

TEACHER EDUCATION
IN INDUSTRIALIZED
NATIONS

*Issues in Changing
Social Contexts*

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The Lowly Status of Teacher Education in the United States: The Impact of Markets and the Implications for Reform

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Calls to reform teacher education are once again arising as part of a more general discussion of ways to improve public schooling in the United States.¹ This is not a new phenomenon but a frequent occurrence in the history of American education. In the past few years, however, there has been a remarkable outpouring of books and articles that criticize teacher education and present plans for reforming it.² In order to evaluate the kinds of diagnoses rendered and prescriptions offered by these critics, it is important to examine the history of American teacher education and the way in which this history has led to the ailments for which reformers now seek a cure. But since there are already a number of good general accounts of this history,³ my aim in this chapter is to examine the historical roots of one particular problem that has plagued American teacher education over the years—its lowly status.

Over the years, teacher education has received little respect in American educational and cultural life. University professors, educational leaders, teachers, and even teacher educators themselves have all heaped scorn on its shoulders. The titles of a few of the volumes in this ongoing literature of status assassination capture the tone of disdain with which the field has been treated; for example, Arthur Bestor's book *Educational*

Wastelands (1953), James Koerner's *The Miseducation of America's Teachers* (1963), and Rita Kramer's *Ed School Follies* (1991).

In this chapter, I argue that the issue of "status" is not epiphenomenal but central to the kinds of problems that teacher education presents to potential reformers in the 1990s. That is, despite what some critics have suggested, the lowly status of American teacher education is not a simple reflection of the purportedly low quality of professional preparation that it offers. Rather than being a natural consequence of failure, I argue, this status is a primary cause of the kinds of failure that teacher education has experienced over the years. In particular, I will explore the way in which the status of teacher education has been shaped by the workings of the *market*.⁴ It is my contention that market forces have treated teacher education quite badly over the past 150 years, assigning it to a position of meager prestige and influence and forcing it to adopt practices that have frequently proved educationally counterproductive. In short, market pressures have in large part led to the low status of teacher education and have contributed significantly to its inability to carry out its functions effectively.

By choosing to focus on the *status* of teacher education rather than its social *role*, I bypass a wide range of important issues relevant to those who would like to reform this institution. So let me explain what will be in the foreground and what will be in the background of the discussion that follows, and why I feel these choices of emphasis are justified. For example, a status perspective naturally leads the researcher to concentrate on the position that teacher education occupies in the social and educational hierarchy more than on the quality of its performance in carrying out professional education, to focus on matters of form more than content. This means that I say little about the content of the curriculum in teacher preparation programs and a great deal about the prestige of these programs and the way in which they became placed within the stratified array of educational options. To take this approach is not to deny the significance of the curriculum but to assert that curriculum issues have often been shaped significantly by the status concerns of the various parties involved in teacher education.

In addition, a status perspective tends to treat teacher education as a marketable commodity, whose function is to meet the status needs of the educational consumers who acquire it, rather than as a process of socialization, whose function is to transmit useful skills to prospective teachers. From this angle, then, the key measure of the worth of teacher education is its exchange value, which is determined by factors of supply and demand in the market for educational credentials. This exchange value may fluctuate according to market conditions and quite independently of the program's use value, which is a measure of the usable practical knowledge acquired there and applicable to the work of teaching. Again, the point here is not that the degree of useful knowledge acquired in a teacher education program is irrelevant to the work of teaching but that it may well be irrelevant to the social position occupied by teachers (or teacher educators). In fact, I suggest that the focus within American teacher education on practical knowledge over high-status liberal learning has had a negative effect on the exchange value of the credentials of its graduates. Further, I argue that concerns about exchange value have exerted a powerful effect in transforming the formal setting within which teacher education takes place (from the normal school to the university) and also in diluting the professional content of its curriculum.

One further caveat is in order. Not only am I stressing status over role in my analysis of teacher education, but I am also focusing primarily on those aspects of this status that have been most affected by market pressures. As a result, I largely bypass gender and class, both of which have exerted enormous downward pressure on the status of these programs. In the nineteenth century, American teaching became quickly transformed into a female occupation, which meant that teacher education came to occupy a subordinate status in relation to those programs that were preparing people for the high professions of medicine and law, both of which remained male domains. During the same period, teacher education came to attract a large number of working-class and lower-middle-class students, who saw it as a way to acquire a respectable middle-class job. In conjunction with the process of feminization, the influx of less-genteel students into teaching served to further

stigmatize teacher education in relation to those more elevated programs of study (both liberal and professional) pursued by students from the more privileged classes.

Given the power of class and gender in shaping the status of teacher education, why focus on the market factor? Two reasons. First, in recent years a sizeable amount of scholarly attention has been directed toward exploring the impact of class and gender on teacher education. For example, Ginsburg (1988), Popkewitz (1987), Lanier and Little (1986), and Clifford and Guthrie (1988) all provide interesting analyses of this particular aspect of the status of the field. But there has been less work focused on the impact of markets on education school status. Warren (1985) and Urban (1990) both touch suggestively on one part of the issue, dealing with the recurring scarcity of teachers, but do not have the space to develop this point. Only Herbst (1989a) has developed an extended analysis of the market pressure that educational consumers exerted on normal schools and the impact that this pressure had on the evolution of these schools into general-purpose colleges.⁵ This is a theme, in short, that needs further development.

Second, by examining the market factor more closely, we can gain insight into some of the characteristics that distinguish American teacher education from similar programs in other countries. Of the nations in the world with the highest degree of economic development, the United States is the most market oriented and has been since the mid-nineteenth century. Nowhere else has the doctrine of *laissez-faire* attained such earnest and long-lasting acceptance. No other industrial power has so persistently protected private enterprise from public interference, so effectively fragmented the state and limited its power, and so prominently elevated the idea of market competition to a central ideological principle. One particularly telling case in point is the state of American health care. The U.S. stands as the only advanced industrial society without a national health plan, and when it begins belatedly to consider the construction of such a plan in the 1990s, it seems intent on doing so in a manner that will preserve the dominant role of private insurance companies in a system organized around "managed competition."

In such a market-centered society, it is not surprising that education too finds itself subject to a wide range of persistent market pressures. Consider the example of the high school. As I have argued elsewhere (Labaree, 1988), the high school early on emerged as a valued commodity that gave some consumers the means to enhance or reinforce their social position. As a result of this market pressure, high schools became stratified—across programs within individual schools and across different schools within a community—according to the exchange value of the credentials offered by each program or school. Trow (1988) and others (e.g., Collins, 1979) argue that higher education in the U.S. has been particularly sensitive to market forces, especially given the glut of colleges and universities, the lack of centralized state control over this sector, and the resulting dependency of these institutions on the consumer preferences of students.

Given the market-saturated environment in which it arose, American teacher education throughout its history has been subjected to a degree of market pressure well beyond that experienced by teacher education in other societies. As a result, focusing on market effects may well inform our understanding of the special character of teacher education in the U.S. from a comparative perspective.

The plan for the remainder of the chapter is this: In the next section, I explore several examples of the ways in which observers have characterized the status of American teacher education. Then I turn to a short history of market influences on the status of this institution. One theme in this history is the problem posed by the insatiable demand for teachers from a burgeoning public school system. Another is the problem of how to meet the social aspirations and credentialing requirements of students who entered normal schools. A third is the impact of these problems on the evolution of teacher education from its original setting in the normal school to the teachers college and eventually the university, and, in turn, the impact that this evolution had on people, programs, and status. Moving to the present, I then take up the question of how much market conditions have changed and the implications for teacher education today. I close by applying my analysis to two contemporary proposals for reforming American teacher

education—embodied in two volumes, *Tomorrow's Teachers* (Holmes Group, 1986) and *Ed School* (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988). Both of these proposals recognize the status problems affecting teacher education and respond with remedies calling for professionalization, but they advocate contradictory strategies for achieving professionalization. In light of teacher education's unhappy history of market pressures and status problems, I conclude with a discussion of how both proposals fail to provide appropriate reform solutions.

