

A Disabling Vision: Rhetoric and Reality in *Tomorrow's Schools of Education*

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In this article, I analyze both the rhetoric and the practical implications of the third report of the Holmes Group (1995b), which seeks to spell out a design for Tomorrow's Schools of Education. As a result of this analysis, I find that the report is both contradictory and counterproductive. Its populist rhetoric presents an anti-intellectual vision of the education school that hopelessly muddles the composite message of the three Holmes reports and substantially undermines the credibility of the Holmes Group as a voice for educational reform. At the same time, this vision sets out an agenda for education schools that, if followed, would radically narrow their currently broad range of functions for American education, both instructionally and intellectually. The report would reduce instructional programs to the point that broad-based schools of education would effectively turn into schools of teacher education; and it would constrain the scope of intellectual activities to the point that academic research on education would devolve into industrial-style research and development, focusing on the production of educational technologies for schools.

In the ten years following the mid-1980s, one of the major growth areas in academic publishing has been the field of teacher education. Or perhaps one should call it a target. For during this period, a wide array of books and articles appeared that sharply criticized American education schools,¹ offering to explain both why American education schools were so ineffective at preparing teachers and what reforms would be required in order to rectify this situation.²

A key event that helped initiate this wave of critical interest in the subject was the publication in 1986 of a report entitled *Tomorrow's Teachers* authored by the Holmes Group—a newly formed organization of education school deans from the country's major research-oriented universities—the report called for the reconstruction of both teacher education and teacher work roles in order to produce a professionalized teaching force for American schools. Four years later, the Holmes Group came out with a second report, *Tomorrow's Schools* (1990), which called for education schools to form “professional development schools” in close collaboration with local school systems. These two reports have been enormously influential. In response to them, Holmes institutions and others have embarked

on a variety of reform efforts called for in the reports, including a move toward graduate-level programs for preparing teachers and the formation of professional development schools (PDSs). At the same time, however, the reports have provoked a flood of critical attacks, which called into question both the validity of the analysis put forward in the reports and the desirability of the changes recommended by them.³

Both the organizational changes and the critical responses prompted by the first two reports spurred advance interest in the proposed third report, which was given the working title *Tomorrow's Schools of Education*. As the title suggests, this document was intended to zero in on the problems and prospects of education schools, building on the previous reports to provide an authoritative analysis of what is wrong with these institutions today and what restructuring will be required in order to correct these problems. After several delays, the Holmes Group finally approved a draft of the report at its annual meeting in January 1995 and released this version (Holmes Group, 1995a) to the press. The final published version of the report (Holmes Group, 1995b) appeared five months later.

The timing of this report could not be better. Schools in the 1990s are under pressure to change from a number of directions, and education schools must adapt to these changes or risk being made irrelevant. Transformations in the American economy exert pressure on schools to prepare students for a changing array of postindustrial jobs over the course of a career, putting a premium on lifelong learning and information-processing skills. The evolving class and ethnic divisions within American society increase both the complexity of teaching and the urgency of providing adequate preparation for students to function in a multicultural environment. As currently structured, both schools and schools of education are not well suited to the task of meeting these kinds of challenges.

As a critic of the earlier reports, I was not expecting to find in this one the definitive answer to the challenges facing education schools. But, as a teacher educator and an observer of teacher education, I was hoping for a serious examination of the problems facing education schools in the 1990s. In particular, it seemed reasonable that readers in general could expect to find a document that would reflect the considerable intellectual resources of the institutions that make up the Holmes Group and would draw substance from the bracing discourse about the roles of education schools that emerged from the first two reports. However, in spite of these promising prospects, the report turns out to be neither astute nor persuasive. Instead, it both misrepresents the situation within education schools today and offers misguided proposals for the future.

Consider a few preliminary puzzles that emerge from a reading of this report. One problem is the striking incompatibility between this report

and its two predecessors. Whereas *Tomorrow's Teachers* proposed that education schools could best serve the professionalization of teaching by grounding themselves within the scientific knowledge of the university, *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* argues that education schools should largely turn their backs on the university and ground themselves primarily within schools. Another oddity about the latest report is the populist attack it directs toward the Holmes Group's own member institutions, research-oriented education schools, and the almost unrecognizable caricature of these institutions that it constructs for the purpose of carrying out this attack. All in all, it is a strange report indeed to be issuing from these institutions at this time.

The result is a report that is both contradictory and counterproductive. Its odd mix of populist and corporate rhetoric presents a disturbingly anti-intellectual vision of the education school that hopelessly muddles the composite message of the three Holmes reports and substantially undermines the credibility of the Holmes Group as a voice for educational reform. At the same time, this vision sets out an agenda for education schools that, if followed, would radically narrow their currently broad range of functions for American education, both instructionally and intellectually. The report would reduce instructional programs to the point that broad-based schools of education would effectively turn into *schools of teacher education* and it would constrain the scope of intellectual activities to the point that academic research on education would devolve into *industrial-style research and development* focusing on the production of educational technologies for schools.

My aim in this article is to explore some of the key arguments raised by the report and to consider their implications. In pursuit of this goal, I have organized the article into the following sections: a summary of the major points made in the report; a comparison of the primary arguments in the report with those in the earlier reports; an analysis of the rhetoric of the report in light the rhetorics of its predecessors; and an examination of what it might mean for education schools if they were to adopt the report's proposals.

TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION THE BASIC ARGUMENT

The structure of the argument in this report is simple: identify the problem with education schools and define the solution. As the report makes clear on the first page and reinforces on nearly every page thereafter, the problem lies in the basic character and standard mode of operation in today's "university-based education schools" (p. 5).⁴ It is in fact the univer-

sity connection that is at the root of this problem, which means that the Holmes institutions themselves bear most of the blame.

And so we expect that universities cannot help but squirm as they ponder the implications of this report, detailing how they have gone awry and what they should do to reconstitute themselves.

No one dons the hair shirt of self-criticism for reasons of comfort. In effect, the Holmes Group, a consortium of universities doing educational research and educator preparation, acknowledges by publishing this report that its member institutions, despite hard-won improvements, need to make further strides. (p. 5)

And what have these institutions been doing wrong? The primary failing is that “in their rush to emulate colleagues in the arts and sciences, many faculty members of education schools lose sight of their responsibilities and opportunities as part of a professional school” (p. 13). These education school professors—imbued with “the generally negative attitude in higher education toward matters relating to elementary and secondary education” (p. 88)—have downplayed the importance of preparing teachers and meeting the needs of K–12 schools. Instead they have focused on graduate studies, programs for nonteaching professionals, and theory-driven research. This has left education schools only remotely connected to educational practitioners and the core problems of practice that constitute the heart of American elementary and secondary education.

The solution to these problems calls for a radical transformation of the form and function of today’s university-based schools of education. For one thing, they must carve off peripheral activities and concentrate their efforts on what should be their central mission. According to the report, a primary goal of tomorrow’s schools of education should be “to center our work on professional knowledge and skill for educators who serve children and youth” (p. 15). It goes on to explain:

We will sharpen our focus and concentrate our programs so that we offer studies more closely aligned with the learning needs of children and youth in a democratic society. . . . Education schools trying to be all things to all people fail everyone. Our priority will be on program quality for those working to improve learning for children and youth. (p. 15)

This means concentrating on teacher preparation at the expense of other programs. It also means focusing research efforts on issues relating to the education of children and youth as opposed to adults. (In a section titled “The Core of Learning: What All Educators Must Know,” the report lists five elements of this core knowledge, all of which revolve around the phrase “young people’s learning” [p. 70].)

Another part of the solution calls for education schools to become grounded in the problems of school practice by reorganizing themselves around professional development schools. Initially proposed in the first report and promoted forcefully in the second, PDSs are elementary and secondary schools that are collaboratively constructed by personnel from education schools and K–12 school systems. As defined by Holmes, these institutions are supposed to serve a complex array of functions: as laboratories of exemplary practice, experiments in restructuring educational roles, models of ongoing professional development, venues for research into problems of practice, and sites for preparing preservice teachers. The idea is that the PDS should become the center around which all other activities in tomorrow's schools of education (TSEs) should revolve: teaching, research, and service will all become concentrated there.

The PDS is not, we repeat, IS NOT, just another project for the education school. It must be woven into the very fabric of the TSE, its many strands combining with those of the institution's other programs. Beginning small, the TSE must plan to increase eventually the number of such sites so that learning experiences for most TSE students can occur at a PDS. This suggests the need for careful planning for a lengthy future for what will be an integral and integrating part of the TSE. The education school may, in fact, have to trim the breadth of other outside involvements and researchers may have to submit to some restraints so that they focus more on their investigations through the PDS prism. (p. 86, emphasis in original)

The report makes it clear that these proposals for solving the education school problem are not to be taken as merely one suggestion among many in an open national discourse about the role of these institutions. Instead, the plans laid out in this report for tomorrow's schools of education are presented as the last and only chance for turning around an institution in crisis. If a current education school is unwilling to adopt these proposals, it should quit or be driven out of business. "We begin this brief with a radical premise: institutions preparing educators should either adopt reforms that link their educational contributions closely with improved schooling for America's young—along the lines proposed in these pages—or surrender their franchise" (p. 6). Toward the end of the report, the authors restate this imperative with even more force: "We will ask our professional partners and allies to join us in framing new standards for the TSE. Those schools of education that cannot meet these new standards after a reasonable period of time should be closed" (p. 96).

