Accountability and Initial Teacher Education Reform: A Perspective from Abroad

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on accountability as a tool for teacher education reform. The article is based on my experience as a teacher education scholar and practitioner over the last 40 years and especially on analyses of teacher preparation accountability in the United States, recently conducted by Project TEER (Teacher Education and Education Reform), a group of teacher education practitioners, researchers, and scholars at Boston College. The members of the group were united by a growing concern about the direction education reform was taking and the impact it was having on teacher education in the US and by a commitment to equity for all the students served in the nation's schools. For five years, we tracked US teacher education reform, concentrating on the major accountability initiatives that were shaping the field. This work culminated in the book, *Reclaiming Accountability in Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018). Drawing on this work and on my experience in the national and international teacher education communities, this article has three purposes: to present a framework for unpacking accountability policies related to initial teacher education; to use that framework to describe briefly the dominant accountability paradigm in the US as well as an alternative to the dominant paradigm –democratic accountability in teacher education; and finally, to use ideas from the framework and from our US analyses to comment on the current reform of initial teacher education in Wales.

Key words: international teacher education, accountability, Wales, United States, reforms

Initial Teacher Education Accountability as a Tool for Reform

For more than two decades and across many developed countries, initial teacher education has been constructed as a public policy problem (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Furlong *et al.*, 2008). When teacher education is defined as a policy problem, the goal for policy makers is to determine which of the broad parameters they can control (Kennedy, 1999) is most likely to enhance the quality of teacher preparation, which in turn is assumed will enhance teacher quality and the quality of a nation's overall education system. Although the policy parameters in question vary across national boundaries and geopolitical contexts, many of them have to do with the structural arrangements that shape and govern initial teacher education, such as policies stipulating: allowable entry routes into teaching (e.g. initial teacher education programs at teachers colleges/universities, fast-track alternate routes, school-initiated preparation programs, test-only entry routes); authorized teacher education providers and/or formats (e.g. non-profit/for-profit organizations, on-line providers); subject matter, pedagogical, and fieldwork requirements (e.g. academic majors, number/ kinds of courses or credits, number of practice days); the length of initial teacher education programs (3 –5 years for baccalaureate programs, 1 –2 year post-baccalaureate options); and, the degrees, certificates, or diplomas conferred to those completing programs (e.g. BA, BEd, Dip. Ed, MA, MEd, PGC). Other policy parameters that have been manipulated by policy makers have to do with the credentials of the various participants in initial teacher education, including teacher educators (e.g. required academic degrees or years of teaching experience), mentors for teacher candidates (e.g. required teaching certification/licensure, mentor/supervision training), or prospective teachers (e.g. required minimum grade point average for program entry or test score for certification).

In addition to policies that manipulate the structural arrangements of initial teacher education or stipulate the credentials of participants, many policies with the explicit purpose of reforming initial teacher education and improving its quality zero in on accountability. That is, they regulate and monitor the inputs, procedures, processes, practices, systems, and/or outcomes that initial teacher education programs and institutions are accountable for in order to be accredited, approved, and/or funded by governmental or other regulatory agencies or, in some cases, endorsed by advocacy organizations. Along these lines, over the last decade many countries (or states/provinces) have developed and implemented new

accreditation criteria and/or new auditing procedures that apply to those colleges and universities that desire to offer initial teacher education programs; in some countries, these regulations may also apply to non-university entities that wish to be providers of initial teacher education. In England, the US, and Australia (and in some developing countries such as Chilé), some of the key criteria to which teacher education programs are accountable focus on outcomes, such as program graduates' effectiveness, teachers' performance in the classroom, program impact, and teacher retention in urban, rural, or other schools considered 'hard to staff.' In some other countries, however, such as Norway, Austria, Portugal, and New Zealand, there is more emphasis on inputs and processes than on outcomes.

Whether the focus is on inputs, processes, practices, systems, or outcomes – or, more commonly, some combination of these – *accountability* has come to be regarded in many places as a powerful policy tool – sometimes even the last best hope – for the reform of initial teacher education. Wales is no exception to this trend in that its major approach to the fundamental reform of initial teacher education is a new set of accreditation criteria to which universities and their associated schools that wish to offer initial teacher education are now being held accountable (Furlong, 2015; Welsh Government, 2018). In short, it is neither surprising nor exceptional that Wales has a new accountability plan for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs. However, what may indeed be exceptional about Wales is that its new accountability plan seems dramatically different in a number of ways from what is happening in many other countries, in particular the values, purposes, ideals, and student learning goals that animate the new accreditation plan, the joint responsibility of universities and schools, and the processes and practices for which initial teacher education programs and their partners are actually accountable. I take up these and other issues related to the new Wales accreditation criteria in the second half of this article.