The Status of Teacher Education: Images

Perhaps the most striking fact about much of the critical literature on teacher education is its scornful tone. There is a quality about some of this writing that suggests that teacher education is—almost, but not quite—beneath contempt. In his exposé, the *Miseducation of American Teachers*, James Koerner (1963) describes his subject in a language that underscores the lowly position of teacher education in the educational hierarchy. Faculty, students, curriculum—all come under his verbal lash. In the middle of a list of grievances, he issues the following indictments:

(5) It is an indecorous thing to say and obviously offensive to most educationists, but it is the truth and it should be said: the inferior quality of the Education faculty is *the* fundamental limitation of the field, and will remain so, in my judgment for some time to come. . . . Until the question of the preparation and the intellectual qualifications of faculty members is faced head-on in Education, the prospects of basic reform are not bright.

(6) Likewise, the academic caliber of students in Education remains a problem, as it always has. . . . Education students still show up poorly on standardized tests and still impress members of the academic faculty as being among their less able students. . . .

(7) Course work in Education deserves its ill-repute. It is most often puerile, repetitious, dull, and ambiguous—

incontestably. Two factors make it that way: the limitations of the instructor, and the limitations of the subject-matter that has been remorselessly fragmented, sub-divided, and inflated, and that in many cases was not adequate to its uninflated state. . . . The intellectual impoverishment of the course work remains a major characteristic of the field. (Koerner, 1963, pp. 17–18)

People frequently complain about professional education in a wide range of fields other than teaching, but they do not generally adopt this same tone of scorn when they discuss the preparation of doctors and lawyers. There is something about the status of teacher education that makes it an easy target, a free-fire zone in the realm of higher education.⁶ Sterling McMurrin, a former U.S. Commissioner of Education, notes this in his introduction to Koerner's book:

As is well known, for the past several years criticism of the professional education schools has been a favorite sport among the faculties of other professional schools and of the sciences and arts. (p. xii)

Yet, though he adopts a more judicious approach than Koerner to the subject, McMurrin still agrees with the latter's central judgment:

While recognizing the outstanding work of both individuals and institutions in pointing new directions in teacher education, I must agree with Mr. Koerner that when one views the national scene as a whole the quality of our teacher education schools and colleges is a weak element in our educational complex, a weakness at the point where the most damage can be done—and where all too often it is done. (p. xii)

Even when the tone of the critical voice softens and the gaze turns more sympathetic, many of the same themes continue to emerge. The underlying charge remains that teacher education as an enterprise suffers from a basic condition of *inferiority*. Judith Lanier, who wrote an influential review of "Research on Teacher Education" (Lanier and Little, 1986), is certainly a sympathetic voice. As the dean of an education school and the president of Holmes Group, she constructed this review as a

platform from which to launch the Holmes Group's effort to reform both teaching and teacher education. Yet her list of ailments requiring a remedy sounds similar in substance if not in tone to the list spelled out by Koerner. Like him, she finds teacher education cursed with an inferior status and finds the roots of this status, in part, in characteristics of its faculty, students, and curriculum.

On faculty: "There is an inverse relationship," she notes, "between professorial prestige and the intensity of involvement with the formal education of teachers" (p. 530). When one examines the characteristics of the professors themselves, the "research, in general, suggests that education professors differ from the academic counterparts in that they have less scholarly production and lower social class origins. . . ." (p. 531). Such faculty members demonstrate "conformist orientations and utilitarian views of knowledge," which helps "explain why teacher educators, as some researchers have observed, 'have difficulty in adjusting to and accepting the norms and expectations of academe' (Ducharme and Agne, 1982, p. 33)" (p. 535). On students:

Here the research is unequivocal. Those who teach teachers encounter a substantial number of learners with average and high scores on standardized measures of academic ability. But the overall group norm for teacher education students falls below the average for all college students due to the larger numbers of learners scoring in the lowest ranks on such measures. (p. 540)

And on curriculum:

The research is unequivocal about the general, overall course work provided for teachers. It remains casual at best and affords a poorly conceived collage of courses across the spectrum of initial preparation and an assembly of disparate content fragments throughout continuing education. The formal offerings lack curricular articulation within and between initial and continuing teacher education, and depth of study is noticeably and consistently absent. (p. 549)

Both sympathetic and unsympathetic observers agree that American teacher education occupies an inferior status in the

educational hierarchy. The open question, however, seems to be whether or not this lowly status is well deserved. For critics like Koerner, the answer is clear. Teacher education has a bad reputation because it has weak faculty, students, and courses. But for critics like Lanier, the issue is more complex. Yes, she notes, all these aspects of teacher education are indeed weak; however, she seems to be of two minds about what this means. On the one hand, she sees these particular weaknesses themselves as the problem and argues for strengthening each of these areas as the key to improving the status of American teacher education. This is at the core of the Holmes Group proposals for reforming education schools—promoting an academic research orientation among faculty, improving the academic quality of students, and producing a more extended, rigorous, and relevant program of study.

Yet, on the other hand, she also identifies factors depressing the status of education schools that are not their fault. These factors include the gender and class character of education school faculty and students (female and lower middle class). But they also include such factors as the lower prestige accorded to practical over theoretical knowledge, the marginal position accorded a vocational program like education within a university setting dominated by the liberal arts, and the impact that the sheer size of the teacher education enterprise has on its ability to make claims of academic exclusiveness and intellectual superiority. These last factors are directly traceable to the kind of market situation within which American teacher education has found itself over the years. So let us examine some of ways that the market has made its mark on this field.

A Short History of Market Influences on Teacher Education

The Teacher Factory: Filling Empty Classrooms

The biggest single problem facing American school officials in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had nothing to do with curriculum or pedagogy. Instead, the persisting challenge was to find a way to build enough classrooms for all the students who required education and to fill these classrooms with teachers. The aim of the common school movement, which swept out of New England and across the country in the years before the Civil War, was to have each community establish a publicly funded system of elementary schooling that would provide a common educational experience for all of the young people in that community. And in keeping with the American suspicion of centralized state power, the responsibility for paying for the new schools and hiring the new teachers that were required by this expansion fell primarily on local government.

By 1870, when the federal government began gathering data on schools, there were already 200,000 public school teachers in the U.S., and the number doubled by 1900. At this point, when the supply of elementary schooling was finally beginning to catch up with demand, the sudden growth of high schools set off another dizzying spiral of educational expansion which by 1930 once again doubled the size of the public school teaching force, bringing the total in that year to almost 850,000 (Warren, 1985, p. 7; Sedlak and Schlossman, 1986, table 11).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the insatiable demand for teachers—combined with the radical decentralization of control over schools and the absence of consistent standards for certification—meant that the emphasis was on finding warm bodies to fill classrooms rather than on preparing qualified professionals. The following examination of a teacher candidate in a New England town during the 1860s was not unusual:

Chairman: How old are you?

Candidate: I was eighteen years old the 27th day of last May.

Chairman: Where did you last attend school?

Candidate: At the Academy of S.

Chairman: Do you think you can make our big youngsters mind?

Candidate: Yes, I think I can.

Chairman: Well, I am satisfied. I guess you will do for our school. I will send over the certificate by the children tomorrow. (quoted in Sedlak, 1989, p. 261)

As Sedlak concludes in his review of teacher hiring in this period,

A general teacher shortage, combined with wildly fluctuating and inconsistent prerequisite qualifications, virtually assured any prospective teacher some sort of job, and secured someone for most communities needing a teacher (p. 262).

It was in the midst of this difficult period in the history of the market for teachers that the American normal school appeared on the scene. By many accounts, the first public normal school opened in 1839 in Lexington, Massachusetts, under the leadership of Cyrus Peirce.⁷ Looking back on this experience a dozen years later, Peirce spelled out the aims of his pathbreaking institution in a letter to Henry Barnard, sounding themes that defined the core concerns of the whole normal school movement.