COMPARING REPORTS: CONTRADICTIONARY ARGUMENTS

Tomorrow's Schools of Education presents an argument that is diametrically opposed to the central argument of the original Holmes Group report (1986). Whereas the first report canonizes the university for the role it plays in shaping the professional education of educators, the third report demonizes the university for this same role.

From the perspective of *Tomorrow's Teachers* the research-oriented education school—grounded in the scientific authority of the university—is the long-awaited savior of the teaching profession. The aim of the Holmes Group, as expressed in this report, is to accomplish “nothing less than the transformation of teaching from an occupation into a genuine profession” (1986, p. ix), and the university is the key to this transformation. For an occupation to call itself a genuine profession, it needs a solid core of exclusive expertise, a distinctive base of knowledge that marks it off from the laity:

The established professions have, over time, developed a body of specialized knowledge, codified and transmitted through professional education and clinical practice. Their claim to professional status rests on this. For the occupation of teaching, a defensible claim for such special knowledge has emerged only recently. Efforts to reform the preparation of teachers and the profession of teaching must begin, therefore, with the serious work of articulating the knowledge base of the profession and developing the means by which it can be imparted. (p. 63)

According to this report, that knowledge base is now becoming visible and available. However, it is arising not from the clinical experience of practicing teachers but from the scientific research carried out by education professors in university-based colleges of education.

Until the last two decades, scholarship in education and the content of the hundreds of university courses in the subject had to rely heavily upon the findings in other disciplines, particularly the behavioral sciences. . . . Within the last twenty years, however, the science of education promised by Dewey, Thorndike, and others at the turn of the century, has become more tangible: The behavioral sciences have been turned on the schools themselves, and not just in laboratory simulations. Studies of life in classrooms now make possible some convincing and counter-intuitive conclusions about schooling and pupil achievement. (p. 52)

As a result, research-producing education schools, drawing heavily on their distinctive assets as members of the university, are the crucial component in providing an adequate professional education for teachers and for elevating teaching itself to the level of a profession.⁵ At the end of the first sec-

tion, the report concludes, “The work that we propose is therefore distinctively the province of the university: study, research, and teaching” (p. 20).

As we have seen, however, *Tomorrow’s Schools of Education* flips this argument on its head. The university, as the base for research-oriented education schools, becomes the problem rather than the solution for teachers and schools. The classic attributes of a university—theory-driven research, graduate education, academic autonomy—are now seen as detrimental to the mission laid out for the ideal education school, which is expected to be centered relentlessly on applied knowledge, teacher preparation, and problems of practice.

Ambiguity surrounds the purpose of schools of education. Many of these institutions have been less than clear about their mission. The confusion arises, largely, from the tendency of many education schools to support too many different programs and to invest too little in work with the schools. As a consequence, a disproportionate number of faculty members separate their work from that of the elementary and secondary sector. Many professors go about their teaching and research with hardly a nod toward the public schools, seldom if ever deigning to cross the thresholds of those “lowly” places. Such attitudes transmit an unmistakable message. The people most intimately responsible for children’s learning in elementary and secondary schools are not sufficiently valued by the education school. Schoolteachers and young learners, who should be the focus of the education school’s concern, are kept at arm’s length. They are a sideshow to the performance in the center ring, where professors carry out their work insulated from the messiness and hurly-burly of elementary and secondary education. (p. 17)

According to the new report, the only answer to this problem is for tomorrow’s schools of education to turn their backs on the corrupting influence of the university (with its fatal attraction to research and graduate studies) and ground themselves instead in the K–12 classroom. The professional development school is the organizational mechanism for effecting this transformation in the way education schools do their work.

Fortunately, the Professional Development School (PDS) movement that we advanced in the late 1980’s has taken root and promises to grow into something substantial that can cast its nurturing shadow over more and more of the education enterprise, allowing knowledge development to take greater cognizance of teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools. Inquiry in the PDSs challenges the traditional relationship between research and application and gives promise of creating a new conception of that relationship. (p. 19)

The PDS will be the site where education schools will center their teaching and research activities in the future, rather than the seminar rooms, laboratories, and libraries of the university. And this will call for a new breed of education faculty and a new vision of faculty roles. After a brief disclaimer—“nothing in this report should be read as hostile to this free play of scholarly inquiry” (p. 60)—the report strongly asserts the need to change the meaning of both scholarship and professorship in the new education school:

A fresh emphasis in the revamped school of education, though, will be put on forming a tighter bond between scholarship and practice. The creation of the PDS promotes that objective. Thus, the TSE agenda has implications for the composition of the university faculty and for faculty work commitments. Tomorrow’s School of Education unabashedly seeks to employ more faculty members who want to use their research abilities to pursue interests in the settings provided by elementary and secondary schools, grounding their scholarship in practice. (p. 60)

As both symbol and substance, the meaning of the PDS changed dramatically over the course of the three reports. In *Tomorrow’s Teachers* this institution was portrayed as an extension of the university-based college of education into the schools, through which the university could transmit its scientific knowledge and lend its prestige to the beleaguered semi-profession of teaching. In *Tomorrow’s Schools* it became an almost mystical scene of collaboration, where the emphasis was put on equality between the partners: “We believe these bonds between universities and schools should be a partnership among peers” (p. vii). But by the time we get to *Tomorrow’s Schools of Education* the power relations have undergone a subtle but significant shift. The PDS is still a collaboration between partners, but now its function is reversed. Instead of being a mechanism that will allow the university education school to save the schools, it becomes the device that will save the education school from the university. (The report talks about the education school “*hitching its wagon to* public schools that are striving to transform themselves into Professional Development Schools” [p. 18, emphasis added].) At this stage in the development of thinking in the Holmes Group, it appears that the education school may need the PDS more than the schools do. Apparently, the only thing that can protect the education school from the lure of the university is to be placed—forcibly if necessary—under the “nurturing shadow” of the PDS.

COMPARING REPORTS: CONTRADICTIONARY RHETORICS

Not only does the argument change from one report to the next, but also the rhetoric of the reports shifts dramatically.

COMPETING CARICATURES

In one sense only, the rhetoric of the three Holmes Group reports is quite consistent. The argument in each of the three reports relies heavily on a caricature of a university education school. The consistency ends there, however, because it turns out that each report employs a strikingly different caricature to make its point.

Tomorrow's Teachers portrays the university education school as the prime epistemological authority in the otherwise uncertain world of teaching and learning. In this role, it produces the scientific knowledge about teaching that can be used as a solid foundation for the construction of a teaching profession. However, this is a gross misrepresentation of the nature of academic knowledge and the utility of educational research. Like other academics, educational researchers at their best seek to build theories about the world. No matter how scientific their approach to this task, however, these researchers are never able to turn their theories into firm prescriptions for what practitioners should do in schools. One reason is that theories are efforts to generalize over time and across contexts, while teaching is a highly particularistic activity, necessarily bounded by time and place. Another is that educator judgments involve a mixture of value concerns and technical evaluations, and research can contribute only to the latter.

Therefore, the kind of research that education schools carry out can be helpful to teachers and other educational practitioners, but only in limited ways. Research-based theory provides practitioners with a portrait of general tendencies in education that can serve as a reference point for interpreting the peculiarities of practice in a particular educational setting. But they still have to make the judgments themselves—based on their clinical knowledge about how schools work and their values about what schools should accomplish—without being able to rely on (or to be bound by) what research says. The imperial authority of the university-based education school, as propounded in the first Holmes report, is thus a myth. It serves a useful rhetorical purpose there, by providing the apparent answer to the problem of teacher professionalization and serving as the lever for reform. But in fact the knowledge generated by education schools is potentially useful but not authoritative, so this knowledge cannot be the singular foundation for the reform of teaching as the report proposes.⁶

Tomorrow's Schools presents a different caricature of the university-based education school. Far from being the authoritative purveyor of scientific knowledge, the education school becomes a partner with a school system in the collaborative task of building a professional development school. This vision places the education school in a democratic role, with education professors and schoolteachers working side by side to restructure the way schools organize and carry out instruction. Gone from the rhetoric of this report are the earlier imperial pretensions:

A Professional Development School must not become a colony settled by the university in the public schools. Rather, it should be an opportunity to join the strengths of the two institutions in pursuit of common purposes, and to combine their intellectual and material resources to more powerfully pursue those purposes. (p. 51)

The image is remarkably egalitarian, promising to level the hierarchical distinctions that have separated K–12 education from “higher” education.

The problem, however, is that in presenting this egalitarian vision, the report chooses to ignore the nature of the real institutional differences that separate schools from education schools. A central case in point is a dramatic difference in modes of practice. Schoolteachers must contend with the task of managing and teaching large groups of students over the course of the whole day, five days a week. Education school professors, like other academics, have much more limited contact with and responsibility for students, leaving them large amounts of time to fulfill other functions that are built into their job, such as carrying on research. Thus the pressure on teachers is to do something now about the pressing instructional situation at hand, while the pressure on professors is to step back from momentary pressures in order to observe, reflect, analyze, and theorize. As a result, even when both come together in the same setting, such as a professional development school, they are seeking to accomplish different things (Labaree, 1995b). This is not to say that collaboration is impossible between the two, only that it cannot take place unless both sides acknowledge the differences that bring them there and work out a bargain that allows each group to meet its needs without interfering with the other (Goodson & Mangan, 1991). Rhetorically, however, the second Holmes report needs a simpler vision of the education school and its relationship with schools, because it wants to make the task of building PDSs seem relatively easy—just a matter of good people getting together around “common purposes.”