Understanding Initial Teacher Education Accountability: A Framework

Scholars in a number of fields have worked to define, theorize, compare, and critique key aspects of accountability. Trow's (1996) basic definition of accountability in higher education is a useful starting place:

> Accountability is the obligation to report to others, to explain, to justify, to answer questions about how resources have been used, and to what effect. Accountability

to others takes many different forms in different societies, with respect to different actions and different kinds of support. The fundamental questions with respect to accountability are: who is to be held accountable, for what, to whom, through what means, and with what consequences (Trow, 1996: 310).

Even though Romzek (2000) theorized accountability in the public sector rather than in education, she defined accountability along lines similar to Trow's. Romzek said accountability was 'answerability for performance (Romzek, 2000: 21), emphasizing that this included answerability to whom, for what, and how.

Some scholars and practitioners have proposed types or conceptions of accountability in various domains (e.g. Anderson, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Howe & Murray, 2015; Mayer, 2005) along with analyses of their strengths and weaknesses. Although there is undoubtedly more than one useful way to conceptualize and parse the larger notion of teacher education accountability, in our reading of the literature, we found accountability typologies somewhat problematic in that they tended to treat accountability as a unitary and one-dimensional concept or they mixed together various aspects of accountability in inconsistent ways (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018). Rather than a typology, then, we proposed a multi-dimensional framework, which allows for a complex and nuanced analysis of accountability policies and initiatives. With this goal in mind, what we found most helpful were discussions that tackled multiple aspects of accountability and considered how key dimensions combined and inter-acted, such as those by Carnoy, Elmore and Siskin (2003), Powell (2000), Romzek (2000) and Trow (1996). We concluded that there were several aspects of accountability that needed to be taken into account if an account-ability framework were to have conceptual power: the idea of obligation, which usually distinguishes accountability from a sense of individual or collective responsibility; the question of agency, which gets at issues of jurisdiction, control, and autonomy; the notion of substance, which has to do with the assumed fundamental purpose of the organization being held accountable; values, including the principles and ideologies animating an accountability scheme; and the question of mechanism, or how an account-ability scheme is expected to operate to yield the desired consequences.

Our accountability framework is intended to help unpack and make sense of particular accountability policies and initiatives regarding initial teacher education within intersecting social, economic, and historical con-texts (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018). As Figure 1 illustrates, the basic idea of the framework is that accountability is a complex and multi-faceted
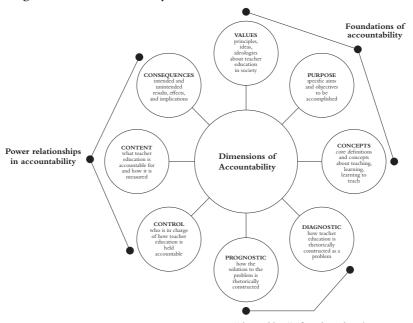
concept comprised of eight core dimensions, which are intricately inter-woven with one another. Reading clockwise from the top of the figure, the eight dimensions are: (1) *the values dimension*, (2) *the purpose dimension*, (3) *the concepts dimension*, (4) *the diagnostic dimension*, (5) *the prognostic dimension*, (6) *the control dimension*, (7) *the content dimension*, and (8) *the consequences dimension*. In addition, these eight dimensions cluster together to constitute larger themes. As Figure 1 shows, the first three dimensions – *values, purpose,* and *concepts* – form a thematic cluster that we refer to as the 'foundations of accountability.' The next two – the *diagnostic and prognostic dimensions* – define 'the problem of teacher education.' The last three dimensions – *control, content, and consequences* – form the thematic cluster, 'power relationships in accountability.' Grouping the eight dimensions into clusters

Figure 1: An Accountability Framework for Initial Teacher Education

Adapted from: Cochran-Smith, M., Carney, M., Keefe, E.S, Burton, S., Chang, W.C., Fernández, M.B., Miller, A.F., Sánchez, J.G., & Baker, M. (2018). *Reclaiming Accountability in Teacher Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

that are part of a larger whole underscores how the dimensions operate together systemically.