I answer briefly, that it was my aim, and it would be my aim again, to make better teachers, and especially, better teachers for our common schools; so that those primary seminaries, on which so many depend for their education, might answer, in a higher degree, the end of their institution. Yes, to make better teachers; teachers who would understand, and do their business better; teachers who should know more of the nature of children, of youthful developments, more of the subject to be taught, and more of the true methods of teaching; who would teach more philosophically, more in harmony with the natural development of the young mind, with a truer regard to the order and connection in which the different

branches of knowledge should be presented to it, and, of course, more successfully. (Borrowman, 1965, p. 65)

This was a tall order indeed. And although "the formal history of American teacher education and professionalization is conventionally a story of one triumphal march" (Borrowman, 1971, p. 71), the reality was a story of rearguard action by the stalwart normal school advocates while the opposing hoard swept around them on both flanks. By the time of the Civil War, there were only twelve state normal schools in existence in the entire country (Elsbree, 1939, p. 152), so that in spite of the high ideals of these institutions, their actual impact was minimal at best. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the large majority of teachers entered into the classroom without benefit of a normal school diploma. There was a wide range of ways for a prospective teacher to acquire training and obtain a job. The larger cities often set up their own normal schools to supply teachers to the local elementary schools. High schools frequently offered a short course in pedagogy toward the same end. At an even more rudimentary level, local school districts would provide a brief preparation in the grammar school so that graduates could almost immediately return to their old classrooms as the teacher. There was a widespread network of teacher institutes that offered training during the summer, both for new teachers and, after the fact, for teachers already on the job. But there were also a large number of teachers who were hired and kept on the job with no formal training and no qualifications at all except the ability to make the "large youngsters mind."

Consider the problems that this situation posed for the status of the normal school. In order for a form of professional education to attain a high status in the educational marketplace, it must meet two primary prerequisites: monopoly and selectivity. The current situation of law schools and medical schools serve as a case in point. Each has established itself as the only door through which a person can gain entry to the profession. And each has made it difficult to get through that door, by instituting restrictive admissions and rigorous programs of study. When Cyrus Peirce and Horace Mann and others established the first normal schools, they chose to ignore

the market situation and concentrate on developing a sound program of professional preparation for future teachers. However, the problem was that the professional schools they nurtured into life ran the risk of being completely irrelevant to the realities of the job market for teachers. Since no one had to attend a normal school in order to teach and since all the alternative modes of access to teaching were easier and less costly, the normal school leaders found themselves standing on the sidelines while the real work of training and hiring teachers played out before them.

In short, normal school leaders faced a choice between selectivity and monopoly. They could remain as elite institutions providing an idealized form of professional preparation for a small number of aspiring teachers—"teachers who would understand and do their business better," in Peirce's words—and allow other routes to teaching remain dominant. Or they could expand the system to meet the demand for teachers, establishing eventual monopoly over access to the profession while risking the dilution of the normal school ideal in the process. They chose expansion.

Between 1865 and 1890, the number of state normal schools grew from 15 to 103 (Borrowman, 1956, p. 70). A key element of this expansion was the growing tendency for state governments to employ certification as a mechanism for restricting the pool of teacher candidates from which local districts could hire their faculty and to employ teacher education as a criterion for certification.

By 1873, according to a leading analyst of this issue, policy deliberations were beginning to recognize credentials from normal schools as "professional licenses," and several states were relying on them as the basis for certification. By 1897, 28 states accepted normal-school diplomas, and by 1921 all but one state "recognized graduation from normal schools and universities as evidence of qualification for certification."⁸ By the World War I era, therefore, certification policies that bestowed licenses on the basis of credential acquisition had become the rule nationwide. (Sedlak, 1989, p. 266)

The expansion of normal schools and their growing monopoly over access to teaching were accelerated "as graduates of professional programs assumed leadership roles in state departments of education" (Sedlak, 1989, p. 266).

Once normal schools moved toward establishing a monopoly on access to teaching, they also took on the responsibility for meeting the full weight of the market's demand for teachers. The natural result was that teacher education came under intense pressure to produce large numbers of teachers as quickly and cheaply as possible. Two factors served to intensify this pressure. One was the feminization of the teaching force and the kind of career pattern that accompanied this shift. The standard pattern in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was for young women to enter teaching for a half dozen years or so, beginning in their late teens and ending with marriage. The short tenure in the classroom for the average teacher meant that normal schools had to produce large numbers of graduates in order to keep replacing young teachers who were leaving the classroom. The other was a fiscal problem. If teacher training took on aspects of mass production, and if the product was not expected to last very long anyway, then the cost of producing each unit had to be kept down in order to sustain the operation. Under these circumstances, an intensive and prolonged process of professional education was difficult to justify to legislators and taxpayers.

The pressure for warm bodies to fill empty classrooms continued throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the impact on both the content and the status of teacher education was devastating. All three problem areas identified by the critics of teacher education—faculty, students, and curriculum—have their origins in considerable degree in this pressure to meet the demand for teachers. The burgeoning normal school system had to mass-produce faculty members to staff its own classrooms, without the luxury of being particularly selective about whom to admit into these positions or of being especially thorough in the preparation of these people for the role of teaching teachers. As for students, the rapid expansion of normal schools in the late nineteenth century necessarily meant

that these schools had to open their doors wide to admit the flood of candidates that were required to meet demand. The normal school became, as Herbst (1989a) points out, a true people's college, which offered a chance at advanced education to a wide range of the population that had previously been confined to a grammar school education. And the curriculum felt the effects of this market pressure as well. The need to produce a large number of teachers quickly meant that normal schools could not enforce an extensive and rigorous professional education. These schools operated under the constant threat of being bypassed. If they made access to or completion of teacher education very difficult, the number of graduates would decline and school districts would be forced to find other sources for teachers. One way or the other, the classrooms would be filled, and the normal school leaders chose to fill them with their own graduates, whatever the cost.

The cost, I suggest, was high. A thinly educated faculty, academically weak students, and a foreshortened and unchallenging curriculum—all were consequences of the effort by normal schools to meet the continuing high level of demand for teachers. As a result, the normal school became a kind of teacher factory, mass-producing as many practitioners as the market required. But by pressing the normal school to choose quantity over quality, the market exerted an impact on the status of this institution as well as its content. Selectivity is a crucial component of the status of an educational institution. The current status hierarchy of American higher education is closely related to the degree of difficulty students experience in gaining access to credentials of individual colleges, which range from highly selective Ivy League-type schools at the high end of the scale to open-admissions community colleges at the low end. The normal school was the community college of the late nineteenth century, easily accessible and thus lacking in distinction. By choosing to meet the demand for teachers, this institution gave up any claim it might have once had for elite status. By becoming socially useful, it lost social respect. What this suggests is that much of the scorn that has been directed at teacher education over the years can be traced to the simple fact

that it has earnestly sought to provide all of the teachers that were asked of it.

The People's College: Meeting Consumer Demand

As we have already seen, one market influence on American teacher education came from *employers*, as school districts demanded a large number of teachers and normal schools chose to supply this demand in spite of the negative impact on both the content and the status of teacher education. But another market influence came from educational *consumers*, as students demanded a particular kind of educational product and normal schools chose to give it to them. The first imposed a *social-efficiency* function on these schools, which required them to subordinate concerns about institutional status and effective professional education to the pressing social need for teachers. However, the second market influence imposed a *social-mobility*⁹ function on normal schools, which required them to provide the kind of educational choices that would best serve the needs of students who were competing for desirable social positions.

