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CHAPTER 1

A Framework for Teacher Education in Special Education

Teacher Education Matters

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> We shouldn't try to do something better until we first determine if we should do it at all.
>
> —DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

> As in other fields of teacher training, special education is undergoing significant changes. In addition to the growing need to supply the nation with sufficient numbers of teachers to meet the demand for special educational services, there is an increasing emphasis on improving the quality of the teacher-training process and product. Teacher preparation programs, like the personnel they train, are being held accountable for their methods through the effects they produce; hence, the trend toward competency-based teacher certification. (Thiagarajan, Semmel, & Semmel, 1974, p. 3)

This quotation is from a book written over 35 years ago, *Instructional Development for Training Teachers of Exceptional Children: A Sourcebook*. In the book, teacher trainers were given guidelines for how to train candidates for positions in special education. While some of the techniques in those pages might, in the 21st century, seem dated, or even inadequate, most of what they wrote is still relevant today. Teacher trainers were told to determine what instructional materials might be required, and who the learners were (meaning candidates). They were also guided toward task-analyzing the teaching process, and how to specify instructional objectives.

Then, in the second part of the book, readers were taught about construction of criterion-referenced tests, methods of instruction, mastery learning, self-instructional formats, and even some computer-based formats of training. In the final two parts of the book, special education teacher educators were given guidelines on how to develop and disseminate what has been developed to complete the process of teacher training. Over 35 years later, this remains the only book to have addressed special education teacher education, even though research in the field has continued, and journals such as *Teacher Education and Special Education* publish up-to-date research and descriptions of excellent programs. So, what do we know about the status of special education teacher preparation in the 21st century?

It is difficult to open a journal, or even a newspaper, these days without seeing a mention of the current shortage of teachers, especially in the areas of mathematics, sciences, and special education. These shortages are not new, nor is there any real sign of their abating soon. At the same time, in the current economic crisis, it is equally common to read of layoffs, cutbacks of services, pay cuts, and so forth. In the face of these circumstances, encouraging candidates to enter a field they have little experience in can be difficult. Even with current, hopefully short term, cutbacks, there still seem to be too few special education teachers produced, either by institutions of higher education (universities) or alternate means.

The research on teacher shortages, though, is problematic, as it is confounded with issues of definitions of high quality, certification, and what counts as attrition. Some researchers count leaving a particular job or district as attrition, whereas others may count as attribution an actual change from the field of education. Therefore, a teacher who simply moves to a new school district, and takes another special education teaching job, might be counted as a "leaver." Likewise, individuals who leave the classroom for jobs in administration, or to pursue an advanced degree, may be counted as leaving the field in one study but not in another. In my career, I might have been counted as a leaver several times: when I left my first job to move to another state, when I left that state and teaching position to go to graduate school, and when I left my job after graduate school to return for my PhD studies. However, I have never left the field, even though I have left the classroom. At any rate, it is not clear that the problems are as severe as presented in some places, but it does seem clear that there is, in fact, a shortage (Boe, 2006). It is not within the scope of this book to address these issues directly, but they surely impact how the task of preparing teachers should be (and will be) approached.

Due to the prevailing shortages of special education teachers, special education teacher educators face pressures from schools, universities, state education departments, and the public in general to turn out more and better teachers more quickly. How do we work with these tensions and competing interests of excellent preparation and rapid preparation? What are the factors that help

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develop good teachers? How do we prepare best? Even with the rush to quickly prepare teachers—the focus needs to be on doing that *well*, regardless of the time it takes.

Currently, there are various avenues described in the literature for approaching special education teacher education: undergraduate preparation, fifth-year programs, graduate-level preparation (including Master of Arts in Teaching [MAT] degrees), a possible need for general education certification first, classes offered on a traditional campus, online instruction, on-the-job learning, regional centers, and more. That said, how do we work with these tensions as well as competing interests of excellent preparation and rapid preparation? The purpose of this book is to discuss features of teacher education programs that produce excellent teachers, realizing that the same goals can be accomplished in many different ways. I intend to describe the important features we need to include in our courses and programs. These features of excellent preparation should be considered no matter how the candidates come to us. Simply put, the job of the special education teacher educator is to produce excellent special education teachers. To do that, we must consider what needs to be part of their education and then provide it.

This chapter lays out what is known about effective teacher education programs in general education, and discusses how these features may appear in special education teacher preparation (Brownell, Ross, Colón, & McCallum, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2006). This chapter also addresses what sets special education teacher education apart from general teacher education. What is "special," in other words, about our work? The literature on the nature and needs of the shortage of special education teachers helps inform the chapter, as well as what may set special education apart from other areas that may also be experiencing shortages (Duffy & Forgan, 2005). Finally, there will be a brief discussion of two sets of standards which inform teacher education. The Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC, 2009) standards for special educators are a major resource that informs teacher preparation practices. The other set of standards for teacher educators are general standards for teacher education from the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE, 2007).

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EFFECTIVE TEACHER EDUCATION IN GENERAL EDUCATION

While there is research that addresses teacher preparation for general education teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Lampert, 2001), it is not a well-established area of high-quality research. Israel (2009) suggested that there is likely an assumption that teacher preparation should be intuitive to teachers. There is historical precedence for this. Before the establishment of normal schools, individuals merely had to be good

students in order to teach. Now, university preparation of teachers is the norm, but how candidates are taught in universities is not well studied. That said, there are position and policy papers, if not a large body of research, regarding general education teacher education.

