Embracing Tensions and Creating Opportunities in Teacher Education

Renée T. Clift
Presentation to the Association of Teacher Educators
February 2019
Tensions and Opportunities

Inner striving, unrest, or imbalance often with physiological indication of emotion

The act or action of stretching or the condition or degree of being stretched to stiffness

Either of two balancing forces causing or tending to cause extension

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tension

The parachute keeps the cable under tension as it drops
Uneven stitches usually indicate the tension is out of balance

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tension
• Part One – Learning from ATE’s Historical Commitment

• Part Two – Acknowledging Competition

• Part Three – Recognizing Tensions

• Part Four – Embracing Tension and Telling Our Own Story

• Part Five – Policy as Creating Opportunity
Evolution of clinical practice

1948: *School and Community Laboratory Experiences in Teacher Education*

2000/2015: ATE Standards

2011 – 17: Commission on Clinically-Based Teacher Preparation
Winter 2015

ATE Clinical Practice Fellows Created

Teacher educators, PK-12 school personnel, and clinical field coordinators who have a strong research interest in clinical practice.

Strong encouragement to come in pairs of P12 and university partners or in teams.

In 2019, a partnership with ATE and NAPDS

Learning from ATE’s Historical Commitments

Nancy Dana and Diane Yendol-Hoppey

Kathryn Will-Dubyak and Robin Johnson
Guidelines for Informing Clinical Practice

# 2 Develop authentic relationships between all involved

# 8 Commit to and take action towards the creation of more equitable classrooms and schools

# 10 Recognize programs as works in progress with continual self-improvement and renewal efforts.
Competition: A Given

- This is not a new phenomenon
- There is money to be made
- There are faster routes
- This is an international phenomenon
- Competition is not necessarily bad
- Universities were created to explore, innovate, create and critique
## The Arizona Context

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<tr>
<th>Educator Preparation Program</th>
<th>Professional Preparation Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary Education Program</td>
<td><strong>American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence</strong></td>
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<td>Classroom-Based Alternative Preparation Program</td>
<td><strong>Vail Unified School District</strong></td>
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https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5b844b9e1dc250c100841e2
The Arizona Context


- Valid fingerprint clearance card
- Subject area teaching experience at one or more regionally nationally accredited postsecondary institutions or
- Subject area Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctoral degree or
- Verification of at least five years of subject area related work experience
House Bill 2534 requires all applicants for the Subject Matter Expert Standard Teaching, Grades 6-12 Certificate to have a Bachelor’s degree.

https://www.azed.gov/educator-certification/category/changes/
Sometimes Criticism is a bit Inaccurate…

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<td>Classroom Management</td>
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<td>Secondary Methods Practice</td>
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https://www.nctq.org/review/view/University-of-Arizona-AZ-4
Tensions in Practice and in Research

- Physiological Indication of Emotion
- Stretching or Being Stretched
- Two Balancing Forces Resulting in Extension
Managing Tension

Tensions of Practice

Dr. Amanda Berry, Monash University, 2008

Teaching Secondary Science Methods in Australia
Studying one’s self as teacher educator

- Confidence and Uncertainty
- Safety and Challenge
- Planning and Being Responsive

Berry, 2008
Knowing your students and not knowing them

Being in charge of the classroom and not being in charge of the classroom

Teaching mathematics and not teaching mathematics.

Gutiérrez, 2009
Dealing with Social Inequities

- What Can I Do? The Tension of Offering Teachers Both Theories and Concrete Ideas
- What Can I Do? The Tension of Educating Individual Teachers to Act Within a Racially Unequal Structure
- What Can I Do? The Tension of Educating Individual Teachers at Various Moments in Their Personal Development
Contradictory Pedagogical Traditions in English Education

- Understanding and interpreting
- Mimicry and creativity
- Faculty autonomy and program coherence
- Assessment preparation and individuality

Bickmore, Smagorinsky, & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015
School Level Professionalism

- Participation and Intensification
- Time for Students and Time for Governance
- School Focus and Community Focus
- Schools’ Responsibilities and Society’s Responsibilities

Zeichner, 1991
Enduring Tension is not the Same as Embracing Tension

Would you want a sewing machine free of tension?

A parachute??
Who Will Tell Our Story?

We Will!

…the purpose of presenting models of good practice is to engage teacher education practitioners in meaningful and productive dialogue in analyzing the design of preservice programs and in developing carefully thought out and theoretically grounded local design based on research and evidence from practice that take the local context into consideration.