Drawing on hundreds of policy documents and tools, position statements, media responses, and professional critiques, Project TEER used this accountability framework to analyze the most widely publicized, politicized, and impactful national-level accountability policies and initiatives that were in place or proposed at the height of teacher education's "era of accountability" in the US (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2016), identified roughly as the two decades between 1998 and 2018 (Cochran-Smith *et al.,* 2017). The history, development, and use of each of these accountability initiatives in initial teacher education are analyzed in detail in our book along with political and policy critique (Cochran-Smith *et al.,* 2018) Although we found some important differences across the various initiatives, we identified a "dominant accountability paradigm" in initial teacher education, which emerged as part of broader trends in education reform in the US (Ambrosio, 2013; Mehta, 2013; Taubman, 2009). As we show in our analysis, the accountability reforms that emerged as part of the dominant paradigm reshaped teacher education's goals and expectations in subtractive ways. They redefined how teacher educators understood their roles by placing great emphasis on test-based accountability and reducing the spaces for discussion and advocacy related to equity and social justice. Further, compliance with the dominant accountability paradigm undercut the notion of expertise by placing low priority on teacher educators' local knowledge, their commitments to preparing teachers through unique program structures/experiences, and local measures of progress toward meeting their own goals. These results in the field of US teacher education are consistent with what Lipman (2011) has called the 'neoliberalization of public education.'

Accountability: The Dominant Paradigm and A Democratic Alternative

Below I elaborate upon each cluster of the accountability framework – foundations, the problem of initial teacher education, and power relationships in accountability – and then illustrate the framework with a brief analysis of the dominant accountability paradigm in terms of each cluster. This is followed by a contrasting analysis of the cluster from the perspective of our alternative proposal – democratic accountability in teacher education. Democratic accountability is based on the assumption

that 21st century democratic societies need deliberative and critical demo-cratic education that teaches all students not only the skills of critical literacy and numeracy, but also how to analyze multiple perspectives and engage in deliberative dialogue. The assumption here is that in democratic societies, teaching and teacher education are enterprises for the public good, rather than market-oriented enterprises based on individual compe-tition for private goods. From this perspective, an important goal of teacher education is to prepare teachers who understand that part of the job is recognizing inequities in schools and society and working with others to challenge the structures that reproduce inequities.

The foundations of accountability

Unpacking 'the foundations of accountability' is based on the assumption that neither accountability nor the broader enterprise of initial teacher education is value-free or neutral. Rather, accountability in teacher educa-tion, like all other social and cultural practices in education, emerges from values, ideas, and ideals. This cluster has three dimensions. The *values dimension* focuses on stated or implied cultural ideals, beliefs, and principles about the broad purposes and roles of teaching, schooling, and teacher education in the larger society. The *purpose dimension*, which is related to values but more specific, has to do with the stated aims and specific objec-tives a particular accountability initiative is intended to accomplish. This also involves the consistency (or not) of explicit and implicit purposes as well as the theory of change assumed in the accountability initiative. The *concepts dimension* refers to the key ideas about teaching, learning, and learning to teach that animate a given accountability policy or initiative. This includes conceptions and assumptions about: the role and image of the teacher, including issues related to agency, autonomy, and profession-alism; the nature of teaching as an activity; definitions of effectiveness in teaching and teacher education; what it means to learn to teach; the knowledge teachers need to teach well; and, the meaning of practice and assumed relationships between knowledge, research, theory, and practice.

The most salient themes in the foundations of the dominant accounta-bility paradigm have to do with teacher quality, market ideology, and what we call 'thin equity' (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2016). In short, the dominant accountability paradigm is animated by key ideas from market ideology (Engel, 2000; Stone, 2011): the quality of a country's education system – defined by teacher quality and measured primarily by students' test scores

– determines its ability to compete in the global knowledge economy. Specifically, the assumption is that strong and evenly distributed teacher quality can ensure economic security for a nation and close the 'teacher quality gap' (Education Trust, 2008; Peske & Haycock, 2006) so that all students have access to quality teachers. This assumes that the 'teacher quality gap' is a major cause, if not the single most important determiner, of educational (and social) inequity and that equalizing the distribution of teacher quality will achieve equity without necessarily addressing poverty and the intersecting systems of inequality in education and also in health care, employment, transportation, housing, and early childhood services that produce and reproduce inequity. This 'thin equity' perspective (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2016) assumes that teachers and schools are the primary cause of educational inequality and that access to better teachers will cure inequality.