Reviewing the literature, there are aspects of general teacher education that can be generalized across specialty areas, including special education. Effective teacher education programs in general education have been described by Brownell and colleagues (2003) and Darling-Hammond (2006) and include the following features:

1. Faculty have a coherent, common, and clear vision of good teaching.
2. Faculty have developed standards for ensuring quality teaching by the candidates.
3. There is a blending of theory, disciplinary knowledge, and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge and practice.
4. Faculty use an active pedagogy that employs modeling and promotes reflection.
5. The curriculum is grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development, learning, social contexts, and subject matter.
6. Faculty use case study methods, teacher research, performance assessments, and portfolio evaluation. Learning is applied to real problems.
7. There are carefully crafted and extended clinical experiences.
8. The curriculum focuses on meeting the needs of a diverse student population and contains explicit strategies to help candidates confront their beliefs/assumptions about people different from themselves.
9. Collaboration is used as a vehicle for building a professional community, and strong relationships, common knowledge, and shared beliefs link school-based and university-based faculty.
10. Well-defined standards of practice and performance are used to guide and evaluate coursework/clinical work.

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General education teacher preparation, therefore, can provide guidance for various specialty areas in education, including special education. The various standards can serve as guideposts for what to include in programs, at a minimum, to help candidates become teachers in any field. In the subsequent chapters of this book, the ideals and standards for general teacher education will help inform what special education teacher education should look like.

No Dream Denied

Spooner (2005) enumerated what to look for in quality teacher preparation, naming the six dimensions from *No Dream Denied* (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003):

1. Careful recruitment and selection of candidates.
2. Strong academic preparation for teaching, including deep knowledge of subjects to be taught, and firm understanding of how students learn.
3. Extensive clinical practice to develop effective teaching skills, including an ability to teach specific content effectively, at specific grade levels, to diverse students.
4. Entry-level teaching support through residencies and mentored induction.
5. Modern learning technologies that are embedded in academic preparation, clinical practice, induction, and ongoing professional development.
6. Assessment of teacher preparation programs' effectiveness.

Each of these dimensions raises questions for special education. Many special education teacher preparation programs are hampered in their ability to recruit and select candidates carefully. In many cases, the programs are small, and might be under pressure to increase enrollment by lowering or ignoring standards. Another situation that arises are candidates coming to programs who have already been hired by schools as special education teachers on an emergency or provisional basis, and nearby programs that have an ethical obligation to train them to be good special education teachers. Having a strong academic preparation for teaching is certainly a worthy goal, but having a deep understanding of all subjects to be taught might be more unattainable. Special educators should have a firm understanding of how students learn, which in fact might be considered foundational to their content knowledge. The third factor noted by Spooner (2005), providing extensive clinical practice, is something that is difficult to argue with in principle, but also can be difficult to fulfill since special educators are often licensed over a wide range of grades, or types of disability. These issues will be directly addressed in other chapters of the book.

Continuing to examine this list (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003; Spooner, 2005), and how it relates to special education teacher preparation, we should keep in mind that the new teachers who are entering the field will still require support, and we can work closely with school districts to help support these new teachers in their first several years. As technology becomes more a part of our daily lives, and options expand, training programs are in a position to reach teachers (former candidates) and continue the teaching and mentoring process. Finally, to determine if we are doing what we set out to do, we must assess our programs. These issues are discussed in more detail later in this book.

EFFECTIVE TEACHER EDUCATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

While there is guidance available about general education teacher education, special education teacher education is not an established area of inquiry (Brownell et

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al., 2003; Israel, 2009; Leko, 2008). Israel (2009) provided the following basic definition of special education teacher education, whether it originates at a university or is based in a school district: Special education teacher education involves introducing preservice or inservice teachers to the content and pedagogical tools necessary to teach students with disabilities effectively. The inherent complexities of teacher education are magnified when it comes to special education teacher education (Israel, 2009). At this point there is no solid synthesis of available programs and their features. The focus of programs varies according to age and grade levels and categories of disability covered, which may alter significantly what programs cover.

Further complicating matters is that we currently find ourselves in a crisis situation regarding preparing special education teachers quickly in order to get them into classrooms where they are needed. There is little time to truly investigate what method or methods of preparation would be preferable. Instead, universities find themselves under pressure from state departments of public instruction to produce teachers with as few "roadblocks" as possible. Universities may have a different viewpoint, and see these roadblocks as necessary to the degree program, the school, college, or university vision, or best practice. States have established various methods for producing licensed teachers, ranging from full degree programs to methods that require no coursework whatsoever, beyond the possession of a bachelor's degree.

Indeed, despite the wide variety of options for candidates, the majority of special educators are prepared, at least in part, in traditional university programs. This indicates that the attention to alternative routes may be blown out of proportion—or overcovered—in the literature and overshadow the larger issues of special education teacher education. At this point, the literature available points to the advantages of a coherent program (see above). The literature is less clear as to whether "fast-track" licensure, or taking courses at a variety of universities to meet discreet standards, will lead to excellent special education teachers. At the very least, preparation approaches should include the qualities addressed in this book.

Alternative Routes to Licensure

Given that there are numerous routes to licensure for special education teachers, it is important to briefly consider conditions for success in alternate routes. Several have been identified in the literature, including the following, identified by Bergeron, Larson, Prest, Dumas-Hopper, and Wenhart (2005): communication, use of cohorts, field experiences, partnerships with local education agencies (LEAs), practical experiences, and use of technology. The optimal size of a cohort or class size for creating community was described as "small" by Beck and Kosnik (2006), by which they meant 25–80 candidates, dividing these groups into even smaller cohorts for subject areas, practicum clusters, and so forth. These conditions very closely mirror the conditions for success in teacher preparation

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in general. While these features have been suggested as conditions for success, it is unclear how many alternative routes have how many of these features in place, and to what extent.