The reverence for individual freedom of choice—construed both as political choice and consumer choice—has deep roots in American cultural history. Louis Hartz, in his classic essay on *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), defined the issue this way:

Here, then, is the master assumption of American political thought, the assumption from which all of the American attitudes discussed in this essay flow: the reality of atomistic social freedom. It is instinctive to the American mind, as in a sense the concept of the polis was instinctive to Platonic Athens or the concept of the church to the mind of the middle ages. (p. 62)

This assumption is at the heart of the market as a social institution. In a market system, consumers exercise individual freedom of choice by expressing their personal desires, and entrepreneurs prosper by more efficiently meeting these desires. As Martin Trow (1988, p. 17) has put it so succinctly, in America

“the market preceded society,” with the result that the consumer has long been king.

This central characteristic of American social life has been a powerful force contributing to the distinctiveness of American educational institutions, which have been shaped by consumerism to a far greater extent than educational institutions elsewhere in the world.

We in the United States, surely the most populist society in the world, accept a larger role [than do Europeans] for the influence of consumer preference on cultural forms—even in the provision of what and how subjects are taught in colleges and universities. Europeans try to reduce the influence of consumer preference in a number of ways. Most importantly, they try to insulate their financing of institutions of higher education from student fees. By contrast, in the United States, enrollment-driven budgets in all but a few institutions, both public and private, ensure that most institutions are extremely sensitive to student preferences. (Trow, 1988, p. 17)

In a setting where the educational consumer is highly influential, educational leaders are compelled to respond in a thoroughly entrepreneurial fashion if they wish to thrive or even survive. If they fail to meet consumer demand, students will vote with their feet by enrolling elsewhere in a school that is all too eager to give them what they want.

This was the situation facing normal school leaders in the second half of the nineteenth century. More specifically, they had to confront two characteristics of the educational market during this period. First, anyone who wanted to become a teacher could do so without ever attending a normal school. Although gradually, through increasingly restrictive certification requirements, teacher education would attain a monopoly over access to the teacher workforce, this was a long time in coming. Second, there was a glut of post-grammar-school educational institutions that were competing for the student's tuition dollars. In 1880, for example, there were more than 16 colleges and universities for every million in the population, the highest ratio ever in American educational history (Collins, 1979, p. 119). As a result of these market conditions, the potential normal school

student had a variety of options for becoming a teacher and for receiving advanced education, options that allowed her to bypass this institution altogether. Therefore, the normal schools had to find a way to make their programs attractive to prospective consumers, and this meant listening very closely to the educational preferences being expressed by students.

What students were saying was clear. They did not want to be trapped in a single-purpose school that provided them with a narrow vocational education and then channeled them into a single occupational slot. Instead they wanted an advanced educational setting that would, in the classic American fashion, provide them with the maximum degree of individual choice of programs and with access to the widest array of attractive occupational possibilities. In short, they wanted to pursue social mobility and wanted educational institutions to facilitate this pursuit. But this was not a vision that fit comfortably with the alternative visions of the normal school that were also in place: The founders of normal schools saw them as places for instilling sound professional skills; school districts saw them as one among several sources for warm bodies to fill empty classrooms; and students saw them as one among several places where they could acquire the credentials that would enhance their future status. The possibilities for conflict over the purposes of these schools were great, leaving them subject to an array of competing pressures.

In spite of efforts to put normal schools into the service of teacher professionalization or social efficiency, social mobility quickly emerged as a central function through the medium of students exercising their own consumer choices. And this form of pressure was there from the very beginning. Cyrus Peirce ran into the problem shortly after he opened the first normal school in Lexington.

Peirce's frustrations increased as time went on. He was particularly chagrined to find that some of his students did not even want to become teachers, and others did not have the necessary ability. (Herbst, 1989b, p. 219)

When Herbst examined the records of Wisconsin's first state normal school in Platteville, he found that, between its founding in 1866 and 1880, "on the average no more than 45 percent of all

attending students were enrolled in the normal classes" (Herbst, 1989a, p. 129). Bowing to this demand for a broader and less vocationally oriented educational experience, normal schools began to offer increasing numbers of liberal arts courses.

Many students, especially those who lived near the colleges, came for those courses rather than the teacher training curriculum that formed the original mission of such institutions. Other students used the normal school as a "junior college," completing its program as a step toward enrollment at a state university. To ensure that students who entered the normal departments would actually teach, Illinois Normal not only required that they pledge their intent to teach for three years after graduation; students also had to report their employment, whatever it was, to the state superintendent of public instruction. Signing a pledge to teach and signing a contract with a school district were two different matters. Records at Illinois indicate that only 30 percent of the alumni during the 1860s spent any time in teaching. (Altenbaugh and Underwood, 1990, p. 164)

For many American families, who otherwise would never have considered pursuing advanced education, normal schools provided an opportunity to gain social advantages that previously had been restricted to the more privileged members of society, who could afford to send their children away to college. In the eyes of these families, the normal school became more than a place for training teachers, it became a kind of people's college. Herbst puts it this way:

Normal schools, rather than the land grant universities, were the pioneers of higher education for the people. Almost everywhere the state universities and agricultural and mechanical colleges were developed at a central location or state capital, whereas the normal schools were scattered to the small country towns across the prairies. (Herbst, 1980, p. 227; quoted in Altenbaugh and Underwood, 1990, p. 143)

These schools "took higher education to where the people lived and worked" (Herbst, 1989a, p. 6). While some normal schools tried to remain focused on their original professional mission,

most gradually yielded to the pressure to broaden their vocational curriculum in order to meet the persistent demand for general academic education and social opportunity. The lure of expanding enrollments was difficult for them to resist, especially in the tuition-driven educational economy in which they had to operate. In addition, shifting in the direction of servicing the community rather than simply training teachers also gained them the support of legislators, who found that promoting people's colleges was good politics.

What effect did this consumer pressure have on normal schools? Essentially, it served to undermine, marginalize, and diffuse the goal of teacher professionalization that had led to the creation of these schools in the first place as well as the professionally oriented curriculum that had accompanied this goal. Normal schools were evolving away from single-purpose vocational schools toward general-purpose schools of advanced educational opportunity, within which teacher education was just one program and not necessarily the most popular or prestigious one at that. One result was a growing confusion about the identity of these schools: Were they teacher training schools or people's colleges? Another was a watering-down of the professional curriculum. It was difficult for normal schools to maintain a rigorous and focused program of teacher preparation when many, often most, of the students wanted something different and when even prospective teachers intended to move on to business and professional careers after a short stint in the classroom (Herbst, 1989a, p. 135). This curriculum diffusion problem was exacerbated by social efficiency pressures, which prodded normal schools to turn out graduates in large numbers in order to meet the demand for teachers who could fill new slots in expanding school systems and to provide a steady stream of replacements for teachers whose average tenure in the classroom tended to be brief.

Under these circumstances, normal schools were under considerable market pressure to make teacher education as undemanding as possible. In their twin roles as teacher factories and people's colleges, these schools were compelled to make the teacher preparation program: *easy*, so students would be encouraged to sign up for it rather than other potentially more

attractive but also more difficult alternatives; *flexible*, so they could fit it into a larger set of studies that would grant them opportunities outside of teaching; and *inexpensive*, so the state could afford to produce teachers at a unit cost commensurate with their brief shelf life in the classroom, and so students would consider the program a worthwhile investment given their modest commitment to a career in teaching.

All in all, the impact of the market on American teacher education has hardly been elevating. The pressure from both the job market and the credentials market, from both employers and consumers, has tended to marginalize, minimize, and trivialize the process of educating future teachers. And, as we will explore later, this disabling legacy continues to affect the way in which teacher education carries out its work. But first, we need to examine the impact of these market factors on the status of teacher education.

From Normal School to University: Effects on Status

Between the 1890s and the 1970s, market factors propelled the normal school through a process of institutional evolution that eventually transformed it into a general-purpose university. The consequences of this change for the status of teacher education were both profound and profoundly mixed. To put it simply, the institutional status of the normal school rose dramatically during this period while the status of teacher education within the institution declined just as dramatically. Let us consider the causes and effects of this transformation.