In contrast to the dominant accountability paradigm, the core values of democratic accountability in teacher education are strong democracy and strong equity. Benjamin Barber's (1984) initial conceptualization of 'strong democracy' was based on the idea of people with different interests living together in a political community that transforms private interests and private individuals into equal participants with a commitment to public goods. Strong democracy depends on democratic education (Dewey, 1916) and democratic teacher education. Building on Barber's language and distinction, Project TEER developed the distinction between 'strong equity' and 'thin equity' (Cochran-Smith *et al.,* 2016). We argued that although nearly all accountability initiatives – and nearly all of today's teacher education reforms in general, for that matter – purport to 'promote equity,' underlying most of them is a notion of thin rather than strong equity. With thin equity, the operating assumption is that assimilation into 'shared goals' is a fundamental purpose of the education of minoritized students and that providing equal (i.e., 'the same') access to teachers, curriculum, and schools for all students will bring about equity (Tan & Barton, 2012). In contrast, from the perspective of strong equity, it is assumed that complex and intersecting historical, economic, and social systems – especially poverty and, in many places, intergenerational poverty – maintain unequal access to teachers, curriculum, and schools. This means that although access is critically important, access alone and teachers alone – no matter how good – cannot bring about equity. Rather genuine change requires access to capable teachers and strong schools for all students *and at the same time* curriculum and school policy/practice that build on the knowledge

sources of historically marginalized groups *and at the same time* educators working with families, communities, and policy makers to undo the structural and systemic policies and other aspects of schools and society that maintain inequity (Cochran–Smith *et al.*, 2016).

The problem of teacher education

Unpacking 'the problem of teacher education' is based on the assumption that policy problems do not exist 'out there', waiting to be discovered by policymakers and reformers. Rather, policy problems and solutions are constructed politically and rhetorically as part of larger debates about educational ideas, ideals, and worldviews and thus are related to the *values dimension* above (Stone, 2011; Snow & Benford, 1988). The *diagnostic dimension* refers to how the language and rhetoric of an accountability initiative construct or *diagnose* teacher quality/teacher education as a 'problem', including who or what 'caused' the problem and what kind of problem it actually is. The *prognostic dimension,* which generally goes hand in hand with the diagnostic dimension, constructs the solution to the perceived problem, including the general underlying theory about what specific accountability mechanism or system is presumed will 'fix' the perceived problem and how that mechanism will work. To identify these two dimensions, we borrowed language and concepts from frame analysis, particularly the idea of 'diagnostic' and 'prognostic' frames, which highlight the rhetorical strategies reformers and policy makers use to align their positions with the "common sense" perspectives of their presumed audiences (Gamson, 1988; Snow & Benford, 1988).

In the US, at the broadest level, major accountability initiatives and policies regarding initial teacher education have been designed to address the problem of alleged threats to the nation's economic health and security, caused by a mediocre education system, particularly weak teachers. Directly connected to these broad economic issues, the dominant accountability paradigm frames the problem of teacher education in terms of its failure to attract well–qualified candidates, its failure to earn public confidence as a profession, and its failure to collect and utilize meaningful data to direct continuous program improvement. Given this framing of the problem, it is not surprising that the dominant accountability paradigm frames the solution to the teacher quality/teacher preparation problem as the creation and implementation of national data systems that would systematically rate, rank, and evaluate preparation programs *and/or*

implementation of uniform national performance assessments that would evaluate teacher candidates and – indirectly – the teacher educators and programs that prepare them. This framing is based on the twin assumptions that the perceived pervasive low level of teacher quality in the US is the fault primarily of mediocre teacher preparation (and teachers) and that accreditors and other regulators can control this problem by putting into place rigorous data systems, uniform indicators, cutting-edge assessment tools, and sophisticated data analytics, which cull out bad programs and promote good ones.

In contrast, with democratic accountability in teacher education, the problem is defined as the dominance of the accountability paradigm itself. In other words, if strong democracy and strong equity are our objectives, then a major problem of initial teacher education is taken to be the negative effect the accountability paradigm has had and continues to have on teaching and teacher preparation. The dominant accountability paradigm in teacher education has prompted uniformity and compliance, redefined how teacher educators understand their roles, emphasized narrow outcomes, and subtracted from the spaces in the teacher education curriculum for discussion and action related to equity, social justice, and democratic education. To a certain extent, the accountability paradigm has also prompted a technical view of teaching and learning and a linear understanding of the relationships among teacher education, teacher quality, students' achievement, and economic prosperity. As Jenlink (2016: 164) suggests, this has distanced teacher education 'from its public purpose of educating citizens for a democratic society'. A second reason the dominant accountability paradigm is 'the problem' (or at least one of the central problems) of teacher education in the US is that it has controlled the field despite the fact that there is very little evidence to suggest that its mechanism are effective as a way to improve the quality of teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2016).

With this understanding of the problem, the solution is a democratic – and additive – approach to accountability. That is, democratic accountability challenges and rejects the assumption that the primary goal of teacher education is preparing teachers who enhance the nation's ability to compete in the global economy. Rather from the perspective of democratic accountability, the goal is preparing teachers who create democratic learning environments that enhance students' academic, social, and emotional learning, prepare them to be life-long learners and problem solvers as well as problem posers, and also prepares them to participate constructively in a

complex, diverse, and divided democratic society. Our concept of demo-cratic accountability in teacher education is intended to be a call to action for US teacher education – to rename the world of accountability and reframe the issues (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018). We argue that this is not a romanticized point of view nor does it ask too much of teacher education. Rather, given the increasing polarization of our society and people's growing inability and unwillingness to engage in deliberative disagree-ment, a new democratic approach is a dire necessity grounded in enhanced critical professionalism and working from an inquiry stance on teaching, learning and schooling.

