addressed with specificity many of the criticisms aimed at traditional teacher education programs in urban environments. It had a curriculum and delivery mode designed to prepare reflective urban professionals; improved the practice of both novice and experienced teachers, worked toward their retention in hard to staff schools, and improved the achievement of children (Vital Research, 2001). This developmental reflective model became the base for the new SB 2042 program.

**Development of the SB 2042 Professional Teacher Preparation Program**

The move toward the new credential was purposeful and methodic. Previous changes caused by the California Reading Initiative of 1996 and the explosive increase in preparation program enrollment due to class-size reduction, 1997-1998, allowed for very little thoughtful strategic planning. The unification of all parts of teacher professional development into one continuum and the complete revamping of certification and licensure provided the department the rationale for a profound self-study and reorganization. In response to the rapid increased enrollment of intern and emergency permit teachers and the opportunities to be participants in funded state projects such as Consortia BTSA Programs, University Intern Programs, and regional initiatives such as DELTA, the department had grown rapidly and faculty were involved in projects at all stages of the Learning to Teach Continuum: Liberal Studies, Blended Program, Preintern, Student Teaching, Intern and BTSA.

At the same time, the threat of balkanization lurked. There were clear divides among faculty who taught in the campus-based student teaching programs and those who taught in the site-based university intern programs, DELTA programs, and the professional development schools. Faculty in DELTA and the PDSs had received in-depth professional development in Critical Friends Inquiry and cognitive coaching whereas the student teaching faculty were wedded to discrete, skill-based competency checklists. We were a faculty who espoused a social equity belief and trained our candidates to use reflective inquiry, yet evaluated our students with a social efficiency assessment system. Not unlike many others, we were a pedagogical contradiction created by the years of reform sediment piling on top of established program protocols.

The first step in addressing this situation was a self-study to clarify the department’s goals and to leverage resources to accomplish those
goals. In October 1999, three task forces were established: the Learning to Teach Continuum (LTC) Task Force, the Competencies Task Force, and the Portfolio Task Force. The first group was to study the requirements of the continuum and make recommendations for departmental policies and procedures, reorganization of staff and programs, and prioritization of resources to meet goals of the continuum. The second was to rewrite the student teaching and fieldwork performance competencies. The third was to redesign the portfolio requirement. The intent was to have the participation of the entire faculty to create a new home for our endeavors.

In spring 2000, the LTC Task Force presented its recommendations. The work of this task force was fundamental to all that followed. It envisioned the role of teacher education department chair as an instructional leader responsible for curriculum and assessment and articulation with other members of the continuum, and defined the position of assistant chair as the students' advocate, organizing advising, orientation, recruitment and student grievances. It added an administrative support coordinator for student teaching and intern supervision charged with the responsibility of creating a system for developing a dissemination, collection, and storage system for evaluation materials. These new administrative structures provided stability and continuity during a time of change for students, faculty and staff.

The first year's work culminated in the TED Quality Retreat in May 2000. Previously, the department had clearly expressed and to the best of its ability made manifest its commitment to equity and diversity. The intention now was to create a new program that aimed for quality outcomes also. The hope was to support all candidates in reaching the proficiencies that our PDS candidates were achieving. Since the Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Preparation Programs (CCTC 2001) had not yet been completed, the department utilized the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) (CCTC 1997) as the barometer by which it would measure its program efficacy. In keeping with our decision to use data for program decisions, the faculty studied recent evaluation data, reviewed the goals set for the LCT, and decided how it wanted to change admission procedures, curricular offerings, and program policies to ensure consistency and quality.

During the summers of 2000 and 2001, the CCTC sponsored two distinct Title II Workshops on Teacher Performance Assessment. The first, in August 2000, featured an array of assessment researchers - David Berliner, Richard Stiggins, and Angelo Collins; samples of different portfolio based teacher performance assessment systems, and presented a draft of the new standards. The theoretical pieces and the samples of
portfolios lead the faculty to reconceptualize assessment. The draft standards presented the need to change the barometer from the CSTP to the new Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs).

To do the reframed work, the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPATF) and the Program Redesign (PRTF) Task Forces were established. In an attempt to ensure consensus, every member of the department was on one of the task forces. The TPATF was given a more comprehensive charge: create a portfolio system consisting of signature pieces from courses and reflective essays for each benchmark. The portfolio would be accompanied by embedded performances completed during student teaching or internship fieldwork. In April 2001, a TED leadership team attended the AACTE Title II Renaissance Group's Conference on Teaching Performance Assessment. This conference provided examples of the Teacher Work Sample and Systems of Data Management for teacher performance systems. The input from this conference influenced the way in which the TPATF took a theoretical assessment framework and made it into a realistic manageable system.