Tomorrow's Schools of Education we have already seen, presents a third caricature of the university education school. No longer the strong savior of schools or the friendly partner in reform, the university education school becomes the weak link in the reform process. In part, the institution is portrayed as worthy of pity, because of the way its faculty members have been lured by the siren song of the university, as they “rush to emulate colleagues in the arts and sciences” (p. 13). But in larger part these professors are deserving of scorn, for “los[ing] sight of their responsibilities and opportunities as part of a professional school” (p. 13) and “seldom if ever deigning to cross the thresholds” (p. 17) of public schools. These crimes in turn call for confession (“the Holmes Group . . . acknowledges by publishing this report that its member institutions . . . need to make fur-

ther strides" [p. 5]), shame ("universities cannot help but squirm as they ponder the implications of this report" [p. 5]), punishment ("don[ning] the hair shirt of self-criticism" [p. 5]), and possibly the death penalty ("those . . . that cannot meet these new standards . . . should be closed" [p. 96]).

The problem, however, is that once again it is difficult to match the caricature with many real institutions. For example, where are all those education schools in which "professors go about their teaching and research with hardly a nod toward the public schools, seldom if ever deigning to cross the thresholds of those 'lowly' places" (p. 17)? Where is it that "school-teachers and young learners . . . are kept at arm's length" (p. 17)? Where are the institutions dominated by "professors [who] carry out their work insulated from the messiness and hurly-burly of elementary and secondary education" (p. 17)? How many education schools in fact simply ignore teacher education, which the report asserts is the norm? There are indeed a few institutions that match some of these characterizations, a subset of the small number of graduate schools of education located in elite universities. Here in fact research and graduate programs may well take precedence over teacher preparation. But this tiny group of sinners serves as a straw man for the authors of the report, used by them to tar the whole population of university education schools. (The report identifies a total of 250 universities that grant doctoral degrees in education in addition to preparing teachers.) And, in turn, this scathing indictment of the straw-man education school is used as the basis for a proposed transformation of the structure of all education schools in the United States.⁷

Therefore, the caricature of the university education school that appears in *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* an incorrigible institution that turns its back on teachers and schools and embraces the effete intellectual life of the university—serves the same purpose in this report that markedly different caricatures (education school as knowledge source, education school as equal partner) served in the first two reports. In each case, the misrepresentation of the university education school provided the basis for the central argument. Given that all three reports were issued by the same organization, it is remarkable that these characterizations are so strikingly different from each other. And given that the organization itself represents the deans of university education schools, it is just as remarkable that none of the characterizations comes close to capturing the reality of these very institutions. But apparently the rhetorical task in each report was to use whatever depiction of education schools was convenient in order to advance the argument of the moment, and therefore neither consistency nor accuracy was considered very important. The result is a series of reports that are unified by little more than a desire to press for reform by whatever means are necessary.

SHIFTING AUDIENCES

If opportunism is the rhetorical strategy, that still leaves open the question of who the audience is. Given the radical differences in the rhetoric of each report, one can only conclude that the audiences are different in each case. *Tomorrow's Teachers* has the broadest audience in mind. In part it is directed at universities. It takes care to present the work of education schools as carrying out credible research in the classic traditions of academic empiricism. The message here is that education school professors should be accepted as full members of the academic community. In part the report is directed at university education schools, which are being asked to continue on the research track and to use this work to elevate their teacher preparation programs. In part it is aimed at the lesser education schools, those existing outside the inner circle of doctorate-awarding and research-producing institutions. The message to them is "Follow our lead; we know best about these things." Also in part, the report is directed toward teachers and schools. The entire reform effort proposed by the report is presented as an effort to professionalize teaching, to elevate this long-suffering group through an infusion of knowledge and prestige from the university. However, as I have argued elsewhere (Labaree, 1992a), the primary beneficiaries of the proposed effort seem to be the university education schools rather than teachers, since education faculty are the ones whose fortunes are most directly elevated by all the talk about the power of research and the reform actions that follow from this talk.

Tomorrow's Schools speaks to a narrower array of audiences. Ignoring the university, it issues a plea to university education schools to become involved in the process of constructing professional development schools. As an inducement, it offers the reward of doing something good for students in American schools. Its egalitarian rhetoric portrays the structurally complex process of collaborating with schools as a relatively simple problem that will yield to good will and hard work. The other primary audience for this report is the schools. Speaking in the voice of the research education school, the report says to schools, "We're from the university and we're here to help." The idea is that the university education school can be a friend and able co-worker, providing valuable advice and support in solving the problems of organization and practice that afflict practitioners in schools (Labaree, 1992b).

Trying to identify the audience for *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* however, is more difficult. There is no effort here to appeal to the university, because the report portrays that institution as a site of seduction for the education school, not the source of its rescue. In fact, the report argues for the education school to turn its back on the university and develop a primary attachment to K-12 schools. But this does not mean that Holmes is

framing its appeal toward the schools either, as it did in part in the first two documents. Instead, schools are the *deus ex machina* imported to save the day for the wayward education school. They provide the grounding for this report, but they remain largely external to its purpose, which is primarily to reform education schools rather than schools. The report does not ask schools to do anything or call on their support for the reforms it proposes.

Unlike either of the other reports, this one narrowly targets one sector—research-producing university-based education schools. At the end, the report defines its audience this way:

In this document, we have assumed the peculiar posture of talking to ourselves. On the one hand, the Holmes Group used the occasion of this report to affirm its intention to improve schooling in America for all children, and especially for those worst served. On the other hand, we speak to ourselves to admonish some of our colleagues and to reaffirm our own commitment to the difficult course we have set for our future. (p. 97)

But the way in which the Holmes Group goes about “talking to” its own membership suggests that these institutions are in fact not its primary audience. Instead, the overall impression that strikes the reader is that the report seems to be *directed at* university education schools rather than *addressed to* them. It relentlessly beats on them but it rarely seeks to appeal to them as an audience that could be convinced by its arguments. If, on the contrary, this report is really an effort to win over these institutions to the reforms proposed here, its rhetoric is remarkably ineffective in accomplishing this end. Consider the impact of both the tone and the language of the report.

Tone

The tone is harsh indeed. Throughout its pages, the report admonishes, hectors, browbeats, ridicules, shames, and punishes the university education school for its purported failings. This is clearly visible in many of the quotations that I have already included in this article. And even when the report seeks to back away from blanket condemnation of its object, the tone is that of a backhanded compliment. For example, one paragraph, in a section berating the education school for its negative effect on teachers, begins with this sentence: “The blame for denigrating the teacher’s role rests not only with the school of education” (p. 22).

In the report’s closing paragraphs, the authors acknowledge that some readers may find the report’s tone a bit harsh: “We realize that the dose of reality we have administered here may be too strong for some tastes” (p. 97). However, the problem is that such a tone is not a useful way of drawing an education school audience to the aims of the report; instead it serves to

distance this population. While the first report appealed to the scientific-researcher side of education school faculty and the second appealed to the democratic values of this group, the authors of the third report seem intent on turning these people into an object requiring reconstruction rather than a subject being rallied to a cause. This kind of distancing and demonizing rhetoric is common in reform efforts, educational and other. However, it is usually reserved for those cases where the speaker has effectively written off the possibility of winning over the target group and has decided to go over its head, appealing to others in the effort to change the target group in spite of itself. This is the way, in contemporary politics, that we talk about reforming criminals, welfare recipients, and government bureaucrats. *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* talks about university education schools in the same tone.

Toward the end of the report, when the authors turn toward the kind of action plan required to carry out its aims, they sound increasingly pessimistic about the chances of gaining substantial support from among the existing education school faculty:

Too many spectators and not enough players. That sums up the situation facing those who would like to create Tomorrow's Schools of Education. As a practical matter, transformation demands a sufficient number of participants to put change in motion and to sustain it during the difficult periods when countervailing forces will try to bring it to a halt. The university faculty sorts itself into several factions when we examine reactions to the agenda we propose. Some people, usually fewer than a majority, are willing and prepared to pursue a new agenda. Another group has the capability, but insufficient backing—at least not until a different sort of reward structure lends them the support they need. Still another group contains people sympathetic to the goals of the TSE, but ill-equipped to help without pursuing professional development. And yet others, the diehards who hold the potential to undermine the entire effort, refuse to promote change in schools of education. Strategies must be fashioned to deal with each of these various groups. (p. 92)

The tone of this passage—replete with references to “difficult periods,” “countervailing forces,” “factions,” and “diehards”—suggests that the authors of the report see themselves occupying a bunker in enemy territory. The strategies that follow from this perception are necessarily ones that call for changing the education school from above or from the outside, with or without the cooperation of the current inhabitants.