Given the wide variability, the jury is still out regarding the efficacy of alternate routes in teacher preparation. Since there are so many variations on what is possible, it becomes difficult to draw strong conclusions. There is also an argument to be made that, since candidates for traditional routes may differ from those for alternate routes, comparison of the candidates is probably not useful. The question, in any case, is whether or not candidates are being prepared to take on the role of special education teacher at the end of their training. Whether you are in the position, therefore, of providing support to candidates taking a traditional undergraduate or graduate program, or candidates taking an alternate route, or some combination of those scenarios, the recommendations in these pages should be useful. It is beyond the scope of this book to address the wisdom or efficacy of these paths to licensure, though it is my bias/belief that preparation in a university program is preferable.

Features of Special Education Programs

Brownell and her colleagues (2003) completed a review of features of special education programs described in the literature. These, which I discuss in more detail in the following chapters, include the following attributes:

Maintaining a Positivist or Constructivist Orientation toward Learning/Teaching

Effective programs may emphasize one of these orientations or have a blended approach. Whichever orientation is taken by the program, a strong competency-based approach to teacher education assumes that a specific set of knowledge and skills exists and should be disseminated to students. This is not to say that orientations and emphases cannot shift and change over time. What is important is that there is a strong, well-articulated, and defensible approach to special education teacher education. (See Chapter 2.)

Crafting Extensive Field Experiences That Are Well Supervised, Incorporate Practices Acquired in Courses, and Provide Links between Theory and Practice

This area of teacher preparation has gotten much attention, and rightly so. It has long been recognized that field experiences are where candidates are given the opportunities to practice skills learned in classrooms. At the same time, this is the area that is most difficult to control, since there are myriad factors beyond the control of the university or entity making the placement. (See Chapter 3.)

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Focus on Inclusion

Since the late 1980s, students with disabilities have been increasingly likely to be educated alongside their general education peers in inclusive settings. As of 2006, 95% of students 6 to 21 years old served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) have been enrolled in a regular school. Furthermore, over 80% of students receiving services are educated at least part of the day in general education classrooms: 53.7% spend less than 21% of their time outside the general classroom, and 23.7% spend 21–60% of their time outside the general classroom (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Therefore, effective special education teacher educators emphasize education about inclusive practices. (See Chapter 5.)

Diversity Education

In addition to inclusion of students with various ability levels, special education teacher educators also need to help candidates increase their knowledge about cultural diversity. Not surprisingly, increasing diversity in the schools has received a lot of attention from the general public. Current estimates are that by 2020 nearly 40% of students will be members of a historically underrepresented culture (Kewal Ramani, Gilbertson, Fox, & Provasnik, 2007). However, teachers, at this point at least, still tend to be female and white. Regardless of the cultural background of the special education teachers, they must be prepared to teach in a cultural context that is very likely to be different from the one in which they were educated. (See Chapter 5.)

Working Together

Special education programs need to include information about collaboration, including collaboration between teachers, between schools and teachers, and among cohorts of candidates. Coursework for students about collaboration with families and professionals is likely going to be an important part of accomplishing this goal. While the area of collaboration is recognized in special education as an important part of the job, the concept of collaboration is not as likely to be covered in general education preparation programs. It then becomes incumbent on the special education faculty to communicate with general education faculty about the need to collaborate. It also becomes the job of the candidates to learn leadership skills as well, as special educators are often in the position of being "lead collaborator" with a variety of people. Teachers need to communicate regularly with parents and work with them as team members for the benefit of the student. Special education teachers may also find themselves in the position at times of supervising one or more paraprofessionals. Finally, they must collaborate with general educators to get information about the general curriculum and

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collaborate on appropriate modifications and accommodations for students. (See Chapter 5.)

Evaluating the Impact of Teacher Education Programs through a Variety of Assessment Methods

Effective programs, including special education programs, are continually evaluated and adjustments are made where needed. Special education teacher educators take into account candidate feedback, employer feedback, and peer feedback. They also pay attention to changing requirements and changing circumstances when determining needed changes. (See Chapter 6.)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHER EDUCATION IN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

As stated earlier, there is a body of literature regarding the preparation of general education teachers, and we can extrapolate from that literature to a certain extent for the purposes of preparing special education teachers. The question, then, is whether special education is different in any way in terms of teacher preparation. If it is different, why is there not a body of literature and research about it? One answer is that special education is a relatively young field, whether using 1974 (passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education of Handicapped Children Act) or 1922 (founding of CEC) or another date as a starting point. Education for the general population has been addressed in a more systematic way for longer than that, and teachers have been trained to teach general education populations since a much earlier time. So, the relative newness of the field may be one explanation as to why there has been but one book (Thiagarajan et al., 1974) written about how to prepare special education teachers. There is literature available in journals, but it has not yet been pulled together in a coherent way for the purpose of guiding special education teacher education practice. That is another goal of this volume.

An alternative explanation for the lack of research may be that preparing special education teachers is no different from preparing general education teachers. At its most basic, this is true. However, Duffy and Forgan (2005) pointed out several factors that make special education teacher preparation unique. Special educators do, indeed, have special knowledge that prepares them to provide specialized services for their students, their students' families, and other professionals. These areas include (1) IDEIA legislation; (2) forms of assessment; (3) medical information; (4) due process, individualized education plans (IEPs), and referrals; (5) instructional strategies and diversity of accommodations; (6) complex teacher roles; (7) collaborating with general educators, parents, and paraprofessionals; and (8) cultural diversity issues. The final two items on this list were addressed

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previously, so will not be repeated here. The remaining six items, though, are explained briefly below:

IDEIA Legislation

IDEIA legislation is perhaps the most obvious area making special education teacher education and teachers different from general education teacher education and teachers. Knowledge of the current law (IDEIA, 2004) is critical, and as it approaches regular reauthorizations, special education teacher educators need to make themselves aware of the issues involved and provide feedback to appropriate parties on potential changes. Further, they must convey this knowledge to candidates and help them understand how to use it in practice.