In May 2001, the TED Faculty Retreat focused on the architecture of the new credential and reports of the Program Redesign, and Teaching Performance Assessment Task Forces. The faculty adopted the following principles upon which to ground its curriculum and assessment design:

(a) Teachers learn to teach in a progressive structure that increases in complexity;

(b) Teachers develop their understanding about learning within the context of realistic educational settings;

(c) Teachers need multiple opportunities for guided practice and specific feedback to improve their practice;

(d) Teachers need to know the current research about best teaching practices, the psychology of how humans develop and learn, and the theory and practice of content-related methodology; and

(e) Teachers need to learn how to become reflective practitioners in order to grow professionally and improve their teaching practices.

A momentous decision was made: the department decided to develop its own teaching performance assessment rather than use the prototype that was being developed by the CCTC. The following factors lead the department to embrace this alternative: (a) the powerful and insightful experience from the performance assessment in the PDSs; (b) the desire to have an elegant and rich assessment system that informed instruction and program improvement in an immediate fashion; (c) to insure that the assessment system was truly formative and developmental in harmony

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with our conceptual framework; and (d) to enable the program, when necessary, to scaffold learning experiences for struggling candidates. It was felt that such a system would support our dual goals of equity and quality.

The department created the Teaching Performance Assessment System (TPAS)© as its formative and summative assessment. It embraced a clearly delineated sequence of preparation and a clearly defined formative assessment process. Courses in each module provided the pedagogical knowledge for the course signature assignments. Each course signature assignment formed the basis for the performance tasks that were applied and practiced during each field experience. Supervisors provided ongoing feedback to candidates regarding their performance on the TPEs during pre- and post-observation conferences. Candidates used the feedback to practice and refine their skills and to revise the signature assignments prior to submission to course instructor for the electronic portfolio. Course signature assignments also were used as the basis for evidence when candidates write their reflective essays for the Formative Assessment Tasks and the Summative Assessment Task. Trained assessors reviewed multiple benchmark criteria in order to assess candidates' readiness for advancement at the end of each phase of the program. In order to successfully advance to the next program phase and be recommended for a credential at the end of the program, candidates must meet all benchmark criteria.

In August 2001, the CCTC sponsored its second Title II Conference: Teacher Quality Matters in which it presented the changes to the draft standards after field review and the proposed Assessment Standards. At its September 28, 2001 retreat, the TED faculty finalized the portfolio system component of TPAS and the new program design and aligned its proposed curricular structure to the thirteen Teaching Performance Expectations. Supported by the Early Adopter Grant from the CCTC, a writing team culled from the two task forces prepared the program document and submitted it for review.

Benefits of the New Credential

SB 2042 was the result of an overarching unifying concept in teacher education reform: a road map to world-class standards that everyone must meet to raise student achievement. It clearly said that academic programs and teacher education programs were responsible for educating teachers and they needed to work together and articulate with the public schools and professional induction programs. It required all programs in the most diverse state in the nation to prepare teacher candidates to teach English learners and students with special needs. In
a common sense fashion, it also recognized that all candidates needed to be able to use technology in 21st century classrooms and establish healthy supportive environments at the beginning of their career. Last but not least, it held the individual candidate as well as the teacher education program accountable. For this program, it gave the faculty the opportunity to use its experiences in urban diverse schools with urban diverse teacher candidates to design a coherent curriculum and assessment system faithful to its conceptual framework.

Emerging data suggest that two important milestones have been met. First, candidates feel supported by a program that gives them multiple opportunities to achieve high standards. Second, both school districts and candidates perceive that candidates are better prepared to teach diverse learners, especially English learners. In the last 3 years of implementation, school districts (master teachers, principals, and human resource personnel) have reported formally in surveys and informally in conversations that they are impressed with the quality of the SB 2042 student teachers. In their remarks, they underline the candidates’ ability to reflect on their practice and diagnose and assess children’s learning. Candidates, as captured in exit surveys, take pride in their accomplishments and complain, a little, about how hard they have to work.

In the implementation of the SB 2042 architecture, the articulation between teacher preparation and induction programs is deeper, broader and more focused than previous collaborations between IHEs and school districts. The two programs have had to expand their networks of communication to ensure that candidates in the two tiers are appropriately served. Communication is now about curriculum, portfolios, reflective practice, and advising. A promising development is the emergence of district/IHE collaborative masters’ programs for induction candidates.

Unintended Consequences

Perhaps, the greatest of all the unintended consequences have been the density of the curriculum and the cost of the program. The new standards are very detailed and comprehensive, including the traditional elements of the teacher preparation curriculum and adding the contemporary issues of a balanced reading curriculum, English learners, special populations, technology, and health in public education. To accomplish this, content was condensed and embedded in courses. This placed an extremely heavy burden on our students both financially and academically.