One such strategy is to change hiring policies: “A TSE can increase the number of faculty members prepared and willing to work in the schools

simply by hiring new people who are so inclined” (p. 93). Another is to change the reward structure for faculty in order to provide incentives to promote work in PDSs and in teacher education. A third is to swamp the opposition within the faculty by drawing in schoolteachers from PDSs as clinical faculty in the education school. As a result, “each person who affiliates himself or herself with the university through the PDS represents a potential addition to the formation of a critical mass” (p. 94). A fourth is to mount a campaign of intensive rehabilitation for existing faculty who are unable or unwilling to go along with the new regime:

Professional development can be a vehicle for converting some of those already on the faculty—but unprepared for the new mission—to become productive contributors to the TSE. No less than in elementary and secondary education, professional development can be used to retrain those whose knowledge and skills are insufficient to meet new expectations. (p. 94)

Language

The language of the report reinforces the conclusion that *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* is seeking to appeal to audiences outside the education school in order to compel change within. Unlike the first two reports, which were written entirely by deans and faculty members in Holmes institutions, the wording of the third report was crafted to a considerable degree by a nonacademic. The Holmes Group contracted with Gene L. Maeroff, former education writer for the *New York Times* to carry out a revision of the full text of the report during the latter stages of the drafting process. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that this report does not read like a university product. The report draws on little research, it offers no citations, it appeals to no theoretical frameworks, and it makes no intellectual demands on the reader. The report is not speaking an academic language and is not drawing on academic resources; in short, it is not addressing an academic audience. This is not a complaint about clarity of prose or an appeal for more academic jargon. A reformist report should not read like an academic journal article if it is going to be at all effective. Instead I am arguing that the report's language suggests a deliberate effort to speak around rather than to the inhabitants of education schools, and to disregard the substantial intellectual contributions and thoughtful reflections that education schools have made concerning the very issues the report claims to address.

Consider the industrial metaphors that litter the text. The report opens this way:

America worries deeply about its elementary and secondary schools, a concern that ultimately must reflect on the institutions that prepare

teachers, administrators, counselors and others to work in those schools. Much like the nation's automobile industry, university-based education schools long took their markets for granted—in turn, giving insufficient attention to quality, costs, and innovation. (p. 5)

This production metaphor continues throughout the early pages of the report:

Like the auto industry before them, universities will have to restructure and make drastic adjustments. (p. 5)

If the education school continues to equip people for organizing and managing schools as the factories of old, plans for improvement will be dead on arrival. (p. 10)

Another industrial metaphor is even more pervasive. In the language of the report, tomorrow's schools of education should invest in "research and development"—a phrase that is repeated frequently—in the same way that corporations do. For example: "Universities will have to redirect their investment in education R&D to take account of long-term applied work on what needs to be done to improve the public schools" (p. 11).⁸ This is one reason that PDSs will be so essential, since they will be both laboratories for carrying out R&D and sites for testing the products that emerge from this work.

I suggest that the language in this report represents something more than an effort to smooth out academic rough edges or even an effort to speak over the heads of education school faculty. The reliance on industrial metaphors signals a deeper problem, and that is the Holmes Group's palpable unwillingness in the report to draw on the distinctive academic strengths and university-based capacities of its own membership. Consider the way it handles the issue of research, for example. The production of research is a central characteristic of Holmes members, which frequently define themselves in shorthand as research-oriented education schools. The report does in fact speak positively about the role of research in the mission of tomorrow's schools of education—but only if this research is removed from the university setting and carried out in a PDS, and even then only if this research is directed away from theory construction and reconceived as research and development of educational products. In this sense, then, *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* tone, language, and content—is profoundly anti-intellectual. This is a disturbing conclusion to reach about a report sponsored by the leading education schools in the country.

If the report is therefore not addressed to the university education schools but over their heads, then presumably its intended audience is the

wider public of policymakers, business leaders (like the automakers who are referred to within it), and citizens. Maybe the aim is to have governors or state education officials or corporation presidents or public action groups force the proposed changes on a resistant and/or incompetent group of “diehard” education professors.

But if this is the case, then there is another rhetorical problem that prevents the report from accomplishing such a goal. The problem is simply this: The report is issued by the same group that is its primary target—research-producing, doctorate-awarding, university-based education schools. Throughout *Tomorrow’s Schools of Education* the Holmes Group argues that the incompetent and misguided efforts of its own institutions are a primary source of the problems with today’s schools. To the extent that it is effective in making this case, it has thereby undercut its own credibility.

By attacking its own base in the third report, the Holmes Group adopts a position that starkly separates this report from its predecessors. Although all three reports construct caricatures of research-oriented education schools in order to make their point, the first two documents, for better or worse, nonetheless build their proposals on an authentic intellectual and social base within these institutions. *Tomorrow’s Teachers* erects its entire argument for reform on the scientific authority of research-based knowledge generated in university colleges of education, and it presents the education school professor-researcher as the natural agent of this reform effort. *Tomorrow’s Schools* shifts the image of the education school from authority figure to friendly collaborator; however, it does so without disavowing this university-grounded authority but instead chooses a stance of condescension—by which faculty members will stoop from this authoritative position in order to develop joint projects in schools while never abandoning their university roles. But the approach adopted in *Tomorrow’s Schools of Education* is quite different. Choosing neither to stand on nor stoop from the Holmes Group’s base in university education schools, the report launches an unrelenting attack on the power and credibility of the base itself. Even though the first two reports were misguided and misleading in their analysis and proposals, at least they acknowledged (directly or indirectly) the ground within the university from which they spoke and on which the Holmes Group stands. In striking contrast, the third report sets out to destroy the only authentic foundation for its own claims. Given the way it floats free of its intellectual and organizational anchor, there is little wonder why the report’s voice wavers and its audience is difficult to identify.

This accumulation of rhetorical problems leaves the report’s authors in a very awkward situation by the closing pages. They have succeeded in alienating their target audience and discrediting their own authority, which means that they now have very few rhetorical options remaining. In

the final section, they spell out a variety of mechanisms that can be used to motivate, reeducate, or contain the various factions in the education school faculty in order to accomplish the report's aims. But given the weakness of their argument at this late stage in the text and the diminishing size of the potential audience for this argument, the question remains: Who can be called on to help carry out this effort to reform education schools in the face of significant internal resistance to the proposed reforms?

Having in effect declared intellectual bankruptcy, the Holmes Group in the end throws its fate into the hands of an array of what it refers to as "external forces"—existing educational organizations that may have more power and credibility to carry out the reforms of its own institutions than does Holmes itself: "The Holmes Group must face outward, not inward" (p. 94). A veritable alphabet soup of acronyms, representing a remarkably heterogeneous mix of such organizations, litters the final pages of the report (pp. 94–97). The proposed "partners" in a coalition for creating tomorrow's schools of education include: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), American Association of School Administrators (AASA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Education Association (NEA), National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), National Staff Development Council (NSDC), Educational Testing Service (ETS), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)—all to help promote the TSE via the PDS. Perhaps with the aid of these powerful partners, Holmes will be able to accomplish some of the goals in this report—and gain help in the effort "to impose sanctions" (p. 97) on its own recalcitrant membership.

The 250 schools of education in the United States that now offer credentials for doctoral and masters study as well as initial education preparation should be accountable to the public and to the profession for the quality of their contributions to educational knowledge, to professional practice, and to education policy setting. We will ask our professional partners and allies to join us in framing new standards for the TSE. Those schools of education that cannot meet these new standards after a reasonable period of time should be closed. (p. 96)

Understanding the Rhetorical Strategy

Now that we have examined the rhetoric employed in the third Holmes Group report, we still must explain why this approach was adopted. On the face of it, the Holmes Group's choice of rhetoric in this report is difficult to understand, given the way in which this rhetoric contradicts the group's earlier arguments, attacks its institutional base, and undermines its collec-

tive credibility. One explanation for this choice is that it resulted from a split within the Holmes Group itself, between a leadership faction supporting the agenda spelled out in the report and a large group of member institutions leaning against this agenda. And in fact, when the group's leaders presented the report in a session at the American Educational Research Association (American Educational Research Association, 1995, p. 104), they confirmed the existence of such a split. Under these circumstances, it becomes more understandable why the report writers would seek to portray the Holmes Group's members as the problem and to adopt the stance of the critical outsider in proposing reform.

This kind of split within the organization also helps explain why there was such a dramatic change in the report's rhetoric between January 1995, when the Holmes Group deans approved a draft (1995a) at their annual meeting and released this draft to the press, and June, when the published report (1995b) appeared. Both versions depict the university education school in a negative light, but the earlier draft used a harshness of language and an unremitting style of attack that was noticeably moderated in the final report. Some particularly defamatory statements in the original draft were simply removed—for example, the following statement about the consequences of failing to follow the report's action agenda:

Otherwise, we will continue to be besieged by the money hungry degree mills that now flood the market with meaningless education credentials—the merely self interested institutions that avoid trustworthy evaluation and give our nation's children less than qualified educators. (1995a, final section, p. 9)

Other statements were toned down by adding qualifiers. For example, the original statement from the opening page was changed from “the Holmes Group . . . acknowledges by publishing this report that its member institutions ought to improve” (1995a, p. 1) to “the Holmes Group . . . acknowledges by publishing this report that its member institutions, in spite of hard-won improvements, need to make further strides” (1995b, p. 5).