The outlines of this evolutionary development are clear. Normal schools experienced a remarkably linear process of institutional mobility. In the words of William Johnson,

... the history of twentieth-century teacher training can be seen as a series of institutional displacements, with normal schools becoming state teachers colleges, then multipurpose liberal arts colleges, and now, in many instances, regional state universities. (Johnson, 1989, p. 243; quoted in Altenbaugh and Underwood, 1990, p. 149)

But, as Altenbaugh and Underwood (1990, p. 149) note, "Normal schools actually began this transition well before the turn of the century." As they expanded their academic course offerings and broadened their appeal, normal schools "began to raise admission standards, requiring high school diplomas, and to extend the program of study." During most of the nineteenth century, normal schools had been operating at the same level as high schools, taking in grammar school graduates and sending them out with something like a high school diploma. But by 1900 these schools were beginning to look more like junior colleges, and "after 1920, two- and three-year normal schools evolved to four-year teachers' colleges." One indicator of the rapid pace of this change is that between 1920 and 1933 the number of state and city normal schools fell from 170 to 66 and the number of state teachers' colleges rose from 46 to 146.

By 1940, the term "normal school" had become obsolete. . . . State teachers' colleges likewise experienced a short life, since by the 1960s they had begun to evolve into multipurpose state colleges or state universities, which granted liberal arts and other degrees as well as education degrees. (Altenbaugh and Underwood, 1990, p. 150)

At the same time that normal schools were turning into universities, already existing universities were incorporating at least an attenuated form of teacher education within their own arrays of program offerings.

Market factors are what propelled this remarkable process of institutional mobility,¹⁰ whose final outcome was to move teacher education from its own niche at the lower fringe of American higher education and lodge it firmly within the confines of the university. Later, the fiscal cost and social inefficiency of the transformation became clear (more on this subject later). But this elevation of the status and function of the normal school took place primarily because of the overwhelming *demand* for it that developed from all sides. It seemed to benefit everyone concerned. Through the mechanism of the expanding and rising normal school, citizens received access to higher education far beyond what was available through state universities and land grant schools. Legislators won a politically popular program on which voters were eager to spend tax

dollars. For students, the upward movement meant that they could gain the advantages of both a normal school education (accessibility, low cost, and teacher certification) and a college education (bachelor's degree, institutional prestige, and access to a wide range of white collar jobs beyond teaching). For teachers, the change meant a symbolic elevation, as a college diploma came to represent the minimum educational requirement for entry into the occupation. Teacher educators found themselves evolving from trade school instructors into college professors, a heady increase in occupational status. And universities found in teacher education a lucrative "cash cow," which attracted large numbers of students, and a political blessing, which demonstrated to the state legislature the practical benefits of a university education.

Compare this market perspective on the evolution of the normal school to the traditional view of this transformation that has been espoused by the educational establishment. Merle Borrowman captures the essence of this view:

The formal history of American teacher education and professionalization is conventionally a story of one triumphal march from Samuel R. Hall's Concord, Vt., normal school in 1823 to the modern National Education Association and the great graduate schools of education. This version of history is misleading. (Borrowman, 1971, pp. 71-72)

What is misleading about it is the assumption that the institutional elevation of teacher education represents progress; that is, a steady and ineluctable improvement in the quality of teacher education and (consequently) of teaching. Instead, I suggest, the elevation of the status of the normal school and the incorporation of teacher education within the university have less to do with the quality of the professional education of teachers than with the quantity of consumer demand for higher education and the market conditions that encouraged educational institutions to meet that demand. Thus, the content of teacher education was less important to this process than its institutional form, and preparing people effectively to carry out the role of a teacher was less important than simply providing them with the status of a college graduate.

The transformation of the status and locus of teacher education had wide-ranging effects. It reduced the social efficiency of these programs, undermined their ability to provide professional preparation, stratified the way in which they were delivered, and marginalized them within their home institutions. Let us consider each of these points in turn.

First, the elevation of normal schools and their transformation into general-purpose universities signaled the subordination of the original social-efficiency goal of the normal school to the social-mobility goal that came to dominate American higher education more generally. While providing enhanced educational and social opportunities for a wide array of Americans who otherwise would not have had them, this change introduced a radical degree of *social inefficiency* into the task of preparing teachers. Providing individuals with open access to higher education through an expanded and broadened system of teachers' colleges may be very attractive to the individuals who benefit from it and may be justifiable politically as an effort to democratize the delivery of education, but it is hardly an efficient investment of social resources. This educational expansion was not based on the social need for skills that could only be provided through a college education but on the individual desire for improved personal status. And it did nothing to meet the need for qualified teachers to staff the nation's classrooms. The normal schools that were created to meet the latter need were thus subverted by the market, transformed into institutions of general education in response to pressing consumer demand. In short, teacher education ended up subsidizing individual ambition and social opportunity at the expense of preparing teachers.

Second, this reorientation of the normal school away from social efficiency and toward social mobility also had the effect of undermining *professional education*. Originally, these schools were seen by their founders and by many of the students attending them as places that focused on providing a practical education in the knowledge and skills required to be an effective teacher. That is, their function was to provide an education with considerable *use value*. However, this function changed when consumers asserted their strong preference for an institution that would

provide them with educational credentials carrying substantial *exchange value*. This inevitably shifted the focus within the schools from the content to the form of education, since increasingly students attended them less for the kind of usable knowledge they could acquire there than for the kind of social advantage they could gain by attending them. In this manner, the transformation of the normal school was a key step in the commodification of American higher education during the twentieth century, as status attainment shouldered aside learning as the central aim of students and as colleges and universities quickly adapted themselves to this changing consumer demand.¹¹ In this commodified setting, the kind of practical learning represented by teacher education lost appeal because students were driven by concerns about the marketability of education more than its applicability. From the consumer's perspective, who cared what you learned in college as long as your diploma gave you access to a good job? Under these circumstances, the former normal schools that became state colleges and universities had no market incentive to sustain a rigorous program of professional teacher preparation. As a result, it is not surprising that even sympathetic observers have often found these programs feeble and undemanding (Lanier and Little, 1986; Goodlad, 1990). In the market-centered environment of American higher education, there has been little incentive to make them otherwise.

Third, the evolution of the normal school also tended to reinforce the *stratification* of the various functions of professional education. In a market setting, where entrepreneurial educators needed to be concerned about maintaining the exchange value of their educational credentials, there was a strong incentive to focus an institution's attentions on those parts of the educational task that would bring the greatest prestige and influence. As Herbst (1989a) has pointed out in some detail, this meant, as much as possible, turning one's back on the low-status task of preparing elementary teachers and catering to the more prestigious parts of the education market. Even the early normal school leaders in Massachusetts tried to adopt this strategy.

The educators . . . tended to assign the preparation of elementary teachers to short-term city training schools.

Most of the educators preferred to use their state normal schools for the training of secondary school teachers and administrators as well as educational specialists. (Herbst, 1989a, p. 4)

By the early twentieth century, however, the structure of teacher education had become considerably more complex and more stratified, with the result that the various professional preparation functions were allocated across a wider span of institutions. Normal schools, as the lowest rung on the ladder of teacher education, were responsible for the education of elementary teachers, the group no one else wanted. Colleges and universities dominated the market for preparing secondary teachers. And the new graduate schools of education at leading universities took on increasing responsibility for the preparation of school administrators and nonteaching educational professionals (Powell, 1980). However, when normal schools evolved into general-purpose colleges and universities, the distinction between the two lower rungs of the ladder became blurred. The preparation of both elementary and secondary teachers became the responsibility of four-year institutions, in general, with the primary distinction being that former teachers' colleges drew a larger share of teacher candidates of all types.