Assessment Practices

Special education teachers are often called upon to administer individual achievement tests to students who have or are suspected of having disabilities. They are also responsible for interpreting tests for parents, teachers, and others who may have an interest in the results. Additionally, they may be in a position of developing both formative and summative assessments for their students. Special education teacher educators, therefore, must stay updated on assessment practices and be willing to spend the time it takes to help candidates become proficient in administering and choosing the appropriate tools. Special education teachers also must be expert in modifying or otherwise making accessible teacher-made assessments. They need a deep understanding of how to allow students to "show what they know."

Medical Issues

Special education teachers are more likely than other teachers to deal with a host of medical issues, including administering or monitoring medication their students take, and tracking behavioral or other changes resulting from the medication. They may be in the position of providing first aid such as in the case of seizure disorders, and may at times have to provide more specialized care for certain students.

Due Process, IEPs, and Referrals

While general educators have responsibilities for participation in the IEP process, and they are often the ones who initiate referrals for special education, it is often up to the special educator to help guide the process. The special educator is expected to be up to date as procedures change, and to help others in their school understand those changes. For example, as more schools and LEAs move toward

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using response to intervention (RTI) to assess students suspected of having a learning disability, the special educator must understand fully the various components involved in the process. Special education teacher educators likewise need to be up to date on these procedures and help candidates understand them, as well as on controversies that may exist and pitfalls to avoid.

Instructional Strategies and Diversity of Accommodations

While general educators certainly understand instructional strategies, special educators are expected to have a wider array of such strategies at their disposal. Since special educators work with the students who are not typical learners, they tend to have more experience with and knowledge of a variety of methods. Similarly, since special educators encounter students with a wide range of needs, and possibly quite unique needs, they need to be excellent problem solvers and at times be quite creative in how accommodations are made for their students. In his meta-analyses of what works for students with learning disabilities, for example, Lee Swanson and colleagues (Swanson & Hoskyn, 1998; Swanson & Sachse-Lee, 2000) identified strategies instruction as a positive influence on academic achievement.

Complex Teacher Roles

As has already been noted, special education teachers may take on a variety of "teacher roles," which may vary over the course of an individual teacher's career. These teachers may be lead, or primary teacher for their students, may co-teach with general educators, may collaborate with other professionals (physical, occupational, or other therapists; speech/language pathologists; or medical professionals), may have paraprofessionals whom they supervise, and/or may be consultants to other teachers. They need to be prepared to work effectively at any point along the continuum of placements available to students. They also need to understand these various arrangements and be able to advocate for their students so that their students have the best learning situation for their needs. As special education teacher roles continue to evolve, both teachers and teacher educators need to be able to take on new roles and responsibilities, as well as be informed enough to articulate the appropriateness of new roles and responsibilities.

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NATURE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER SHORTAGE

In education, the most common areas of teacher shortage have historically been math, science, and special education. Math and science teacher shortages might be partially explained by the job opportunities outside of education. Special education, on the other hand, does not have that "excuse." So why is there such a

shortage? One explanation might be that most potential candidates are not aware of special education as a career opportunity. It is likely that potential teachers were not recipients of special education in their own schooling. College students may choose another education major with the stated objective of helping students who struggle, and might be unaware of special education as a field. The onus falls, in my opinion, on faculty members at universities to speak to potential education majors about special education as a field. Duffy and Forgan (2005) mentioned several strategies, including "grow your own," recruiting candidates from non-shortage areas, and mentoring to retain. Special education programs can use university resources to contact college students who are "undeclared" or "undecided" majors. Directly contacting them with an invitation to consider special education can increase the numbers of candidates who are in preparation programs, and eventually teaching.

Sun, Bender, and Fore (2003) provided an example from Georgia of a web-based certification program developed in an effort to increase the supply of special education teachers in the state. They found that having a web-based option tended to increase enrollment. They provided cautions for universities about how to go about starting an online program and how to do it well. It is also up to professional organizations to advocate for better working conditions, realistic job expectations, and good laws protecting students, families, and teachers. While this book focuses on quality special education teacher education, some of the same approaches can be applied to retention and advocacy, so might be of interest to those audiences as well.

Another explanation for the small numbers of students pursuing degrees in special education is that as a field special education may have a "bad" reputation: Potential candidates may have heard of difficult students and "too much" paperwork, and might be concerned about not having "their own class." More and more, though, these are features of general education as well, given the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, recently known as No Child Left Behind [NCLB]) and other requirements. It is up to special education teacher educators to better explain the job of a special educator, dispel myths, and assure candidates they can be equipped to deal with the complexities of the job.

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Retaining Good Special Educators

While various strategies might increase the number of new special education teachers, the next task, retaining them, belongs primarily to the schools (Billingsley, 2005). According to the CEC (Duffy & Forgan, 2005), within the first 5 years, four out of ten teachers leave the field of special education. By 2005 over 200,000 new special educators were needed. Cook and Boe (2007), however, suggested that teacher shortages appear to be more a result of inadequate supply to the field than of attrition issues. According to Duffy and Forgan (2005), *Education Week*

reported that 98% of districts fell short of filling positions. Boyer and Mainzer (2003) stated that in the last 10 years of the 20th century, when there was an increase in students identified with disabilities by 30%, the increase in teaching positions rose by just 11%. Special education teacher education can help change these statistics by equipping special education teachers well, following up in initial years to mentor formally or informally, and help candidates find their voices as advocates for their profession.

While trying to limit attrition, we should also be cautious about being too disparaging of leavers or transfers. People may leave to pursue more education, and if they proceed through to a doctoral program, they may ultimately contribute to increasing the special education teacher pool. Some may leave temporarily to start a family, in which case they are counted in some studies as leavers, and may or may not be counted as returners. Some may leave for positions in administration or in general education and can still have an important, positive impact on students receiving special education services. What is concerning in attrition studies, though, is when teachers who leave note lack of preparation as a reason (Billingsley, 2004; Mastropieri, 2001; Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999; Whitaker, 2001). This factor clearly falls within the purview of special education teacher education.