One particularly striking difference between the two versions is in the way they speak about the role of graduate study and research in university education schools. The draft report that was approved by the deans in January speaks scornfully about the way faculty in these institutions waste time on academic abstractions like theory construction and self-indulgent distractions like doctoral programs when the real work is in teacher preparation and school-based R&D. A particularly strong statement along these lines comes at the start of the report's second section:

Teachers and young learners . . . are a sideshow to the performance in the main ring, where professors propound abstract theories and lavish

their main attention on graduate students seeking advanced credentials to escape from careers in the classroom. (1995a, pp. 12–13)

In the published version, this becomes:

Schoolteachers and young learners . . . are a sideshow to the performance in the center ring, where professors carry out their work insulated from the messiness and hurly-burly of elementary and secondary education. (1995b, p. 17)

Unlike its predecessor, the final report actually makes a few positive comments about the role of theory and graduate study within education schools, though always mandating that these pursuits be put in service to the needs of teaching practice and the PDS (1995b, pp. 21, 69). However, even more noteworthy is the way the two versions treat research. The original draft draws on no research in support of its diagnosis and prescription, which is particularly striking in a report sponsored by the nation's leading producers of educational research. But in the final report, new paragraphs are inserted at several points that make general reference to areas of research by education schools that have produced useful results (see, e.g., 1995b, pp. 10–11, 30–31). The report even concedes that “scholarly pursuits have brought distinction to the Holmes institutions in the past and will continue to do so in the future” (1995b, p. 60), while quickly going on to call for “a fresh emphasis . . . on forming a tighter bond between scholarship and practice” in the PDS.

What all this suggests is that, between the approval of the draft in January and the publication of the report in June, the Holmes Group leadership decided to respond to some of the criticisms from its membership about the report's hostile rhetoric toward university education schools (such as the criticisms voiced by panelists at the Holmes Group's AERA session in April). The harsh rhetoric of the original report (with its intemperate attacks on university education schools, education professors, theory-building, and graduate programs, and its casual discounting of educational research) made it all too clear that this report was targeting university education schools as the problem rather than appealing to them for help in working toward a solution. The changes made prior to publication helped to tone down some of the rhetoric and partially back away from the earlier frontal assault on all things that tie the education school to the academic life of the university, therefore making the report potentially more palatable to the Holmes membership. However, by reducing the rhetorical heat a few degrees and adding a few qualifiers to the report's denunciation of the role played by university education schools, the authors did not in fact alter the report's basic stance toward these institutions. The passages I have drawn from the final report throughout this article should make clear

that this report (like the original draft) continues to speak in the voice of the critical outsider (albeit at a somewhat lower pitch), railing against education schools and their faculty for succumbing to the blandishments of the university and turning their backs on the schools. The report's analysis, proposals, tone, language, and final forlorn appeal for help from "external forces" all serve to reinforce this conclusion. Given the stance of the outsider that was taken by the report's authors and sustained throughout the revision process, there was a ready-made rhetoric available for them to use in making their case, the rhetoric that has dominated American political discourse in the 1980s and 1990s—populism.

Populism, seen in its own terms, is the language of ordinary people who are excluded from the seats of institutional power. Presenting themselves as the voice of the people, populists rail against elites who have taken control of major institutions (government, business, education) and who have buffered these institutions from public pressures in order to bend them to the service of elite interests. From the populist perspective, university professors of education are a natural target. Appearing to stand aloof from the common herd, wrapped in arcane and exclusive expertise, and living a privileged existence within the comfortable confines of the ivory tower, these professors can be portrayed as just another self-indulgent elite. And this is just what the authors of *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* have done. Instead of drawing on the perspective of the informed insider to the business of education schools (as they did in the earlier reports), the Holmes Group leaders adopted the position of the uninformed outsider. Deliberately turning their backs on the accumulation of research and experience within education schools about the functions and workings of these institutions, they adopted the kind of simplistic image of education schools that might be held by the average layperson. From the latter perspective, it may well seem obvious that children and teachers should be the exclusive focus of these institutions, that theory-driven research and graduate study should be subordinated to school-improvement efforts and teacher preparation, that education schools should extricate themselves from the university and embed themselves in schools, and that these changes would produce substantial practical benefits for education without sacrificing any important functions.

The problem with these thoroughly populist judgments about the education school is that, as we will see in the next section, not one of them is true. For all of its ability to rally ordinary citizens against the partisans of privilege, populism brings with it severe limitations, all of which are apparent in the third Holmes Group report. By elevating common sense over expert knowledge, populism often promotes anti-intellectualism; by focusing on the power and privilege of elites rather than pursuing close analysis

of institutional process, it often breeds paranoia and sweeping conspiracy theories; and by disdaining the need for complex understandings of how things work, it often produces a demand for simple-minded solutions. By adopting a populist strategy in constructing this report, the Holmes Group's leaders were able to take the role of the outsider and advance their reform agenda by attacking their own membership. But the end result was to create a report—anti-intellectual, conspiratorial, and simplistic—that displays populist rhetoric at its worst. It reads as though the country's leading schools of education decided to abandon their own cumulative wisdom about their work and instead impose on themselves a set of reforms developed by the least informed layperson.

CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REPORT'S PROPOSALS

Thus far, I have argued the following: *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* presents proposals for reforming education schools that are flatly contradictory to the proposals made in the Holmes Group's initial report; the rhetoric it uses to support these proposals is equally contradictory to the rhetoric used in previous reports; the report is grounded in a populist caricature of a university-based education school that bears little resemblance to reality; and, having undermined its own credibility and alienated its primary constituency (since the report attacks the authority of the Holmes Group membership), the report ends up addressing an uncertain audience with an unreliable voice.

However, in spite of all this, the report may still exert a significant impact on the direction of education school reform. For one thing, it is likely to reach a much larger number of influential people than will the analyses of its critics. Based on what happened with its predecessors, the report itself will be distributed widely, and it will receive generally respectful press coverage. It was initially presented to the public in a press conference on January 27, 1995, and the accounts that appeared in the papers immediately following (e.g., Bradley, 1995) provided sketchy accounts of its proposals that sounded vaguely promising. Most people in education will hear about it secondhand, filtered through the media or presented by a Holmes Group supporter. Labeled as coming from the leading education schools, the report has automatic credibility until other evidence comes into view. Meanwhile, critics can be easily dismissed as "diehards" who are themselves a primary cause of the problems identified by the report, a strategy the report has already developed in its final section.

Even those readers who look at the report itself instead of relying on secondary accounts are likely to skim it quickly and find much there that is

superficially attractive. Its language (thanks in part to ghostwriter Gene Maeroff) is accessible, punchy, and quotable, free of academic jargon as well as intellectual complexities. Its self-critical stance may well strike the casual reader as a disarming display of candor, which serves to enhance its initial credibility. And its populist attack on the elitist university and the accompanying call for a return to the basics of children and schools may well appeal to the ordinary citizen considering the situation from a position outside the academy.

What this means is that a close and critical reading of the report is probably going to be a rarity. Therefore, for most practical purposes, the report is likely to be a reasonably popular and even influential document in spite of its logical and rhetorical faults. As a result, we need to move beyond the kind of textual analysis that I have provided up to this point and consider the consequences for education schools and education if the report's proposals were in fact put into place. For this purpose, I will focus on the two most central and basic proposals put forward by the report: concentrating the energy of the education school on preparing educators of children and youth, and reorganizing the effort of education schools around the site of the professional development school. In both cases, I argue that the effect of adopting the Holmes proposals would be to radically narrow the mission and practice of education schools in ways that would be highly counterproductive. Let us consider each of these in turn.⁹

EDUCATING EDUCATORS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The idea that a primary goal of an education school should be “to center our work on professional knowledge and skill for educators who serve children and youth” (p. 15) is not on the face of it troubling or even noteworthy. Of course education schools need to put the concerns of K–12 schooling—and particularly the concerns of teachers in these settings—at the heart of their mission. And, in fact, nearly all of them do. The only exceptions are a very small number of graduate schools of education in elite universities where research and professional education for nonteachers are held to be of primary importance. As noted earlier, the latter institutions serve as the straw men around which the entire analysis of the report is structured; they embody the particular caricature of the education school that serves the rhetorical needs of *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* much as strikingly different caricatures served the needs of the earlier reports.

However, the report is making a point that goes well beyond the platitude that education schools should focus on preparing educators for the nation's schools. Instead, it is pressing for a radical reconstruction of these

institutions around principles that would seriously undermine their ability to serve the needs of American education.

Colleges of Teacher Education

First, the report is proposing to narrow the mission of the TSE in order to transform the college of education into a college of teacher education. Although the report uses the term “educators” at times to refer to the professional group that will be served by tomorrow’s schools of education (as in the goal statement quoted above), it makes clear soon enough that the almost exclusive focus should in fact be on K–12 teachers. Recall this language, noted earlier:

The people most intimately responsible for children’s learning in elementary and secondary schools are not sufficiently valued by the education school. Schoolteachers and young learners, who should be the focus of the education school’s concern, are kept at arm’s length. They are a sideshow to the performance in the center ring, where professors carry out their work insulated from the messiness and hurly-burly of elementary and secondary education. (p. 17)

The message is that any instructional effort directed toward activities other than the preparation of teachers is a dangerous diversion from the main purpose of “tomorrow’s schools of education.” And such diversions are not just a waste of scarce resources. They actively promote a climate that devalues teaching and even (in the words of the earlier draft) encourages teachers to “escape from careers in the classroom” (1995a, p. 13) as soon as they can.