Power relationships in accountability

The third cluster in our accountability framework, 'power relationships in accountability,' is based on the assumption that teacher education account-ability policies, like all education policies, are political (Bruner, 1996), in the sense that they involve issues of power and power relationships and, sometimes, contestations about power and jurisdiction. The *control dimen-sion* refers directly to jurisdiction and jurisdictional issues, including who is in charge and who should be in charge of the way teacher education institutions, programs/pathways, and/or individuals are assessed and held accountable for particular requirements, processes, or results. The *content dimension* has to do with what a given accountability initiative actually holds teacher education accountable for as well as what counts as evidence that teacher education is actually being accountable for the things stipu-lated by the policy. Romzek (2000) treated issues related to content in terms of what she called accountability 'orientations', including inputs (i.e. resources and resource management), processes (i.e. appropriate proce-dures), outputs (i.e. quantity and quality of services), and outcomes (i.e. quantity and quality of results). Finally, the *consequences dimension* refers to the intended – and unintended – results, effects, and implications of accountability initiatives for the institutions, organizations, and individuals that are its targets and implementers and also for the broader enterprise of initial teacher education.

With the dominant accountability paradigm in the US, there are some tricky issues about power and control based on whether internality and externality are defined relative to the preparation programs and institu-tions being held accountable or relative to 'the profession' in a more general collective sense. Despite some rhetoric to the contrary, however, our

analysis of accountability policy and practice in the US indicated that power and control were held primarily by regulators and agencies outside of teacher education programs and institutions and were perceived by those held accountable as imposed by external agents. We also found that with some variation by state, there were few opportunities for participants to have a voice in determining accountability content and measurement tools or to have the choice of joining in or opting out. In terms of the content of accountability – that is, what programs and institutions are accountable for – we found that this also varied somewhat across major accountability initiatives. However, the bottom line of accountability content was effectiveness, defined in terms of programs' and graduates' impact on students' learning *or* the program and course characteristics presumed to produce effectiveness *or* teachers' performance presumed to predict effectiveness (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018).

Democratic accountability turns the approach of the dominant accountability paradigm on its head by replacing external control and internal compliance with "intelligent professional responsibility" (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018) and by replacing narrow definitions of effectiveness with complex ideas about deliberative and critical democratic education. Democratic accountability is grounded in trust rather than mistrust of the teacher education programs and their school partners that are being held accountable, it involves the active participation of the professionals who are being held accountable, and it is deliberately organized to yield information that is actually usable for thoughtful program improvement. We gathered these ideas under the umbrella term, 'intelligent professional responsibility', which braids together three ideas: the notion of intelligent accountability (O'Neill, 2002); the practice of democratic evaluation based on inclusion and deliberation (House and Howe, 1999, 2000); and, the argument that the priority for K-12 education policy makers should not be mandating external accountability policies that entice and/or coerce schools to comply, but creating the conditions wherein individuals and professional groups willingly taking on collective responsibility for the learning of all students (Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, and Hargreaves, 2015). If all stakeholders participate, then it is clear that the content of accountability cannot be completely pre-determined but rather that it emerges from and integrates local commitments, the goals of particular programs, and professional expectations and norms.

With democratic accountability in teacher education, what teacher education programs are held accountable for and what counts as evidence

that they being accountable again contrasts with these matters in the dominant accountability paradigm. With a democratic approach, teacher preparation programs are accountable for democratic education itself – that is, the preparation of teachers who have the capacity and commitment to enact deliberative and critical democratic education as demonstrated through multiple measures tailored to local contexts. As Gutmann (1987) theorizes, democratic deliberation is a complex skill that depends on the skills of literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking as well as contextual knowledge, empathic perspective taking, making judgments based on evidence and argument, and genuine respect for the rights of individuals and groups to embrace values different from one's own. The capacity to enact deliberative and critical democratic education requires content and pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, and knowing how to construct and maintain positive learning environments *as well as* deep understanding of what it means to live in a diverse, contentious, and heterogeneous society.