This led to a fourth effect of the elevation of the normal school. The incorporation of teacher education within the university meant that the tendency to stratify teacher education functions now became an internal matter defining the relationships between university departments. The result was that teacher education came to occupy a *marginal status* in the academic hierarchy of the university. This is even true to a significant extent, as Goodlad (1990) has noted, within the universities that were once teachers' colleges. One reason for this marginality is that teacher education programs concentrate on providing students with usable knowledge about teaching. In the commodified setting of American education, usable knowledge is low-status knowledge. The more removed knowledge is from ordinary concerns and the more closely associated it is with high culture, the more prestige it carries with it. Just as the low-track English class in high school focuses on reading job applications while the high-track class focuses on

Elizabethan poetry, at the university teacher education is seen as following the low road of practical instruction while the arts and sciences departments pursue the high road of more esoteric knowledge.¹²

Another reason for the marginal status of teacher education in its new home in the university was that it was designed to prepare students for a marginal profession. Medical schools and law schools both provide intensely practical education to their students, but this does not harm the high standing of these schools because of the elevated status of the professions for which they are preparing students. In this sense, then, the high exchange value of a medical or law degree—measured by the high status of the positions to which these degrees provide access—means that no one considers these programs “vocational” in the pejorative sense that is applied to programs in auto repair and hairdressing or, at a more middling status, in nursing or teacher education. In part, then, the status of teacher education in the university has been inseparable from the status of teaching in American society.

Teacher educators therefore have come to be doubly stigmatized within the university, because of their association with low-status practical knowledge and because of their association with an occupation seen as a semiprofession. In combination, this has put them at the lowest tier of the academic hierarchy.

It is common knowledge that professors in the arts and sciences risk a loss of academic respect, including promotion and tenure, if they assume clear interest in or responsibility for teacher education. Professors holding academic rank in education units are in even greater jeopardy of losing the respect of their academic counterparts in the university, because their close proximity makes association with teacher education more possible. And, finally, those education professors who actually supervise prospective or practicing teachers in elementary and secondary schools are indeed at the bottom of the stratification ladder. (Lanier and Little, 1986, p. 530)

Dealing with the Legacy: Changing Conditions

In this chapter, I have identified two broad types of market influence that have shaped the history of American teacher education. One imposed a social-efficiency function on teacher education, and the other imposed a social-mobility function. On the social-efficiency side, the pressure came from educational providers (school districts and the states) for teacher education to provide an adequate supply of teachers at a reasonable cost. On the social-mobility side, the pressure came from educational consumers for the original teacher education institution (the normal school) to transform itself into a form of educational commodity that was more useful in the attainment of higher social status (the general-purpose university). Both of these forms of market pressure have tended to depress the status of teacher education. Both have also tended to marginalize, diffuse, and undercut the quality of professional preparation that these programs have offered.

A key question is to define to what extent this legacy is still exerting a lingering impact on American teacher education in the 1990s. Have things changed substantially, or are many of the same market factors still exerting pressure on these programs?

Social efficiency: Many of the factors that promoted the original social-efficiency pressures on teacher education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have indeed changed. There is no longer a chronic state of teacher shortage. The rapid growth in enrollments that drove so much of the demand for teachers has been replaced by a more stable demographic situation. Also, although turnover remains relatively high and commitment to the job remains relatively low, teaching is no longer the temporary pursuit that it once was. Since World War II, teaching has turned into a career that women and men with growing frequency have pursued all the way to retirement. In large part this is because of the gains in pay, job security, and fringe benefits that teacher unions achieved during this period.

However, in spite of these changes, social-efficiency pressures on teacher education still exist, albeit in reduced intensity and altered form. In 1993 there were 2.8 million elementary and secondary teachers in the U.S., and replacing

those who quit or retire calls for about 20 percent of the new group of college graduates every year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1992, table 4; Clifford and Guthrie, 1988, p. 21). Teacher education, as always, is under pressure to meet this continuing demand. It holds a stronger monopoly over access to teaching than it ever did during the normal school era, which intensifies the pressure to produce the numbers that are required every year even if the numbers themselves are not expanding at the same rate. And reinforcing this pressure is an old threat that has returned in recent years, the threat of bypassing teacher education in the hiring of teachers. A number of state legislatures have put in place or proposed plans for "alternative certification," that is, certifying teachers based on work experience or academic major but without benefit of traditional teacher education. Market rhetoric has supported these plans as ways of restoring choice and opportunity to a teacher job market too long constrained by the education school monopoly. Reinforcing this trend is the move toward mobilizing market forces in K-12 education through such mechanisms as schools of choice and charter schools, which would free schools to hire teachers without the usual restrictions. The message seems to be that if teacher education fails to become more efficient in cranking out teachers, the state or the market will find other ways to fill classroom vacancies.

Fiscal pressure on state universities has also intensified in the last few years as state appropriations have leveled off or even declined, which has left universities more dependent than ever on enrollments and tuition as a source of revenue. Under these circumstances, universities are unlikely to do anything to undercut the traditional profitability of teacher education programs, with their high enrollments and low costs. The result is a familiar pattern: Teacher education is being asked to produce a large number of teachers as efficiently and inexpensively as possible or else these teachers will be hired elsewhere. There is little in this market situation to encourage teacher education to move away from its historic pattern of maintaining programs that are easy, flexible, and cheap.

Social mobility: Teacher education is no longer asked to serve as the conduit for Americans' social aspirations. There are

now a large number of people's colleges—including 1,000 community colleges and a wide array of nonselective four-year colleges and universities (the latter drawn largely from the ranks of former normal schools)—through which people can gain a chance at social mobility. But the long-term effect of consumer pressure on the normal school and the teachers' college (the pressure to provide students with marketable credentials that can be exchanged for a good job) has been to locate teacher education within an institution, the university, where it is looked upon with disdain. In the stratified world of contemporary American higher education, teacher education occupies an anomalous position. It is the low-status option for students in the high-status institution, the university; it offers a practical education in a decidedly academic setting; and it sells itself as a provider of occupational use value in a market that prices educational products on the basis of exchange value.

In this commodified educational world that consumer demand helped create, teacher education finds itself thoroughly marginalized. The preparation of teachers is no longer under its control but is spread across the various colleges within the university, where it is shaped by a number of people who view the whole enterprise with suspicion. As a result, its purposes are diffused and teacher educators find themselves marginalized even within the teacher education program. It is not surprising, then, to find that there is little incentive within the university to enhance the quality, tighten the focus, heighten the field-experience component, or raise the standards of teacher education.

Two Proposals for Reform: An Evaluation

All of this discussion about the impact of market forces on the status and content of American teacher education over the years leads back to the problem of how to reform these programs. Reform proposals necessarily start with the state of teacher education today, a state that has been shaped historically in considerable part by the kind of market pressures that I have outlined in this paper. The historical legacy of teacher education

affects reformers in two related ways. It defines the kinds of problems within these programs that require reform solutions; and it defines the structural factors and continuing influences that are likely to have an impact on the success or failure of any particular effort to reform these problems.

For the purposes of this analysis, I would like to focus on just two recent proposals for reforming American teacher education, one developed by the Holmes Group in *Tomorrow's Teachers*¹³ (1986) and the other developed by Geraldine Boncich Clifford and James W. Guthrie in *Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education* (1988). There are other reform proposals that have come to the fore in the past few years, but these two best fit the analytical approach taken in this paper.¹⁴ Both of them identify the low status of teacher education as a critical problem that affects its ability to carry out its functions effectively and that therefore needs to be resolved. Both of them see professionalization as a key component of any solution to this problem. But each of them takes a very different approach to the task of accomplishing this professionalization, with the Holmes group advocating a strategy that would tie teacher education more closely to the university and Clifford and Guthrie advocating a strategy that would ally the programs more closely with the teaching profession. In light of the similar goals put forward in these proposals and the different strategies suggested for achieving these goals, the two proposals lend themselves to evaluation in tandem. And given the way they both respond to and suggest remedies for the status difficulties of teacher education, this comparative evaluation depends on a firm understanding of the legacy of the market influences that have affected this status. Therefore, the evaluation provides a convenient test for the usefulness of the analysis I have developed in this chapter.

Tomorrow's Teachers

Early in its report, the Holmes Group zeroes in on the status problem that has plagued teacher education over the years and connects it to the status problem that has also affected teaching.