University-based education schools inadvertently contribute to the de-intellectualizing of teaching when they favor professional development programs that accord greater prominence to non-teaching roles or when they minimize the importance of deeper knowledge for those who remain in positions in the classroom. . . . Such differences in expectations imply that classroom teaching represents only a “starter position” and that serious educators study substantial knowledge only in connection with higher level, non-classroom assignments. The folly of this reasoning sustains a dangerous hierarchy in public education and suggests that those at the bottom—the classroom teachers—should not trouble themselves with the deeper theories of teaching and learning, matters best left to curriculum coordinators, other specialists, and administrators. (p. 21)

However, the narrow focus on teachers and teacher education proposed by the report as a remedy to these purported diversions will turn tomor-

row's schools of education into places that significantly play down involvement in any other forms of professional education. In addition to the preparation of teachers, education schools currently offer programs for the preparation of professionals to assume a wide array of other significant educational roles: principals, superintendents, curriculum coordinators, counselors, psychologists, teacher educators, higher education administrators, educational policy analysts, and a wide variety of educational researchers.

To consider these educational professionals marginal participants in American education is to demonstrate a profound misunderstanding of the nature of this institution. The effectiveness of education is not shaped entirely by the interaction between teachers and students behind the classroom door. Instead it depends on the contributions from a large number of people in and around schools who must be well informed and highly skilled if teaching and learning are going to succeed. The suggestion that these other professional education programs exist only to indulge professors or to divert teachers from their classroom duties is insulting to both parties in this educational exchange. If teachers do move on to other educational roles after their graduate work, they are continuing to serve education in alternative ways—effectively combining their clinical expertise acquired in the classroom with their professional education acquired in the education school. It would seem that both teachers and students benefit from this process, so why demean this work as marginal or escapist? And why try to eliminate these programs?

Colleges for Children

A second negative outcome of the report's overemphasis on "educators of children and youth" is the way this narrowing of the mission of tomorrow's schools of education bars education schools from pursuing a much-needed role in promoting the lifelong learning of adults. This emphasis poses a problem on two levels. For one thing, the primary consumers of what these education schools have to offer—that is, the students who enroll in its programs—are in fact not children and youth but grown-ups. The student body ranges in age from eighteen to sixty. This suggests strongly that education schools should devote a large portion of their time and intellectual resources to the task of acquiring an understanding of how adults learn and developing skill in teaching adults effectively. Yet the report instead demands that the reconstructed education school focus on the following elements, as spelled out in a section titled "The Core of Learning: What All Educators Must Know":

Human Development and Young People's Learning
Subject Matter, Technology and Pedagogy for Young People's Learning

Instructional Management for Young People's Learning
Inquiry, Reflection, and R&D in the Interest of Young People's Learning
Collaboration in Support of Young People's Learning. (pp. 67–78)

This relentless focus on “young people’s learning” will not serve education schools well in the necessary and demanding task of meeting the needs of the adults who populate their own classrooms.

Another related problem that arises from the proposed diversion of effort away from adult education is that this is the opposite of the direction in which everyone says education should move at this point in history. As economists, labor-market specialists, employers, policymakers, and educational leaders are constantly reminding us, the nature of work has changed at the end of the twentieth century and education must adapt itself to this change. Technological innovation and economic transformation have made it increasingly unlikely that a person will be able to go to school and then pursue a lifelong career based on that schooling. Instead, the growing expectation is that individuals will have to change careers several times during their lifetime. Therefore employees will require recurring rounds of reeducation in order to adapt to these career changes and will also require continuing education to keep abreast of developments within a particular line of work. Education schools must adapt to this reconstruction of the aims of education by shifting their emphasis away from the old focus on one-shot preservice professional education and toward the development of ongoing programs of in-service professional development and reorientation—without forgetting about the need to prepare teachers who can carry out such instruction for people across their full careers. As a result, education schools should devote less time to issues surrounding the teaching and learning of children and more to issues arising from the lifelong education of adults.

ORGANIZING WORK AROUND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS

At the same time that *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* demands that education schools narrow themselves programmatically, by focusing on teacher preparation and the educational needs of children, it also demands that they narrow themselves organizationally, by concentrating their work within professional development schools. This change would be counterproductive in two different ways: It would cost much more than education schools could be expected to afford, both in terms of money and human resources; and it would bar education schools from carrying out some of the most valuable portions of their current research agenda.

A Costly Involvement

As defined by the Holmes Group, a professional development school is a complex undertaking that calls for enormous investments of time and money and a commitment to stay for the long haul. It cannot be erected quickly or according to a simple algorithm, and it is never really finished, since the process of professional development must be sustained throughout the length of a professional career or an organizational history.

The PDS is no McDonald's franchise to be set in place ready to operate simply by acquiring the proper equipment and following the rules in a manual. Sweat and tears make the PDS. It is as much a process as a place and its dynamism means that the PDS evolves constantly. (p. 79)

Consider all the variety and complexity of goals that the education school is being asked to accomplish through its work in the PDS: restructure professional roles and relationships within a school; enhance the professional autonomy and expertise of teachers; reorganize the decision-making process within a school and a school system; develop model curricula for particular subjects and grade levels; develop model pedagogical approaches; provide a site for extensive research about teaching, learning, and school reform; provide opportunities for preservice teachers to observe and teach in sites of exemplary educational practice; and do all this in an intensive collaboration between the faculty from an education school and the staff in a K-12 school. As a result of these expectations, a PDS is not something to be taken on lightly. The report explicitly warns against any effort by an education school to shortcut the process by attempting to turn out "cheap copies."

The label "PDS" has been slapped on to all kinds of schools that do not begin to approach what we had in mind at the beginning. The most dangerous result of this wave of imitation is that the copies threaten to devalue and drive-out the real currency. When nothing more than a school to which students are sent for their practice teaching automatically carries the designation PDS, the deepest and most radical intentions of this innovation fade away. As a matter of fact, such deceptions, intentional or inadvertent, are inimical to the very essence of the PDS, which means to stress the professional integrity of the teaching profession. (p. 79)

Given the rigorous demands that PDS involvement places on an education school, it is difficult to imagine how such a school could manage to support more than a few such involvements. The monetary cost alone is substantial. There must be money to pay for the salaries of university faculty who devote load time to PDS work, for the substitutes who replace

classroom teachers so they can collaboratively develop curriculum and carry out research, for the technological support called for in innovative pedagogies, for graduate assistants, for travel costs, and so on. Even more substantial is the commitment of time and energy on the part of education school faculty members. Professors who are spending substantial amounts of time in the PDS are being drawn away from their normal teaching, research, and service duties at the university. This puts the education school in a bind, since it must continue to carry out its regular responsibilities to its own students and as a member of the university community while trying simultaneously to sustain its commitment to the PDS.

The answer to this dilemma is, I think, obvious: Education schools simply cannot afford to support more than a very small number of PDSs, at least not ones that meet the Holmes Group's exacting standards. ("Without the imposition of standards, we worry about attempts to pass off imitations of the PDS as the real thing" [p. 85].) Even the largest and most resource-rich education schools will probably only be able to keep at most a half dozen or so full-fledged PDSs operating at any one time. Yet the report calls on tomorrow's schools of education to move well beyond this stage. Recall this admonition, noted earlier:

The PDS is not, we repeat, IS NOT, just another project for the education school. It must be woven into the very fabric of the TSE, its many strands combining with those of the institution's other programs. Beginning small, the TSE must plan to increase eventually the number of such sites so that learning experiences for most TSE students can occur at a PDS. (p. 86, emphasis in original)

This is a large number of PDSs indeed, far larger than any education school could be sensibly asked to sustain. The only way one could even approach such a number would be to sacrifice nearly everything else in the education school's agenda in order to support the PDS effort. And this is exactly what the report calls on these institutions to do. ("The education school may, in fact, have to trim the breadth of other outside involvements" [p. 86].) They are supposed to cut back on graduate programs, on programs for nonteaching professionals, on university-related functions in general, and invest all of their resources in teacher education and professional development schools. Everything else is portrayed as a diversion from the main task, a diffusion of focus—all brought about by the illusory quest for acceptance within the university, when education schools should in fact be throwing in their lot with teachers and schools.

A Narrow Vision of Research

The narrowness of the report's vision of tomorrow's schools of education is

particularly apparent in the way it conceptualizes the research that will be carried out in the new education schools. Primarily focused on and carried out within the PDS, this research will be defined by a “tighter bond between scholarship and practice,” with significant “implications for the composition of the university faculty and for faculty work commitments” (p. 60).

Tomorrow’s School of Education unabashedly seeks to employ more faculty members who want to use their research abilities to pursue interests in the settings provided by elementary and secondary schools, grounding their scholarship in practice.

If one were to observe such scholars’ workdays or work weeks they might look something like this: the professors divide their professional time mainly between two locales, the TSE and PDS, shuttling regularly between campus and public school. Sometimes they teach classes on campus, as professors have always done, and other times they provide professional development for practicing educators at the PDS itself through study groups and other means. Sometimes they co-teach children in the public school; other times they confer with school teams as part of their shared responsibility for TSE interns. They spend some of their time at the PDS testing hypotheses through action- and intervention-oriented research projects, carrying out this work alone at times and sometimes collaborating with school faculty members. When the findings are published, the name may reflect a sole investigator or the names of practitioners in the PDS and maybe even education students who are listed as co-authors in recognition of their scholarly contributions to the publication. (pp. 60–61)

This is an interesting model for how some education professors might define their scholarly role around their work in PDSs, and a number of them are already doing so. Research that is practice-centered, school-based, and collaborative is becoming more prominent in colleges of education, and this is clearly a positive development, which enriches the mix of research forms and findings emerging from these colleges. However, the report is not seeking to add zest from PDSs to the stew of education school research. Instead it is proposing a whole new recipe, which calls for the PDS to supply the main ingredients and also to serve as the stew pot. Just as the report defines teacher education as the only acceptable focus for education school programs, it defines the PDS as the only acceptable subject and site for education school research. This is presented not as optional but as mandatory. Of course, when education schools start to pursue this course, “researchers may have to submit to some restraints so that they focus more of their investigations through the PDS prism” (p. 86).