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Who Leaves and Who Stays?

In reviewing data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Boe (2006) found an increase over time in both the number of students identified with disabilities *and* increases in the number of teacher positions. These teacher positions, according to these data, were *mostly filled* with fully certified teachers. Boe still cited problems of quality and quantity. As he noted, while the quantitative data are problematic, it is clear that a real shortage exists.

Quality or the lack thereof is also difficult to judge. Boe (2006) defined it simply as appropriate or lack of appropriate certification. One difficulty with this way of looking at quality is the wide range of what is considered to be "inappropriate certification." For example, a teacher might be considered inappropriately certified if he or she is teaching high school special education with an elementary special education certificate. A second teacher hired for the same job who does not have any education degree at all is similarly counted as "inappropriately certified." Presumably, hiring the first teacher would result in higher-quality instruction. Special education students are typically not sorted according to disability label for instruction, yet many states certify teachers according to disability label. This can also lead to special education teachers who are technically "inappropriately certified" yet have the necessary skills and training to do an effective job.

Gehrke and Murri (2006) looked at the issue of retention from a different perspective: discovering why special education teachers remain in the field. They found that teachers who stayed in special education were those who were resourceful and resilient in advocating for their students and programs. These teachers still expressed frustration around issues of inclusion and curriculum, however.

Writing about attrition of teachers, Billingsley (2004) discovered that individuals who had higher NTE scores (National Teachers' Exam, now the PRAXIS series) were twice as likely to leave as those who received lower scores. Similarly, teachers who received additional degrees (master's and beyond) were more likely to leave. These results are not really surprising, and they are related. Teachers may obtain further education for the purpose of leaving the classroom (to administration or to higher education). Likewise, teachers who score well on standardized tests are more likely to meet admission requirements for these degree programs. Billingsley found that the likely leavers were younger and had less experience, were uncertified, had higher test scores, or left for personal reasons. In conclusion, regardless of the reason for shortages or for attrition, it is clear that we need more and better strategies to attract individuals into the field of special education, give them the tools they need, support them as they learn, and mentor them as they begin their careers.

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OUR ROLE AS TEACHER EDUCATORS

As teacher educators, we have at least five areas of professional identity: teacher, scholar, collaborator, learner, and leader. Cochran-Smith (2003) identified three traditional areas of teacher educators' work: teacher education, research and inquiry into teaching and learning, and policy analysis as it relates to education and social justice. In many cases we notice a blurring of these roles. Guskey (2000), in his book about evaluating professional development, provided the following steps to guide school districts in designing professional development, which can be applied to teacher education and teacher education preparation as well: (1) begin with a clear statement of purposes and goals, which need to be examined and evaluated; (2) ensure that the goals are worthwhile; and (3) determine how the goals can be assessed. The following chapters address these in the context of preparing special education teachers.

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UWM), Zeichner and Conklin (2005) developed a series of graduate courses in teacher education: supervision/mentoring preservice teachers, analysis of pertinent policy issues, teacher professional development, and reflective practices in teacher education. It was reported that most UWM doctoral students did not take these courses. Zeichner and Conklin suggested that these students saw their role as teacher educator as

a means of financing doctoral studies related to their major focus area and considered teacher education to be of secondary importance. This may lead to problems in learning to be a teacher as a candidate in a research-intensive university. Many faculty have taught only in this type of university. It is seen by some as superior, and there is a bias toward working there. Doctoral students are not typically exposed to learning and teaching in smaller institutions. In my own case, I attended research-intensive universities exclusively and only when I got a job after graduating was I at an institution that placed more emphasis on teaching. Whether we are at a major university or a smaller institution, if we find ourselves in the role of a teacher educator, we need to take that role seriously and encourage excellent special education candidates and teachers to explore various options for becoming excellent teacher educators.

What Do Special Education Teacher Educators Think?

In his keynote address at the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the CEC in 2007, Meyen reported on a survey of the TED membership and discussed the results in several areas. These results are useful as we consider how to best frame special education teacher education. He found that the major changes (roadblocks, challenges) that have hindered teacher education in special education were unfunded mandates, an overemphasis on bureaucratic processes, and the NCLB highly qualified approach. He suggested that we strategically recruit into special education teacher education and offered several recommendations for the organization (TED as well as the parent organization CEC) to pursue.

The overarching recommendation he offered was to improve teacher education. He also suggested to the membership that they continue to pursue advocacy and provide national leadership on issues. The areas of concern noted by Meyen included research on teacher education, issues surrounding certification and licensure, definitions of highly qualified teachers and other NCLB issues, and, finally, recruitment of individuals to the profession of teacher education. As special education teacher educators become more involved in policy and address issues noted by Meyen as well as the reauthorizations of ESEA (currently NCLB), the higher education act, and IDEIA, the profession of special education teacher educator is improved and becomes more capable of doing its job and attracting more people to its ranks.

So, what else might be needed for teacher educators to do their jobs better and to address these issues in the field, particularly the field of special education? Meyen, in his research, found that the following conditions need to be in place to ensure effective special education teacher educators. First, quality faculty colleagues are important. This may be an issue in many universities, as special education faculty might be part of a larger department, school, or college which may not have the same goals, outcomes, or perspectives as special education.

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Special education teacher educators might feel isolated if they are the one person representing the field of special education at their university. In those cases, it is important for the faculty member to seek out people within the university to collaborate with, as well as other special education faculty in other institutions. Special education faculty, like the candidates they are training, also may find themselves in the position of educating their colleagues about their roles and responsibilities.