Implementation of new systems always has start up costs. Once established, a performance system is expensive to maintain due to the assessor candidate ratio, time required to review reflective writing, and
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the necessity to give candidates feedback. Assessors must be compensated either by workload or stipends for work beyond the semester. Accountability systems require data management systems replete with storage capacity, equipment, and personnel to collect, analyze, disseminate and store data. Moreover, any program deciding to develop and use its own assessment system must conduct initial reliability and validity studies, as well as do continual studies validating the reliability of its assessors and fairness to subgroups.

After three years of implementing and piloting its TPAS©, the department decided to join the Performance Assessment of California Teachers (PACT) Consortium to ameliorate the costs associated with an independently designed system. PACT is a consortium of teacher preparation programs at a number of California universities that have joined together to develop a teaching performance assessment. This choice enabled the program to maintain coherence with its conceptual framework by keeping the developmentalist linchpins of the TPAS© signature assignments, formative assessments and the benchmark system.

Sustainability

Whereas professional induction systems have received funding for their operations, no additional funding has been provided to teacher education programs to establish and maintain their accountability system. In fact, teacher education programs have lost enrollment and subsequent revenue because the second level of credentialing, induction, has been transferred to school districts. Moreover, they cannot require that students take more units to cover the costs of assessment due to the one-year limit stipulated in the Preconditions of the Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Preparation Programs (CCTC, 2001). The cost factor may be the greatest threat to the sustainability of the new credential.

The other threat may come from routes of alternative certification. Even though SB 2042 states that all pathways are held to the same standards, Senate Bill 57, "the Early Completion Option" appears to offer a less demanding standard for teacher candidates. It currently allows candidates to waive all preparation courses if tests in basic skills, pedagogy and subject matter are passed. At that point, candidates need only pass the Teaching Performance Assessment in the classroom. This alternative route undermines the developmentalist framework upon which the SB 2042 architecture was built. It reduces the holistic dynamic vision of teacher development inherent in the CSTP into an atomistic one-dimensional snapshot. Ironically, the future of teacher preparation in California may very well witness teacher education units laboring
under the massive costs of well-intentioned accountability systems, while they are stripped of resources by future alternative routes to certification. Deregulation may be an economic hurdle that professionalization may not be able to overcome.

Looking Toward the Future

The underlying assumption of the SB 2042 Reform is that teachers’ meeting both the academic content and teaching standards will have an impact on all students’ achievement. This premise has yet to be substantiated with data. Measuring this impact requires the development of an appropriate system to connect teacher performance with student achievement. The first and most important question is: Should such an assessment system be developed? Will the data be worth the costs of such measurement? The second question is what model should be used? A portfolio system of teacher performance similar to that of the National Board for Teacher Certification, which is a logical step from the induction portfolio? Or a test-based system similar to the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (Sanders & Horn, 1994, 1998)?

This reform put into play a variety of forces that placed in question the role and viability of IHEs in teacher education. In the next five years, institutions need to define their role in teacher education while working in close and authentic collaborations with induction programs. It is imperative to reiterate the research base of the curriculum and continue to expand the knowledge base of teacher practice to ensure that the theory and research responsibilities of the university are not lost. In their future work together, teacher preparation and induction programs need to pose mutual questions of inquiry and share data in appropriate ways to make new discoveries in professional practice and support continuous program improvement, teacher professional growth, and student learning. Teacher education institutions must continue to prove that they prepare quality teachers who do make a difference in P-12 student achievement. Future shared research would provide robust data to tell this story.

Notes

1 This professionalization agenda is linked to the K-12 curriculum standards movement and has been led by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium in collaboration with national professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council of Teachers of English, etc.
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The deregulationists are supported by foundations such as the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, the Heritage Foundation, the Pioneer Institute, and the Manhattan Institute.

Flexner's review of existing medical schools and his demand for a "uniformly arduous and expensive" medical education set a standard for the profession and led to the elimination of many non-conforming medical schools.

DETA was a collaborative consisting of the California State University (CSU) system, and other Los Angeles area universities; Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP); Los Angeles Alliance for Restructuring Now (LEARN); the CSU Institute for Educational Reform; teacher unions and organizations (United Teachers Los Angeles, Teachers Association of Long Beach, United Teachers Pasadena and Pre K-12 School Families within the Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Pasadena Unified School Districts.

The Professional Development School (PDS) for Emergency Permit Teachers was a collaborative project involving LAUSD Local District G, LAEP, the Stuart Foundation and this CSU.

The department was and is one of the most diverse in the country with a student body made up of 41% Latino, 25% Caucasian, 18% African American, 8% Asian, 5% other, and 3% undeclared.

For a more detailed explanation of the consortium and its assessment please refer to http://www.pacttpa.org/.

There is no guarantee that this funding is permanent. Induction programs have also incurred development, start-up and implementation costs.

References