Lavadence & Hollins, 2015
Instructor Self-assessment and Change

• Analyzing words and actions – what we intend to communicate and what students actually hear
• Communicating through care
• Change is up to us as teacher educators

Trout, 2018
Telling Our Stories Together as Partners

- Placing teacher candidates in a struggling school / working together with the school to change the culture
- Listening to the pedagogical wisdom to teachers who are professionals with knowledge of the school and the students
- Changing as a collective “we are better together”

Burns, 2018
Embedded Policy: Choices or Lack of Choice

• Where to place students – and why?
• How to respond to school concerns?
• How to respond to university concerns?
• How to negotiate promotion and tenure policy?
• How to negotiate state testing and labeling policy?
Change Involves Policy at Some Level

Local
Department or Program
School
College
District
University
State
National

Clift & Liaupsin, in press
Tension, Practice, and Policy

• Impact *of* policy
  • On Practice
  • On emotions
• Impact *on* policy
  • Primarily local
  • Negotiations with colleagues, administrators and clinical partners

Clift & Liaupsin, in press
Teacher Educators, Administrators and Three Stories

• Special Education Teacher Preparation and General Teacher Preparation – should our programs be separate or together?

• The Arizona Teachers Academy – are program faculty and administrators partners or adversaries?

• Universities and Schools – how can we navigate permitted and prohibited political activity?
Special Education and General Teacher Preparation

- Institutional policies reify a concept of separateness
- Individuals often draw distinctions as opposed to bridging gaps
- Discussions of equity may not ask the question, equity for whom?
Arizona Teachers Academy
https://education.azgovernor.gov/edu/arizona-teachers-academy

- Administrative levels involved
  - State government
  - University administration
  - Dean’s office
- Tensions involved
  - Voice(s) in decision making
  - Program integrity
  - Equity
Tensions in Policy and Political Activity

- Acting as *Individuals* and Acting as *Institutional Agents*

- Language that *Confronts* and Language that *Concedes*

- Partners only in Teacher Education *Programs* or Partners in Effecting Social Change??
Red for Ed

• IHE/School solidarity
• RED
• Info sessions for our students
• Flexible Policy on walking out – or not
Gov. Ducey's Proposed Budget Brings Changes To Arizona Education Policy

Claire Caulfield, KJZZ
Howard Fischer, Capitol Media Services
January 21, 2019

- $160 million is for the next step of the pay plan designed to boost teacher salaries by 20 percent over 2017 levels by 2020.
- $68 million to eventually restore other funds taken from schools during the recession
- $21 million to expand the number of college students who would get free tuition if they agree to go into teaching in Arizona
New Dimensions for Clinical Preparation and Development of Educators (Pat Tate’s most recent blog)

• #1 – ATE members will be active practitioner-scholars in bridging and bringing together a new synthesis of key theoretical constructs and ethical practices essential for effective clinical practice in the development of teachers. Educators through specialized programs that support their development.

• #2 – ATE will be the “outreach” organization for school- and university-based teacher educators through specialized programs that support their development.

• #3 – ATE leaders will build on and carry forward essential coalitions with our sister organizations to be united in one voice to advocate for the teaching profession and those who prepare teachers – THE TEACHER EDUCATOR.

• #4 – ATE will create and develop new venues to provide spaces and places for both virtual and face-to-face professional development opportunities for our members aimed to support them in their teacher educator roles.

https://ate1.org
New Dimensions for Clinical Preparation and Development of Educators (Renée’s modifications)

- **active practitioner-scholars who inform policy**
- **outreach organization who shares good practices (and critiques of not so good practices)**
- **essential coalitions to take action**
- **new venues for ourselves and our partners**
Getting our Message to the Public

TOGETHER

• Engaged Scholarship
• Individual and Collective Self Studies
• Public Showcases of Partnerships
• Social Media
• Testimonials
• Testimony
Embracing Tension

• Every choice we make in preparing and sustaining teachers and teacher educators necessarily involves tensions among those choices at the macro and micro levels

• Every choice we make is personal, but it is also political and touches on multiple collectives

• I hope you will think about – and trouble – the decisions/choices we make to meet the complex challenges for educators across institutions, states and even nations.
And then, work together and take action
It is up to you

It is up to us
Thank You!

rtclift@email.arizona.edu

Slides available at https://ate1.org/2019-keynote-presentations/
Some references that have informed this presentation


Lavadence & Hollins, 2015