The second area of concern noted by Meyen (2007) was professional preparation of teacher educators. Doctoral programs typically focus on an area of disability rather than special education teacher education. However, faculty who do not work in research-intensive universities are primarily working as teacher educators. How we are prepared to fulfill this critical role is an understudied area (Israel, 2009). In a special issue of *Teacher Education and Special Education* (Johnson & Bauer, 2003), on the study of special education leadership, one group of authors suggested a part-time EdD program for preparing special education teacher educators (Evans, Andrews, Miller, & Smith, 2003).

In the same issue, Pion, Smith, and Tyler (2003) noted that, as with K–12 teachers, there are more faculty vacancies than graduates of doctoral programs, and there is therefore a persistent unmet demand. This is logical, of course, since there is a shortage of special education teachers, and the supply of available faculty functions like a funnel in the following manner: Special education teacher educators come from the ranks of special education teachers, which is already a small pool. Teacher educators are the subset of special education teachers who want to pursue doctoral degrees, and who then want to pursue careers in universities. Also, since there are many more universities that prepare teachers than grant doctoral degrees, this adds to the supply/demand issue. Smith, Pion, Tyler, and Gilmore (2003) found that more than a third of searches in special education teacher education were failed searches. For example, in California, the six schools with doctoral degrees in special education graduated about six students per year, and only two per year pursued faculty positions. This shortage also naturally affects school districts' ability to provide appropriate education for all students.

Israel (2009) found just 18 studies that related to either preparation of teacher educators or the skills/competencies of teacher educators. It should be noted that this review represented all teacher educators, not just special education teacher educators, and much of the research was international, which further complicates conclusions for special education teacher education. A persistent issue with teacher education faculty is their lack of identification with their role as teacher educators (Israel, 2009). Faculty are more likely to identify with their discipline or research. Like the candidates they are preparing, teacher educators have a range of roles. This is highlighted by responsibilities which come with different Carnegie classifications. In any faculty position, there are additional parts of the job beyond teacher preparation—research and service, for example. Other roles may

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include working with novice teachers, collaborating with school districts, and facilitating policy changes. All of these are important, and can inform your role as a teacher educator. Unfortunately, the field has largely ignored the preparation of and institutional supports for teacher educators (Cochran-Smith, 2003). The overarching issue is that teacher educators and researchers have yet to identify best practices adequately.

In her research, Israel (2009) discussed how special education teacher educators were prepared. She found diversity among doctoral programs. Not all were focused on teacher education, and few had it as a line of inquiry. She concluded that future special education teacher educators should be provided with experiences that immerse them in the practices of teacher educators (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005), just as we try, as teacher educators, to immerse candidates in field experiences and practice prior to their entering the field. Logically, doctoral students would benefit from directed experiences that prepare them for their future role as teacher educators (Cochran-Smith, 2003). There are similarities between educating teacher educators and educating teachers in that it is difficult to link outcomes of students directly to the practice of the educator (or teacher educator), but making those connections may be important.

A final finding by Meyen (2007) was that responders to his survey found involvement in associations to be important to their success. Of course, his respondents were those who were already members of professional associations, so the sample was biased in that direction. This is still an important consideration for special education teacher educators, though, given the potential isolation of special education faculty noted above. Involvement in professional associations can be a very important part of maintaining one's grounding and sanity. Involvement also gives members access to journals, websites, blogs, and more. Information is made available to members on upcoming legislation, as well as opportunities to be involved as the legislation is being drafted.

Meyen's research also uncovered what responders felt hindered their effectiveness as special education teacher educators. These included the conditions of a heavy workload, insufficient research time, and an insufficient appreciation for teacher education. In most cases, special education should be expected to be a smaller program than general education in terms of candidates prepared. But special education teacher education might then draw attention as a small program and thereby be in danger of being cut. Faculty need to be prepared to explain and defend their programs. Policies in Meyen's survey that were noted as hindering progress in special education teacher education included unfunded and underfunded legislation (notably IDEIA as well as NCLB), the failure of reforms to include disabilities, and the issues surrounding NCLB and standardized testing. Responders to Meyen also indicated what they wanted for special education teacher education. Basically, special education teacher educators desired more collaboration in teacher preparation, more collaboration in K–12 education, and more effort or emphasis on inclusion.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Teacher education requirements have been seen as a barrier to entering the profession. In response to these complaints, we have seen an increased interest in eliminating or changing some of these barriers. However, this is not without cost to candidates as well as programs. For example, North Carolina had as an entry requirement to teacher education that candidates have a 2.5 grade-point average (GPA) out of a possible 4.0. This has been changed, and universities now have the option of eliminating that requirement. However, a 2.5 GPA is still required for licensure, and in many cases for graduation, so students may find themselves being able to enter teacher education programs, but not exit with a license if they were unable to bridge the gap between their entering GPA and the 2.5 required for licensure. Lessening restrictions, however they are operationalized, is in response to the basic problem: Children keep showing up at schools, and they need teachers.

Special education is different from other fields, since changing licensing requirements in other fields would not have the potential to eliminate federally mandated services. For example, changing licensing requirements so that middle school teachers do not need to specialize in a content area, but are more broadly prepared (like their elementary education counterparts), would not cause middle school students to stop receiving an education. Or, to take a more extreme case, a state could decide that physical education was no longer a required part of the curriculum, thereby eliminating the need for physical education teacher education in universities in that state. However, if special education licensure was determined to be unnecessary, special education students in the state might not be able to receive FAPE (free and appropriate public education). So, as long as there is legislation mandating special education, there will be a need for special education teachers, and therefore preparation programs. Teacher educators must fully understand how these evolving issues relate to preservice teacher education and licensure as their instruction influences teacher effectiveness (Nougaret, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2005; Sindelar & Rosenberg, 2000).

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CEC STANDARDS

The CEC provides a definition of a well-prepared special education teacher (2003, 2009). The standards include a recognition that professional preparation occurs along a continuum, from initial preparation, to induction and mentoring, through to continual professional growth. The focus of this book is primarily on how to accomplish the first step of that process, and how this may lead to the next two steps of entry to and continuation in the profession.