Consider the consequences for research if education schools were to

adopt this proposal. Even if one were willing to accept the constraint that research should be focused on practices within schools, this still raises the question about why such research should target primarily professional development schools. By examining what is going on in these schools, there is much to be learned about such issues as school restructuring, professional development, and collaborative curriculum innovation. But research in such sites will tell us little about regular schools, the kind that 99 percent of the students and teachers in the country inhabit. Laboratory schools such as PDSs have played an important role in educational research over the years, but it seems to me that colleges of education have a responsibility to devote the bulk of their time to developing clear understandings of how schools work and how teaching and learning take place in the natural settings of ordinary schools. Also, it is important to have investigations into education reform efforts in which the investigator is not also the reformer, in order to develop a truly independent perspective on the reform process. How will education schools be able to provide balanced analyses of education reforms such as PDS in which they have such an overwhelming institutional investment?

In addition, a great deal of educational research should and does focus on a wide array of forces affecting schools that arise outside the bounds of the schools themselves. The PDS model suggests that schools are masters of their own educational fates in a way that is belied by the experience of practitioners within these organizations, who find themselves constantly reacting to external factors in the course of trying to determine internal practices. As a result, we must have education schools conduct extensive research on the ways in which these factors impinge on schools and classrooms. Among other things, this means exploring such issues as the organization of school systems, the politics of educational reform, the psychology of learning, the philosophical and ideological roots of educational purposes, and the historical development of educational forms and practices. These explorations help establish an understanding of the context within which practitioners must operate. Without this kind of knowledge, it is difficult for individuals (whether inside or outside the school) to make educational choices in an effective, informed, and responsible manner.

This raises one final negative effect that this report's proposals would have on educational research and on education itself. By overemphasizing PDSs, the report privileges practice over theory. On the surface, the authors seem ambivalent about the role of theory in tomorrow's school of education. In one passage, quoted earlier, they berate current education schools for denying teachers access to "deeper theories of teaching and learning," charging that these schools have decided that such "matters [are] best left to curriculum coordinators, other specialists, and adminis-

trators” (p. 21). Yet in another passage, the authors argue that the defining element of the TSE’s research effort in the PDS is the focus on cases rather than the development of theory: “PDS inquiry devotes itself to understanding a particular case, while traditional university-based research seeks more universal explanations and contributions to general theory” (p. 82).¹⁰ In the first case, theory is seen to be a good thing, a source of power, while in the second it is a bad thing, an example of the way the university diverts education schools away from useful work in schools. As the rest of the report makes clear, the defining characteristic of good theory is its closeness to practice, and a key purpose of the effort to redesign the education school around the PDS is to compel researchers to concentrate on such matters.

We have already seen how the report calls for PDSs to produce a “tighter bond between scholarship and practice” out of which will come research defined as “testing hypotheses through action- and intervention-oriented research projects” (p. 60). Later the report describes this kind of inquiry as “systematic research and development aimed at generating and applying new knowledge by members of both the school and university faculty associated with the PDS. Practice becomes the locus of inquiry” (p. 82).

This is an extraordinarily narrow vision of the role of research. Not only does it confine such research within the bounds of a single subject and site; it also defines the character of this research in strikingly anti-intellectual terms. In the language of the report, scholarly research becomes “research and development,” a phrase that appears regularly throughout the text. (Yet another example: A “commitment” to the TSE model “would demand closer attention to lodging research and development in real classrooms” [p. 27].) “R&D” is an industrial term that describes the work of designing new products for the market, and this is apparently the role that the Holmes Group wants researchers to assume in the kind of education school it is proposing. The PDS can serve as a laboratory, observation site, test track, and focus group all tied together in one neat package, which will allow new educational products to roll off the line with a speed and efficiency never deemed possible in the old education school.

According to the report, research efforts that do not fit within this conception should be dismissed as mere dabbling with abstract theories. Missing from the report is any sense that research is a form of intellectual work, that this work at its best leads to the construction of theory, and that this theory-construction can be very useful to education, well beyond the benefits that derive from whatever educational products might spin off from it. A long line of writers in education, among whom John Dewey is the most prominent, have argued consistently that nothing is more practical than a good theory. Theories are the way we try to make sense of what is going on

in and around schools. For practitioners and academics alike, theory helps provide a broader context for understanding what one is currently experiencing or observing in education, a universalistic mirror for reflecting on the particulars of educational practice in a given setting, a framework within which to fit pieces of the larger educational puzzle. In the absence of this kind of theoretical perspective, practitioners can all too easily become trapped within the framework of existing practices, leaving them and their students at the mercy of the status quo in schools. As a result, limiting the development of theory serves to promote the reproduction of educational practices and make educational reform more difficult to carry out. Also, theory construction is something that education schools, given their location within the intellectual orbit of the university, can do well. They have the intellectual resources, the theoretical training, and the professional incentive to pursue the work of educational theory-building in a competent and productive way.

Why, then, do the authors of *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* cast aspersions on theory-building and redefine research as research and development in a PDS setting? It all comes back to the core argument in the report: Research-oriented, university-based, doctorate-granting education schools are at the root of the problem with American teachers and schools. These are the institutions that do most of the research, provide most of the intellectual leadership, and work most prominently in the construction of theory for American education. If they are the problem, then the answer must be to turn away from everything they stand for and construct a new education school from the ground up. For such an education school, this means playing down graduate programs and concentrating primarily on teacher education; backing away from the university and reorganizing around professional development schools; and transforming research from the practical intellectual work of theory-building to the instrumentalist industrial work of product development under the banner of R&D. In short, the report's anti-intellectualism runs deeper than the veneer of populist rhetoric and industrial metaphors; it lies at the heart of the argument.

CONCLUSION

In drawing this discussion to a close, I would like to place my criticisms of *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* in perspective by pointing out one issue about which I am in fundamental agreement with the report's authors. I thoroughly agree that faculty members at schools of education should not "rush to emulate colleagues in the arts and sciences" or "lose sight of their responsibilities and opportunities as part of a professional school" (p. 18).

In my view, a school of education should be at its core a true *professional school*, and as such it should not seek to model itself after disciplinary departments.

As a professional school, a college of education should concentrate its efforts around two core missions that are closely connected. First, it should focus *intellectually* on a single institutional area, education. This is quite different from the intellectual focus of a sociology or a mathematics department, where the organizing principle is a particular disciplinary perspective that can be applied to a wide range of substantive areas. By contrast, as a professional school, a college of education draws on a wide range of disciplinary perspectives in order to understand the one substantive area that constitutes its social mandate. And, also as a professional school, a college of education should focus its intellectual work on the interaction between theory and practice within education. That is, it should not cut itself off from the world of educational practice that constitutes its operational ground and its zone of expertise. But at the same time, it should not so immerse itself in the world of practice that it loses sight of its responsibility to pursue a theoretical understanding of this world from an appropriate intellectual distance.

Second, an education school should focus *instructionally* on the preparation of professionals who will play important roles within the institutional area that is its responsibility. Again, this is quite different from the instructional mission of a disciplinary department, which is to provide students with access to a particular body of knowledge and skill that they will apply (if at all) in a wide variety of social roles. By contrast, an education school has to be concerned about teaching people to meet particular education-centered role demands and providing students with access to the full range of knowledge and skill required by those roles. And in order to carry out this instructional role effectively, a college of education, as a professional school, must be able to develop and draw on educational theory that is informed by practice in order to promote within professional educators notions of educational practice that are informed by theory.

At the most general level, the authors of *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* would go along with this characterization of the education school's mission. The critical differences arise in the way they operationalize each component of this mission. In my view, as I have argued in this article, the central problem with the latest Holmes Group report is the narrowness of its vision in each case and the counterproductive consequences that would follow from adopting this vision. The report proposes that the intellectual mission of education schools should be reduced to the task of carrying out research and development within professional development schools. But I argue that the needs within American education call on education schools

to think big about the roots and nature of educational problems and to pursue a wide range of scholarly inquiries in order to develop theories for understanding these problems. Without this kind of intellectual groundwork, existing practices within schools will be difficult to change. In the name of restoring the balance between theory and practice, the report's proposed reforms in fact would radically shift the work of education schools away from theory and toward an intellectually diminished notion of practice, closer to the raw instrumentalism of industrial product development than to a form of reflective practice or theory-empowered problem solving.

Similarly, the report proposes that the instructional mission of education schools should be trimmed back in order to focus attention heavily on the preservice preparation of teachers. But I argue that education is a complex undertaking, which depends heavily on a well-prepared cohort of teachers but which also requires a wide range of other skilled professionals—principals, superintendents, curriculum developers, counselors, psychologists, coaches, policy analysts, education school faculty members, researchers, and so on—in order to make it work effectively. And the preparation of these professionals is not going to be well served by an instructional program that places a narrow focus on the production of classroom teachers at the expense of the development of the broad range of theoretical and practical capacities required in this society in order to understand the educational system and make it work.