New Accountability Criteria for Initial Teacher Education in Wales: A Commentary

In the final section of this article, I turn specifically to the new accreditation criteria to which those universities and their associated schools that wish to offer initial teacher education in Wales are now accountable (Furlong, 2015; Welsh Government, 2018). I have been invited to comment on this reform in Wales from the perspective of my recent accountability analyses outlined above and in terms of my positionality as an insider to the teacher education community but an outsider to the Wales/UK context. Especially given my limited knowledge of Wales, I make a point of noting that my comments are not evaluative, and that they are offered with humility and with respect for those who have worked to design and implement the new accreditation criteria.

In the next sections of this article, I use the major clusters of the accountability framework outlined above as a way to organize my comments. I do not address all the aspects of the new accreditation criteria, which are clearly spelled-out in Furlong's recommendations (Furlong, 2015), his extended rationale for these (Furlong, 2016; 2019), and in Welsh government documents specifying the criteria (Welsh Government, 2018). Rather my comments aim to illuminate aspects of the Wales criteria that I find

particularly interesting. I also raise some questions about what is fore-grounded and what is left in the background of the reform.

The foundations of accountability

In the US, as discussed above, one foundation of the dominant accounta-bility paradigm is market ideology. In contrast, the new initial teacher education accreditation approach in Wales has a strikingly different foun-dation. Despite Wales's mediocre performance on international assessments (Furlong, 2015), the reformed Wales accreditation system reflects an ide-ology less focused on the expectation that a teachers job is to prepare the workforce for the competitive global economy and more on the need for teachers to prepare competent, well-rounded, engaged, and principled young people ready to live and work productively in society. Along these lines, Furlong's recommendations about initial teacher education build on Donaldson's (2015) review of Wales curriculum and assessment for pri-mary and secondary education and on his bold argument that the goal of the curriculum should not be knowledge transmission, but rather the crea-tion of 'ambitious, capable learners … enterprising, creative contributors … ethical, informed citizens … [and] healthy confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society' (Furlong, 2015: 6). Furlong (2015, 2016) argues that if these bold aims are going to drive the reform of curriculum and assessment for Wales's school children, then initial teacher education will also need to be dramatically reformed.

Unlike the situation in the US, England, and to a certain extent Aus-tralia, the foundations of the Wales new accreditation requirements lean more toward the educational discourse of UNESCO and other humanist organizations, which propose curriculum and learning standards based on ideas about a global common humanity, than the educational discourse of OECD and other economic organizations, which propose curriculum and learning standards based on assumptions about global job markets. Along these lines, a recent UNESCO (2015) report proposed wholesale rethinking of education in line with "a humanistic vision of education and develop-ment, based on respect for life and human dignity, equal rights, social justice, cultural diversity, international solidarity, and shared responsibility for a sustainable future" (UNESCO, 2015: 9). The UNESCO report is grounded in the four 'pillars' of learning in an integrated approach to edu-cation, laid out in an earlier UNESCO report (Delors *et al.*, 1996): learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together.

These four pillars are highly consistent with the foundations of Furlong's recommendations, which are in turn consistent with the foundations of Donaldson's report. These ideas are also broadly consistent with our proposal for "democratic accountability in teacher education" (Cochran-Smith *et al*. 2018), grounded in strong democracy, which eschews the idea that the sum of the private interests of individuals equates with democracy and forwards instead the notion of equal participants living in communities animated by a shared responsibility for the common public good.

Given that the foundations of the Wales new accreditation system seem to reflect a humanistic ideology more so than a market ideology, it is puzzling that there is little attention to preparing teachers as activists and advocates, who work with others in larger social movements to identify and challenge the systems and structures that reproduce inequity. It is clear that Wales has an exceptionally high poverty level compared to other developed countries and to the rest of the UK (Barnard, 2018), and it is clear that there are disparities in Wales between the educational achievement of those who live in poverty and those who do not (Egan, 2013; Barnard, 2018). Recent studies indicate that under-achievement is a significant problem from the nursery school level onwards for children living in poverty (Egan, 2013) and that although the gap has narrowed somewhat over the last 10 years, children from lower-income backgrounds remain much less likely to leave school with desired levels of achievement (Barnard, 2018).

Despite this situation, there is relatively little mention of equity in the Wales new accreditation criteria. The government guidelines (Welsh Government, 2018) include the fact that 31% of Wales young people live in poverty, but they offer this information as an example of the primarily 'intellectually-based' learning student teachers need (Welsh Government, 2018: 9). In addition, the new accreditation criteria include the requirement that student teachers develop the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of students "from diverse cultural, linguistic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds to ensure equity" (Welsh Government, 2018: 22). Beyond these generic statements, however, there is almost no discussion in either Furlong's recommendations (Furlong, 2015; 2016) or the actual accreditation criteria (Welsh Government, 2018) about preparing teachers who recognize and challenge inequity and understand this as part of the job of teaching. The comments of well-known education advocate, David Berliner (2019), are relevant here even though he is referring to the US rather than Wales:

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> The nonpolitical or apolitical school administrator or teacher is likely to be a remnant of the past. Today's unequal society requires political activism by educa-tors to make communities work better for working class and poor people, for single-parent households, for minimum wage-earning families, and for immigrants (Berliner, 2019: 108).