An important initial statement from CEC is that beginning special education teachers hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution at a minimum.

This idea conflicts with some proposals by states to allow community colleges to provide teacher preparation. If states were to be successful in these attempts, teachers prepared there might not be able to be licensed in other states, to say nothing of the lessening of their professional status.

CEC standards for well-prepared special educators state that teachers have mastered appropriate core academic subject matter, the knowledge and skills in the CEC Common Core, and an appropriate area of specialization. Pedagogy, or teaching skill, is noted as the actual content of special education. Special education knowledge, in other words, is not about knowledge of any particular academic content that K–12 students might be studying, but is the knowledge of how learning occurs, and what good teaching entails. CEC expects special educators to know subject matter sufficiently to collaborate with general educators, in teaching or co-teaching the subject matter, and designing appropriate learning and performance accommodations and modifications. They note, however, that if a special educator is going to assume sole responsibility for teaching a core academic subject, they must have a solid knowledge base sufficient for students to meet state standards. This is more difficult to accomplish, especially at the secondary level where a special education teacher might have different subject assignments from one year/semester to the next, or multiple subjects to handle in a single assignment. Given the current "highly qualified (HQ)" requirements of NCLB, one might expect to see more co-teaching and inclusive practices, especially at the secondary level. However, there are still places (separate schools, hospitals, and the like) where this would be impossible or very unlikely.

CEC has established standards around 10 domains. At each level of development (initial preparation, induction, and continual professional growth) teachers are expected to have different levels of expertise about each standard, but each standard is considered essential for good practice. They are included in Appendix A. Over 40 states are committed to aligning their licensing processes with the CEC standards. CEC standards are also aligned with the standards of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which give special educators a single set of guidelines and goals for practice.

CEC also commented on issues states face regarding teacher preparation and licensure (2009). Over the history of special education teacher licensure and certification, we have grappled with the dilemma of broad preparation versus categorical preparation. CEC notes that broadly prepared teachers might not be adequately prepared for the complex challenges they might face in their classrooms. On the other hand, narrowly prepared teachers might not be prepared for the diversity of students they meet. CEC expressed concern over teacher certification practices that rely too heavily, or in some cases exclusively, on a single test taken by the teacher candidate. NCLB currently includes a provision that a highly qualified teacher could be one who passes a single test, even though logically this does not seem like a high standard, given the complexities of teaching. At this

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point there seems to be no available test for adequately assessing the content and pedagogy required to be a truly "highly qualified" special education teacher.

Preparing Special Education Personnel

As stated in *No Dream Denied* (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003), teacher preparation must begin with what is known about good teaching. Therefore, in special education, we look to the standards set by the CEC, last revised in 2009. As noted in the previous section, CEC has set minimum expectations for teachers in the areas of standards-based curriculum content, individualized pedagogical content, and subject matter content. Furthermore, there are standards for the preparation of special education personnel. States, universities, and various accrediting bodies use these standards to shape preparation practices, as well as to evaluate teachers. The standards for the preparation of personnel from CEC are briefly noted below, and are contained in Appendix B.

1. A strong conceptual framework on the part of the preparing institution.
2. Candidates have mastered the appropriate CEC content standards.
3. Candidates have a solid grounding in liberal education (reading, written and oral communications, calculation, problem solving, thinking).
4. Candidates have an understanding of the general curriculum, teaching or collaborative teaching of the curriculum, and designing appropriate accommodations and modifications.
5. Candidates who will be assuming sole responsibility for providing academic content have appropriate content knowledge.
6. Programs have an assessment system in place.
7. Programs have appropriate field experiences available for candidates.
8. Programs provide experience with diverse populations of students.
9. Program faculty are well qualified.
10. The program has appropriate leadership, authority, budget, facilities, and resources.

CEC considers a well-prepared special education teacher to be one who has met the 10 content standards (see Appendix A). In addition to these 10 standards, there are also more specific standards for teachers of specific groups of students, as well as standards for paraprofessionals, and leadership standards. The standards provide important guidance for teacher education professionals; however, they lack specificity. This is both good news and bad news. The standards need to be operationalized at the local level, and brought into alignment with other considerations such as the conceptual framework of the preparing entity, local cultural context, area, and level of preparation.

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ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

Another set of standards useful for special education teacher educators is from the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE, 2007). These are broad goals which have applicability for all teacher education programs. The nine standards for teacher educators are included in full in Appendix C. Briefly, they state that teacher educators:

1. Model good teaching.
2. Apply cultural competencies and promote social justice.
3. Engage in scholarship.
4. Are committed to professional development.
5. Provide leadership in program development.
6. Collaborate.
7. Advocate for high-quality education.
8. Contribute to improvement of teacher education.
9. Contribute to visions for teaching, learning, and teacher education.

The first standard, teaching, includes an emphasis on modeling. "In order for teacher educators to impact the profession, they must successfully model appropriate behaviors in order for those behaviors to be observed, adjusted, replicated, internalized, and applied appropriately to learners of all levels and styles" (ATE, 2007). The standard basically states that good teacher educators are good teachers. However, it goes further in stating that good teacher educators also have to make what they are doing explicit for candidates. It is not enough to "do" the good teaching practice, they need to say to candidates "this is what I am doing, and why I am doing it." It is good practice, then, for special education teacher educators to self-talk about teaching decisions and model self-regulation. The four types of self-regulation—self-monitoring, goal setting, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement—should be modeled and taught to candidates just as we want them to model and teach them to their students.