Occasionally mollifying language appears in the final report (notably missing in the earlier version approved by the deans), which suggests some flexibility in the way its mandates should be taken,¹¹ but the overwhelming message that emerges from this report is that there is only one workable vision for reform—the TSE—and that the alternative is disaster. Note these threatening closing comments, presented under the forbidding heading “The Final Analysis”:

We realize that the dose of reality we have administered here may be too strong for some tastes. But universities and their schools of education that fail to assess the current public mood or choose to ignore significant changes in the educational environment around them, do so at some risk. *The collapse of public education will be at hand in the absence of action to address the failings of educators—both those in schools of education and those in precollegiate education.* (p. 197, emphasis added)

The narrowness of the vision put forward in this report is particularly troubling because of the heterogeneity of the institutions that are supposed to make it their own. The model for the future laid out in the report is not designed to be adaptable to the varying circumstances of these insti-

tutions but is presented as “one size fits all.” And, whether or not the fit is good, the report declares that education schools that fail to go along with its prescriptions should “surrender their franchise.” In fact, however, American schools of education are markedly different from each other, and the report’s prescriptions would benefit only a tiny fraction of these, while the remainder would suffer substantial adverse reactions.

Consider three broad categories of education schools in American universities. First, there are the graduate schools of education at elite universities. Harry Judge, who did a study of these institutions in the early 1980s, defines them as schools “concentrating upon the award of higher degrees in education. For the most part, they no longer see themselves as deeply concerned with the training of teachers” (1982, p. 1). These are the places that constitute the scapegoat of the third Holmes Group report. As charged in the report, these schools do indeed focus on research and doctoral programs at the expense of teacher education, constituting themselves more as graduate programs for the study of education than as professional schools. For such institutions, it may well be beneficial to move several steps in the direction indicated by the report: to focus more on professional preparation and work more closely with schools. The problem, however, is that the number of these graduate schools is quite small, while the reforms developed in their name are prescribed for the full array of education schools. Judge estimates that there are “no more than a score of graduate schools of education” (p. 5). By my own count, there are fewer than half that number that come close to fitting the Holmes Group’s sharply defined caricature of the remote education school, which turns its back on the problems of practice and the preparation of practitioners.

Second, at the opposite end of the scale are the schools of education often located within former normal schools. These, not the elite graduate schools, represent the central tendency in American education schools, accounting for perhaps 650 out of the approximately 750 education schools in the United States.¹² They are associated with less prestigious universities than are the education schools in the other two categories. Many of these host institutions were originally normal schools or teachers colleges and then gradually evolved into general-purpose universities. The education schools in this category concentrate primarily on the preparation of teachers, turning out the large majority of teacher candidates produced in the country every year. Graduate programs offer mostly master’s degrees with perhaps a small number of doctorates; and because of their heavy instructional commitments, the faculty are able to produce only a modest amount of educational research. The third Holmes report would push these education schools in effect to do more of the same. They already concentrate on teacher education and on developing close rela-

tionships with schools at the expense of research and graduate programs. However, contrary to the prescription in the report, these institutions (and their students and the schools in their communities) would probably benefit from concentrating less on the mass production of teachers so they could instead spend more time on scholarly reflection, theory construction, and graduate education.

Third, in between these two groups are the schools of education that, potentially at least, demonstrate a more balanced approach to their mission—places that carry out a substantial amount of research and award a sizable number of doctorates but that also devote a major effort to the preparation of teachers and other educational professionals. They are well positioned to carry out effectively both the intellectual and the instructional components of the professional-school mission and to strike an appropriate balance between theory and practice, though the extent to which they currently do so varies considerably. Yet the institutions in this group (perhaps 100 in number,¹³ corresponding roughly to the Holmes Group's own initial membership) would be compelled under the terms of *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* to narrow the focus and disrupt the balance of their work. They would be required to pull back from much of their graduate instruction in order to concentrate on teacher education and to pull back from a wide-ranging research agenda to pursue research in PDSs. When one considers the Holmes Group reforms in light of the particular situations and needs of this and the other categories of education schools in the United States, it becomes clear that the institutions that might benefit from these reforms are few indeed and the ones that might be harmed are many.

Both intellectually and instructionally, the report argues for a radically restricted definition of what an education school should be and do. For the large majority of education schools in the United States, to follow this prescription would be a serious mistake. These schools are complex institutions serving a wide variety of functions for American education, and as a result they need different kinds of medicine than they will find in *Tomorrow's Schools of Education*. Ironically, recent challenges to American education have made the work of education schools even more complex, and yet in the face of this complexity the Holmes Group report proposes simplistic and inflexible solutions: Turn schools of education into schools of teacher education, and change broad-based educational research into school-based R&D. It does not require a great deal of thought to come to the conclusion that neither of these outcomes is desirable.

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version of this paper was presented at the PACT conference (*Professional Actions and Cultures of Teaching*) in London, April 2–4, 1995. I am grateful to Aaron Pallas for a series of discussions about *Tomorrow's Schools of Education*, which had a major effect on my thinking in this paper. I am also grateful to Deborah Ball and Susan Melnick for their helpful comments on a preliminary sketch of the arguments developed here.

Notes

1 Throughout this article I will rely primarily on the terms “schools of education” or “education schools” to refer to institutions that in practice go by a variety of names—schools, colleges, or departments of education (identified by the acronym “SCDEs” by Goodlad [1990])—depending on organizational location and local naming conventions. Under the circumstances, it seems useful to adopt “schools of education” or “education schools” as a generic naming device. This is the terminology used in *Tomorrow's Schools of Education* and it is certainly more graceful than repeated reference to “SCDEs.”

2 For books alone, see, for example: Beyer, Feinberg, Pagano, & Whitson (1989); Clifford & Guthrie (1988); Gideonse (1992); Ginsburg (1988); Goodlad (1990, 1994); Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik (1990); Herbst (1989); Judge, Lemosse, Paine, & Sedlak (1994); Liston & Zeichner (1991); Popkewitz (1987, 1991); Profriedt (1994); Sarason (1993); Shimahara & Holowinsky (1995); Tyson (1994); Wisniewski & Ducharme (1989).

3 For example, see: Cherryholmes (1987); Johnson (1987); Labaree (1992a, 1992b, 1995a); Liston & Zeichner (1991); Popkewitz (1987, 1991); Profriedt (1994).

4 Citations showing only a page number refer to the published report (Holmes Group, 1995b).

5 William Johnson portrays the report's strong grounding in the university ethos this way: “The language of the Holmes Group report suggests that if we are to save education from its practitioners, public school teachers, then the schools will have to adopt the university perspective delivered by ‘emissaries from higher education’ ” (Johnson, 1987, p. 227).

6 For discussion of issues about the differences between academic and practitioner knowledge and the uses and limitations of university research in school practice, see the following examples: Becher (1989), Floden & Clark (1988), Goodson & Mangano (1991), Labaree (1995b), Tom (1984), Tom & Valli (1990), Welker (1992).

7 Clifford and Guthrie (1988) employ a similar straw man in their book *Ed School*. Empirically, they are drawing on the history of the Berkeley education school and a few elite graduate schools of education of the same order; but theoretically they are generalizing to the whole population of education schools, even though the latter are dominated by former normal schools, which play a very different role from the Berkeleys in the field. See the conclusion of this article for further discussion of the various types of education schools and the dangers that follow from viewing all of them in light of this straw man.

8 For other examples of the way the report uses R&D metaphor, see Holmes Group (1995b), pp. 8, 9, 13, 27, 82.

9 In the following analysis of the implications of the report's proposals, I am drawing heavily on conversations with Aaron Pallas and on a paper we wrote (Labaree & Pallas, 1995). It is difficult for me at this point to determine which ideas here are mine and which are his.

10 The report continues the argument about case vs. theory in a manner that demonstrates considerable confusion about both:

This emphasis on the close study of cases in context has precedent. Precursors include, for example, Piaget's pioneering investigations of the young pupil's

thinking about basic school subjects, studies in which Piaget rejected the traditional methods of basic science in favor of extensive interviews with children. (p. 82)

Piaget is hardly an example of the case-study method. In fact, he could easily serve as the poster-boy for academic proponents of general-theory construction. (I am grateful to Aaron Pallas for pointing out this anomaly to me.)

11 One such comment is the following:

By highlighting these emerging lines of educational research we do not seek to denigrate the other forms of educational inquiry in and outside PDSs that are also valuable. We are not trying to be exclusionary, but only to note emerging work that holds promise for a field that has historically slighted improvement-oriented work, teacher perspectives, and long-term study of youngsters' learning in the schools. (p. 21)

This generously inclusionary statement, which was conspicuously absent from the earlier version, is quite reasonable, but it is also quite out of place in the thoroughly exclusionary rhetorical context of this report.

12 In estimating these numbers, I am defining an education school as any institution that grants graduate degrees in education. This helps eliminate programs in four-year colleges that provide for teacher education but none of the other activities or programs normally associated with a multifunctional education school. In 1988–1989, there were 1,184 institutions of higher education offering education degrees; of these, 752 offered at least a master's degree in education. By subtracting out approximately 100 institutions that devote substantial effort to educational research and doctoral programs in education (category three), I come up with the number 650 in this category (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1992, table 243).

13 The report identifies 250 research-producing and doctorate-awarding education schools (pp. 2, 96), but only a fraction of these, perhaps 100 or so, produce the lion's share of research publications and doctoral degrees.

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