Unhappily, teaching and teacher education have a long history of mutual impairment. Teacher education long has been intellectually weak; this further eroded the prestige of an already poorly esteemed profession, and it encouraged many inadequately prepared people to enter teaching. But teaching long has been an underpaid and overworked occupation, making it difficult for universities to recruit good students to teacher education or to take it as seriously as they have taken education for more prestigious professions. (Holmes Group, 1986, p. 6)

Acknowledging that "The legendary problems of teacher education in America have been lamented since the turn of the century," the report charges that the solutions commonly proposed for these problems have not worked in large part because of "a failure to appreciate the extent to which teacher education has evolved as a creature of teaching" (pp. 25–26). If mutual impairment is the ailment, then mutual improvement is the remedy. As a result, as Judith Lanier puts it in the preface to the report, the Holmes Group "is organized around the twin goals of the reform of teacher education and the reform of the teaching profession," where the latter refers to "nothing less than the transformation of teaching from an occupation into a genuine profession" (p. ix).

To professionalize teaching calls for significant changes in the structure of teacher roles and rewards within schools. But the Holmes Group members—approximately 100 education schools at top universities—have little control over these areas, which lie within the province of local school boards. As a result, they concentrate their attention on the ways that they can draw on their strengths as research-oriented, university-based education schools to promote the professionalization agenda.

The work that we propose is therefore distinctively the province of the university: study, research, and teaching. What is new in our proposals is the idea that these distinctive academic resources be focused on the problems of teacher education, and that the universities make the solution of these problems a top priority. (p. 20)

What education schools can do is create a program of professional education modeled after programs used as preparation for such professions as medicine and law.

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)

Fortunately, as noted earlier in the report, "Within the last twenty years . . . the science of education promised by Dewey, Thorndike, and others at the turn of the century, has become more tangible" (p. 52).

To recap, the logic of the Holmes Group's argument is this: Teacher education has a poor reputation in part because it is intellectually weak and in part because teaching itself has a low status. The elevation of teacher education requires the professionalization of teaching. From the vantage point of the university, where education schools reside, the most potent and accessible way to promote the latter goal is to restructure teacher education around a research-based core of professional knowledge. This is a strategy that capitalizes on the historical contingencies that brought teacher education up from the lowly normal school and into the university. Teacher educators are university professors who (can or do) carry out scientific research on teaching in the classic university manner. So why not shore up the intellectual weakness of teacher education (its low-brow practicality, its atheoretical character) with some of this high-status, academically validated knowledge? In effect this means calling on teacher educators to outdo the university at its own game, carrying out academically credible research on teaching and then passing this knowledge on to prospective teachers. The high exchange value of this form of knowledge will then be transferred to both teacher educators and teachers, elevating both to a higher status. This is a pure market-based

strategy, which draws on the aura of the university to advance the cause of both groups.

There are two major problems with this strategy that cast doubt on its effectiveness as a mechanism for enhancing the status of either teachers or teacher educators. First, there is little reason to think that the kind of enhanced professional education proposed by the Holmes Group would bring about a significant improvement in the status of teachers. This would only be the case if use value were the key to occupational status; then, indeed, one's prestige would depend on what one knows. However, in the market for occupational status, it is exchange value that matters most. Medicine and law are high-status professions, I would argue, not because they have rigorous programs of professional education but the other way around. They have highly selective professional education programs because the professions are enormously rewarding and therefore draw many more candidates than can be accommodated.

Raising the credential requirements for a subordinate occupation group raises the cost of entry but it does nothing to raise the power, prestige, or salary of the occupation itself. Nursing has been trying this strategy in recent years, moving toward the point where every registered nurse will be required to hold a bachelor's degree. But this will do nothing to change the way in which nurses remain subordinate to doctors; at best, it will serve to draw a firmer boundary between registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, protecting the former against downward mobility rather than promoting professional advancement. If professional education were the critical factor, then pharmacists would be members of an elevated profession. They pursue advanced study of pharmacology in order to carry out a job that often requires them to do little more than transfer pills from one bottle to another. By pursuing a strategy of increased educational requirements, teaching and nursing likewise may run the risk of overcredentialing people for a job that is not changing to meet the new levels of professional preparation.

In fact, as I have argued elsewhere (Labaree, 1992), the Holmes Group strategy is perhaps better designed to enhance the professional status of the teacher educator than that of the

teacher. The effort to install academic research at the center of the professional curriculum serves to displace the clinical knowledge of the practitioner and establish the teacher educator rather than the teacher as the prime authority on correct professional practice. This strategy may actually increase the position of the teacher educator at the expense of the teacher. In addition, it is designed to shore up the status of teacher educators within the university by highlighting their credentials as academic researchers and knowledge producers. But this leads to a second problem with the Holmes Group strategy: There is little reason to think that this effort to model themselves after the other professors in the university will in fact yield teacher educators the kind of respect they desire. This point is at the heart of Clifford and Guthrie's analysis in *Ed School*, and it forms the basis for their own recommendation for reforming teacher education.

Ed School

Clifford and Guthrie begin their book with a quotation from a president of Harvard, who, as far back as 1865, had the same idea as the Holmes Group. He felt, as they do, that by investing teacher education with the full prestige of the university, teaching could be elevated to a true profession. In his words,

... the establishment of a Normal School in a University, and of a special course for Bachelor of Arts in a Normal School, would be steps calculated to raise the standard of excellence required of teachers, and would lift towards its proper dignity the high profession of teaching. (quoted in Clifford and Guthrie, 1988, p. 3)

But the authors sharply disagree with this conclusion and announce that the main point of their book is to argue that the approach suggested by this university president 130 years ago has been tried and has been proven a failure.

This book is about those "normal schools in the university" in the United States: about their origins, historical evolution, continuing problems, and future

prospects. Our thesis is that schools of education, particularly those located on the campuses of prestigious research universities, have become ensnared improvidently in the academic and political cultures of their institutions and have neglected their professional allegiances. They are like marginal men, aliens in their own worlds. They have seldom succeeded in satisfying the scholarly norms of their campus letters and science colleagues, and they are simultaneously estranged from their practicing professional peers. The more forcefully they have rowed toward the shores of scholarly research, the more distant they have become from the public schools they are duty bound to serve. Conversely, systematic efforts at addressing the applied problems of public schools have placed schools of education at risk on their own campuses. (pp. 3–4)

As we have seen, it was not the benevolent feelings of university presidents toward the profession of teaching that brought the normal school into the university but rather the intense pressure from educational consumers seeking advanced degrees. But once teacher education became lodged in this elevated setting, according to Clifford and Guthrie, teacher educators began to suffer from “the American disease of ‘status anxiety,’” compelling them to cast about for ways to establish their own professional credentials within this new academic setting. Unfortunately, these methods did not succeed.

One presumed route to higher regard was to encourage abandonment of the classroom. . . . Another well-worn path that brought them far short of their destination was to be as academic as possible. The usual and unexpected reward was repudiation by other academics on the grounds that such work could only rarely be as worthy as the same work done in disciplinary departments. (p. 325)

Two key points emerge from Clifford and Guthrie’s analysis that are relevant to our discussion of the Holmes Group and of the larger issue of the role of markets in shaping teacher education. First, it was concerns about their own professional status rather than the professionalization of teaching that pushed teacher educators to launch full force into the task of constructing a body of academic research about education.

Therefore, the “science of teaching,” which the Holmes Group sees as the basis for teacher professionalization, actually emerged as a side effect of the effort by education professors to professionalize themselves in ways that were more in tune with academic norms than teacher practice.¹⁵ Second, these efforts failed miserably. “Being as academic as possible”—by engaging in funded research, employing scientific methodology, writing strictly for an academic audience, producing mountains of refereed journal articles—could not erase the stigma of the normal school from the brow of the education professor. The status of teacher educators was fixed by factors outside of their control. As latecomers to the major university faculties, they were fated to play a continuing game of status catch-up. With most of their numbers concentrated in the new regional universities that recently evolved from teachers’ colleges, they were tied to the low standing of these institutions in the established academic hierarchy. They were unavoidably linked to the practical knowledge and vocational orientation of a teacher preparation program in a setting that looked down on these things. And they were also inextricably tied to the low status of teaching.