Take, for example, a professor teaching a course to special education candidates with a doctoral candidate assisting in the teaching. The faculty member may explicitly model self-monitoring activities around their teaching practices (preparing a syllabus, keeping notes, preparing lectures, maintaining gradebooks) for the benefit of the doctoral candidate. She may also model goal setting by sharing with the doctoral candidate goals she has for teaching the class. She may model self-evaluation by reflecting with the doctoral candidate about teaching practices. Finally, the faculty member may model self-reinforcement by celebrating with the doctoral candidate at the end of the semester!

Standard 2, cultural competence, is also important to consider. Candidates first need to know their own cultures, which means that teacher educators do as

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well. As teacher educators, we should hold high expectations for all candidates, understanding their developmental levels, backgrounds, and so forth. Teacher educators need to help candidates to understand these concepts and to apply them successfully in their classrooms. Like Standard 1, teacher educators need to make these explicit and transparent in their own practice.

Standards 3 and 4 are related to aspects of a faculty member's job that are not directly related to candidate development. However, without engaging in scholarship and improving their own practice, teacher educators will not be adequately prepared to address candidates' needs. Standard 5, program development, is an ongoing process for most full-time special education teacher educators. In special education, changes in types of licenses granted to candidates or response to changing standards for K–12 students may necessitate change in programs. Also, as faculty shift in their own interest and expertise, different programs may be developed.

Standard 6, collaboration, refers to work with various stakeholders in teacher education. In special education teacher education, our stakeholders vary, but at least include our candidates, fellow faculty members (in special education and general education), public schools, parents, and the public in general. Collaboration is addressed in more detail in this book and is a major consideration in our practice.

The final three standards, public advocacy, teacher education progression, and vision, ask the teacher educator to look beyond the walls of an individual university and work toward improving experiences for all stakeholders, including ourselves. Special education has a rich history of public advocacy, and as special education teacher educators, we should continue to work toward improving outcomes for all.

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LOOKING FORWARD

In conclusion, in order to have successful beginning special education teachers, preparation matters. Brownell and colleagues conducted a review of successful beginning special education teachers in 2005 and reached several conclusions. First, they noted that candidates need to be grounded in content, and while their particular review focused on reading instruction, there are additional content areas that candidates might be expected to cover, which adds to the complexity of a special education teacher's job. Greer and Meyen (2009) noted that typically candidates are relatively underprepared to teach mathematics in their preparation programs, whereas they are still expected to provide math instruction to their students. Indeed, anything at all that is taught in schools could be the responsibility of a special education teacher to address in some way. This might lead to candidates who are prepared in a shallow way across a great deal of content, or who might be prepared in depth in just a few areas of content. In the first

situation, the candidate might not feel truly comfortable with any area. In the second, candidates might find themselves teaching in a content area in which they have little or no preparation.

One way to address this issue is to encourage or require dual licensure in special education and another area. However, this approach requires even more in the way of coursework and field placements and can be a barrier to attracting enough candidates. There is also a danger in a dual program of doing neither general education nor special education well, watering both down so that teachers leave these programs unprepared to deliver high-quality instruction to anyone.

The second finding (Brownell et al., 2005) was that successful beginning special education teachers are experts in classroom management. This is probably the area of most concern to candidates, schools, cooperating teachers, parents, and the general public. Special education candidates likely take the most coursework and get the most practice in this area, yet still typically encounter difficulties in the field. This is partly because of the nature of the students they encounter, but may also be due to the disconnectedness between what is taught in the university classroom and what the candidates experience in their field placements. For example, universities may teach candidates about positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), and local schools may also be moving toward PBIS models, be at various stages of implementation, and what the candidates experience might be very different from how they were instructed. The resulting cognitive dissonance can be disturbing to new teachers, and they may be more likely to adopt the practices of the schools in which they work, and disregard, discount, or have little chance to apply the education they received about best practices.

The third finding regarding successful beginning special education teachers follows naturally from the second. Candidates need a variety of high-quality practice sites, preferably where there is a close match to the philosophies and practices of the university, a close working relationship between the university and supporting school districts, and close supervision by the university (Brownell et al., 2005). Chapter 3 will address field placements in more detail.

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Ethics

Fiedler and Van Haren (2009) called for focused attention on ethical principles in the practice of teaching. They pointed out that ethical dilemmas do exist in our field and advocated for professionals to know their ethical codes. The CEC Code of Ethics (see Appendix D) should be known by special education teacher candidates, and candidates and teachers need to be able to defend positions they take in their practice based on these codes. In their study, Fiedler and Van Haren found that 46% of their respondents, which included administrators and teachers in Wisconsin, had minimal or no knowledge of the CEC Code of Ethics. They noted that teachers have a more direct impact on quality of education, but that

administrators are more often in the position of engaging in advocacy. They argued that professionals need to be able to articulate these basic ethical principles (which can be found in the CEC Code of Ethics) when confronted with an ethical dilemma: (1) beneficence and responsible caring, (2) integrity in professional relationships, (3) responsibility to community and society, (4) benefit maximization, and (5) equal respect (Fiedler & Van Haren, 2009, p. 162). This indicates that special education teacher educators need to be familiar with the CEC Code of Ethics, and how it relates to other ethical codes candidates and faculty may need to attend to. Teaching specifically about ethical issues and helping candidates to address ethical dilemmas should be carefully and intentionally infused into courses and programs.

Returning to Thiagarajan et al. (1974), addressing how teacher educators can prepare special educators, the stated objective was "to assist the reader in the design, development, and dissemination of instructional materials for training teachers of exceptional children" (p. 1). While some of the issues and procedures are outdated, there are many aspects that still hold true and are useful today when considering educating future special education teachers. Their statement that "as in other fields of teacher training, special education is undergoing significant changes" (p. 3) still holds true today. They presented a model of instructional development they referred to as the "Four-D Model," dividing instructional development into definition, design, development, and dissemination. In this book, I hope to address these issues in light of what we have learned in the intervening 35 years, while still remaining true to the original goal of enhancing preparation of special education teachers.

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