The problem of teacher education

In our teacher education accountability framework, the 'problem of teacher education' includes how teacher quality/teacher education is rhetorically, linguistically, and politically framed as a policy (and practice) problem as well as how the solution to this problem is framed. As noted, US initial teacher education has for many decades been constructed as a problem of pervasive mediocrity, failure to emerge and mature as a profession, and failure to utilize valid cross-institutional outcomes measures for improve-ment. Accordingly, the solution to the problem has been constructed primarily as enhanced control of initial teacher education through public surveillance and monitoring, especially through the creation of national data systems that measure outcomes and promote compliance and uniformity.

As with the foundations of Wales new accountability system, its con-struction of the problem and the solution to the problem of initial teacher education is also dramatically different – and very promising. The docu-ments that outline Wales new approach are exceedingly clear in their two-fold construction of the problem: the mediocre quality of the current provision (Furlong, 2015, 2016; OECD, 2014), on one hand, and, on the other hand, very ambitious expectations for tomorrow's students – and teachers (Donaldson, 2015; Furlong, 2015; 2016). With regard to the first problem, Furlong (2015) suggests that Wales standards for qualified teachers emphasize narrow behavioral competencies that function as a de facto cur-riculum and give scant attention to the developmental nature of teacher learning or the central roles in learning of critical reflection and ongoing research. Lack of strategic leadership also contributes to the mediocrity of the current provision (Furlong, 2015). With regard to the second problem, the country has high aspirations regarding curriculum, assessment, and schooling in keeping with the demands of a society wherein knowledge and information are constantly changing (Donaldson, 2015). According to Furlong (2015, 2016), to keep pace, this means that teachers and teacher education need to take the lead as curriculum designers, decision makers,

knowledge critics, knowledge generators, and learners across the profes-sional lifespan.

The solution to the problem of initial teacher education is completely aligned with the above construction of the problem. Wales initial teacher education reform depends on a 'new vision of teacher professionalism' (Furlong, 2019) with new roles for teachers as well as renewed and extended roles for both universities and schools. This requires more robust profes-sional standards for qualified teachers, a more robust accountability system including new criteria for the accreditation of universities and their school partners, and new leadership professionals and organizations (Furlong, 2015, 2019). Again, the Wales approach is very different from countries where the solution to the problem of teacher education is control and man-agement of the deeply-mistrusted enterprise of university teacher education. To the contrary, the Wales reform reflects deep trust in the capacity of teachers and teacher educators to take on professional responsi-bility and reflects hope for the future.

An important aspect of the solution in Wales is a sophisticated and ambi-tious role for the university, including recruitment and selection of teacher candidates, modeling teaching, and overseeing the school aspects of prepa-ration. Even more important, however, according to Furlong (2015, 2016) is that universities, wherein the hallmark is the contestability of knowledge (Furlong, 2013), must prepare teachers who engage in research, critical reflection, and ongoing interrogation of knowledge and practice – their own and others'. This requires that all participants in teacher education – including teacher educators who have heretofore been unproductive as researchers – participate in a culture of inquiry. Furlong (2019) suggests that this new professional vision for teacher preparation must not only provide opportunities for student teachers to engage in both intellectual learning at the university and practical learning in the schools, but also – and most importantly – rich integrative learning opportunities that support student teachers' practical development and learning simultane-ously with their intellectual development and learning (Welsh Government, 2018).

Designing teacher preparation in ways that challenge the idea of a dichotomy between formal and practical knowledge or that problematize the theory–into–practice model of learning to teach *is not new*. Also, *not new* is the idea that a critical aspect of learning to teach – for student teachers and the teacher educators and mentors with whom they work – is func-tioning as researchers, critical questioners, and knowledge generators. For

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many years, these and related ideas have been conceptualized, instantiated in practice, and empirically studied in many parts of the world, including by those involved in theorizing and enacting teacher education wherein the centerpiece is teacher research, practitioner inquiry, action research, or other forms of inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 1999, 2009). What *is new* in the Wales approach is embedding this perspective within the requirements of an accreditation system and thus bringing these ideas to scale at the country level. In short, this means that in Wales, all universities and their school partners are now accountable for constructing the social, intellectual, and organizational contexts within which student teachers learn the work of teaching *at the same time* they learn to reflect on and theorize what they are doing. From my perspective, the essence of a rich and broad notion of practice is not simply what teachers do, but how they think about and interpret what they are doing by engaging in ongoing and systematically self-critical inquiry and reflection as well as how they act on those reflections to provide rich learning opportunities for students and to challenge inequities in school and societal contexts. What is radical in Wales is that most of this essence is now at the center of a national-level initial teacher education accreditation system.