For these reasons, Clifford and Guthrie argue, the best strategy for improving teacher education is for education schools to abandon their futile pursuit of academic status and focus attention on serving the profession of teaching. This calls for an abrupt about-face (in direct contradiction to the central thrust of the Holmes Group proposal), with education schools being asked to turn their backs on the university and embrace the schools.

. . . Schools of education must take the profession of education, not academia, as their main point of reference. It is not sufficient to say that the greatest strength of schools of education is that they are the only places available to look at fundamental issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. They have been doing so for more than a half a century without appreciable effect on professional practice. It is time for many institutions to shift gears.

. . . Their prime orientation should be to educate practitioners, and education faculty must be made more

cognizant of the technical or experiential culture of schooling for that to happen. To require less is to continue to frustrate both research and training activities. We think it sound policy that faculty appointments in education redress the imbalance that exists on many graduate school faculties by including substantial professional criteria in the guidelines and processes of faculty appraisal. This appraisal should cover both appointment and promotion decisions. (pp. 349–350)

While Clifford and Guthrie provide a cogent critique of the university-based strategy for reforming teacher education proposed by the Holmes Group, their profession-based strategy poses its own problems. The key problem relates again to the issue of status. It seems wholly unrealistic and even counterproductive to ask teacher education to turn its back on the high status setting it currently occupies, however uncomfortably, and throw itself into the arms of an occupation whose status is markedly lower. Even though teacher educators are not well received within the university, holding the position of university professor carries with it a wide range of external status benefits. Whereas education professors do not add much to the aura of the university (as their arts and sciences colleagues are quick to point out), they enjoy being illuminated by its glow. By contrast, as the Holmes Group so accurately points out, the status of teaching tends to exert a downward pull on the public standing of teacher education. This downward pull is the factor that *Ed School* ignores, in the process undercutting the potential effectiveness of its effort to reform teacher education.

Why is the status of teaching relatively low in the United States? First, with 2.8 million teachers on the job at any one time, teaching is a mass occupation and as such cannot credibly claim to be an elite profession. And with more than 200,000 new recruits called for every year, teacher education is never going to be an exclusive form of professional preparation. Second, since teacher salaries are dependent on the public purse and since voters have the opportunity to express their preferences about school funding through frequent millage elections, there is an effective ceiling on what members of this occupation can make. Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that American teachers

will ever be able to earn an income that puts them substantially above the level of the average taxpayer.¹⁶

Third, public school teachers suffer from the negative image of public employment that characterizes this market-oriented society. Market ideology in the U.S. labels private sector workers as productive and public employees as drones. The high professions have played into this ideology effectively by identifying themselves as minientrepreneurs operating under the fee-for-service model. Teachers cannot make this same claim. Fourth, in the public eye, there is nothing mysterious about teaching that might justify high status and elevated pay. Everyone has seen it up close as a student, and the subject matter that teachers purvey seems commonsensical to most adults who have already acquired this learning. The esoteric knowledge and private language of law and medicine are missing from teaching. Fifth, teaching is seen as women's work, and this nudges its status downward in the direction of nursing and social work rather than upward toward the male-dominated high professions.

Market pressures have played a significant role in shaping the distinctive history of American teacher education, and they have left it with a disabling legacy. Education schools have been, and continue to be, torn between competing concerns about social efficiency and social mobility. They continue to occupy a status at the lower end of the educational hierarchy, which has both undermined their ability to carry on sound programs of professional preparation and interfered with efforts to strengthen these programs. Those who would like to reform teacher education will have to tangle with this legacy if they are serious about making a change. The alternative is to keep repeating the old cycle of attacking teacher education for its inferiority and thereby reinforcing its lowly status.

NOTES

1. This chapter is a more thorough examination of some ideas about the relationship between markets and teacher education which I first addressed in a lecture delivered at the conference on Continuity and Change in Teacher Education (University of Western Ontario, October 1991) and in an article for *Kappan* titled "An Unlovely Legacy: The Disabling Impact of the Market on American Teacher Education" (forthcoming).

2. See, for example, Holmes Group (1986); Clifford and Guthrie (1988); Goodlad (1990); Gideonse (1992); Popkewitz (1987); Liston and Zeichner (1991); Ginsburg (1988); Kramer (1991).

3. Books: Borrowman (1956); Herbst (1989a); Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik (1990). Articles: Borrowman (1971); Urban (1990); Warren (1985); Johnson (1987); Clifford (1986); Herbst (1980; 1989b). Chapters in books: Clifford and Guthrie (1988); Johnson (1989); Herbst (1989b); Ginsburg (1988); Liston and Zeichner (1991); Tom (1984); and Goodlad (1990).

4. For the purposes of this chapter, I am defining a market as a social arena in which individual or organizational actors competitively pursue private gain through the exchange of commodities (the buying and selling of goods and services). The value of these commodities, and thus the degree of benefit enjoyed by producers and consumers, is established by the relationship between supply and demand rather than by any intrinsic qualities in the goods or services themselves.

5. Eisenmann (1990) provides an interesting case study of this form of market pressure in Pennsylvania. Altenbaugh and Underwood (1990) capture some key elements of this issue in their review of the evolution of the normal school.

6. Warren (1985, p. 5) lists a whole series of colorful slanders on teacher education issued during the 1980s:

One report announces that "never before in the nation's history has the caliber of those entering the teaching profession been as low as it is today" (Feistritzer, 1983, p. 112). Colorado Governor Richard Lamm comments, "List the ten most somnolent courses in a university, and nine of them will be teacher courses." That remark pales in quotability next to Gary Sykes' characterization of teacher

preparation as "higher education's dirty little secret." H. Ross Perot, the Texas industrialist credited with the recent passage of that state's school reform bill, likens teacher education to a fire drill... The hyperbole borders on silliness, but it gives historians something to chew on.

7. Some assign this honor to Samuel Hall, who founded a normal school in 1823 in Concord, Vermont (Borrowman, 1971).

8. Cook, 1927, p. 3; quoted in Sedlak (1989, p. 266).

9. For a more comprehensive discussion of the social efficiency and social mobility functions of education, see Labaree (1990).

10. For a fascinating case study of the role that the market played in the evolution of normal schools in Pennsylvania, see Eisenmann (1990).

11. For close examination of the causes and effects of commodification on American education and the impact of the social mobility goal on educational institutions, see Labaree (1988, 1990); Collins (1979); Goldman and Tickamyer (1984); and Green (1980).

12. For a perceptive analysis of the tension between "the academic and the vocational" within university-based schools of education, see chapter three of Clifford and Guthrie's *Ed School* (1988).

13. The Holmes Group has come out with another report since this volume was published (*Tomorrow's Schools*, 1990). I am focusing on the earlier report because it provides a clear analysis of the problems of teacher education and a proposal for reforming it; the second one focuses on the rationale for establishing "professional development schools." A third report, tentatively titled "Tomorrow's Schools of Education," is currently being drafted.

14. One high-visibility proposal for the reform of teacher education in recent years is the one put forward by John Goodlad in *Teachers for Our Nation's Schools* (1990) and two supporting volumes (Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik, 1990a, 1990b). On the issues that divide the *Tomorrow's Teachers* and *Ed School*, Goodlad tends to take a middle road. As a result, it is less useful for this discussion than the other two, since they provide a clear set of alternatives that can be addressed through the kind of market analysis developed in this paper.

15. See Labaree (1992) for an extended discussion of this process and its implications for the teacher professionalization reform movement.

16. By contrast, consider the situation in Canada, where local taxpayers do not have the same direct say in school finance and where teachers earn substantially higher salaries than they do in the U.S.

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