Power relationships in accountability

The final aspect of our accountability framework zeroes in on power relationships and control. As noted above, in the US the bottom line of accountability content has been effectiveness, often narrowly defined, and control has been held by regulators and agencies external (or perceived to be external) to the programs and institutions being held accountable with few opportunities for institutions to participate in decisions about accountability content or to have the choice of joining in or opting out. Along these lines, Wales is again markedly different from the US and other outcomes-based accountability systems and may even be ground-breaking in certain ways.

One of the most interesting aspects of the new Wales initial teacher education accreditation system is that it requires universities and schools to be equal partners with joint responsibility for teacher education (Furlong, 2016) with the contribution of the schools more publicly recognized (Furlong, 2015) and with oversight through a new Teacher Accreditation Board, which is now part of the Education Workforce Council (Furlong, 2019).

The idea of joint responsibility is explicit in the Welsh Government (2018) guidelines for the new accreditation criteria: 'Finally there is a need for joint accountability. If truly collaborative teacher education is to be achieved, then 'the Partnership' – the [Higher Education Institutions] together with all of their partner schools – must take joint responsibility for their contributions to the programme. They need to work collaboratively and be willing to accept accountability...' (Welsh Government, 2018: 11). It is also acknowledged in the documents that rationalize and lay out the new accreditation criteria that in order for this to happen, partner schools will need resources and training and that the criteria for Estyn's inspection of schools will need to be revised in collaboration with the initial teacher education sector so that the preparation of teachers becomes a clear respon- sibility of the schools as well as universities (Furlong, 2016; Welsh Government, 2018).

Making universities and their school partners jointly accountable for initial teacher education at country-level scale is unusual in teacher educa- tion accountability policies – and very promising for the future of teacher education. In many countries, the provision of primary and secondary education, on one hand, and the provision of university-based initial teacher education, on the other hand, have grown up in substantially sepa- rate policy and practice spaces with markedly different goals, responsibilities, regulatory bodies, funding streams, and accountability systems. This has made it exceedingly difficult to develop true partnerships, has often exac- erbated the presumed theory-practice gap, and has generated tensions between cooperation and obligation. Along these same lines, it has often been the case that even when university-school partnerships exist in name, it is the university that has control and ultimately the accountability for initial teacher education.

Wales's dramatically different approach is consistent with multiple aspects of democratic accountability in teacher education (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018), especially with our ideas about the democratization of knowl- edge across universities and their school and community partners. The Wales new accreditation system is also noteworthy for its efforts to create the conditions for what we have referred to as "intelligent professional responsibility" in teacher education (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018), as described above. This concept draws on distinctions between external and internal accountability (Carnoy *et al.*, 2003; Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo, & Hargreaves, 2015; Romzek, 2000). Applying to initial teacher education Fullan and colleagues' argument about accountability in elementary and

secondary education, as explained above, one of the premises behind democratic accountability is that rather than coercing or enticing teacher education professionals to comply with external regulations, policy makers should aim to create the conditions within which professionals willingly take on shared responsibility for the learning of student teachers and their students. In other words, the point is that through smart external account-ability policy regarding initial teacher education, regulators can create the conditions for strong internal accountability based on shared values, goals, and local commitments.

My understanding is that the new Wales accreditation criteria are designed to do precisely this and to do so at scale throughout the entire country. This is an ambitious and worthy endeavor. Of course, it remains to be seen whether schools and university-school partnerships will have the resources they need, and the research capacity required and whether universities will be able to relinquish their ownership of teacher education. But these problems have been foreseen by the creators of the accreditation requirements, and their mechanisms for working through these problems are in place, including the new roles and organizations that are part of the new system. It also remains to be seen whether the accreditation require-ments to which universities and their school partners are now accountable will be experienced as creating the conditions for strong internal account-ability or, whether, even with a new accreditation board ultimately to be controlled by the profession, this will be experienced as the imposition of externally- and exclusively-determined rules and regulations. It is my hope for Wales that the accreditation requirements will be experienced as creating the conditions for strong internal accountability that scaffolds the work of initial teacher education at individual universities/partnerships and that draws on local knowledge and commitments. As this journal issue indicates, the signs are very positive along these lines.

Acknowledgement

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