

# The 5Ps of Holistic Policy Development: A Way Forward for Engaging Teacher Educators?

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What would it take to ensure a quality teacher in every classroom? This editorial takes up this pivotally important question in this post-pandemic era marked by increasing rates of teacher attrition and burgeoning teacher shortages. This special issue, within the 75th year of publication for the Journal of Teacher Education (JTE) examines a problem of policy, specifically the role of teacher educators in policy development for increasing the supply of high-quality educators to ensure a quality education in every classroom.

Increasing the supply of high quality educators to ensure a quality education in every classroom is a perennial problem of education preparation. Quality education cannot be had by all without ensuring equal access to quality educators for all. Yet, teacher educators struggle to deliver on this goal. The varied levels of engagement among teacher educators in the teacher education policy arena may explain in part, our profession's inability to effectively contribute to the achievement of this goal. Ensuring that all learners experience the positive impacts of a high-quality educator requires teacher educators to engage in teacher policy development to increase the likelihood of identifying and implementing effective recruitment, preparation, induction, and professional development policies. Effective, in today's context, refers to teacher education policies for mitigating the impact of "unfinished learning" (Dorn et al., 2021) and educator resignations (Walton & Pollock, 2022) associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. As Teacher Educators, we appreciate the competing priorities, other than advocacy, creating barriers for Teacher Educator engagement in the process of "holistic educator policy development" (International Teacher Taskforce on Teachers for Education 2030, 2019). As Editors, we also believe engagement in the process of holistic educator policy development represents a promising mitigation strategy and potential way forward for addressing current concerns over the increase in educator resignations and their impact on an education system's capacity to address unfinished learning by ensuring a quality educator for every classroom. Engagement in a policy process for addressing these concerns may involve engaging with one

or more of the following components of holistic educator policy development.

1. A *purpose* that provides a clear and compelling vision of success for those responsible for ensuring a quality educator for every classroom.
2. A *process* for inclusive social dialogue between the policymakers and those responsible for implementing the policy, to ensure their voices are reflected in the design and increase the likelihood of local buy-in.
3. A *plan* outlining the key dimensions of a holistic approach to ensuring a quality educator for every classroom.
4. A list of *pointers*, or characteristics, of a holistic teacher policy (strategic, feasible, sustainable, context-sensitive) to guide the efforts of those charged with designing and integrating teacher policy within a wider education sector plan for ensuring a quality educator for every classroom.

Unless we begin to address variation in the levels of engagement among teacher educators in the four P's of holistic teacher policy development, any policy-driven, postpandemic response, may result in limited impact on lowering levels of unfinished learning and ensuring a quality educator for every classroom.

This editorial serves as the lead-in commentary for a special issue on holistic policy development for teacher education. Since teacher shortages is a perennial concern for the field of teacher education, this editorial draws on existing research to highlight contributions of teacher educators advancing local efforts for ensuring a quality teacher for every

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classroom. The contributors to this editorial represent a diverse set of thought leaders who use examples from across the globe to engage with elements of the four P's of holistic teacher policy development by answering following questions:

1. Purpose: How can educational policy serve as a guide for informing the efforts of those responsible for ensuring a quality educator for every classroom?
2. Process: How can inclusive policy development processes increase the likelihood of local buy-in among those responsible for implementing teacher policy linked to initial teacher education?
3. Plan: How can teacher policy for teacher standards provide a foundation for quality throughout the process of preparing educators?

### **Purpose, Process, Plan: A Way Forward**

Providing possible answers to these perennial questions is the focus of this editorial and represents a survey of current contributions that provides a useful foundation for highlighting authors who are building on existing research on advancing local efforts for ensuring a quality teacher for every classroom through policy development and/or reform.

#### *The Purpose: How Can We Position Education Policy as a Guide for Systemic Level Change?*

Ensuring a quality teacher for every classroom in countries across the globe has been discussed in the public arena, particularly in the media, but it has not been a policy priority at least from a systemic perspective. Ensuring a quality educator for every classroom is a global complex and multifaceted concern with clear implications for policies of educator preparation, recruitment, and retention. As such, there is a need to unpack this concern as it entails different meanings in different contexts (Craig et al., 2023). For instance, in Portugal, both the aging of the teaching workforce and the decrease in teaching candidates are problematic. Other troublesome factors are the lack of attractiveness of the teaching profession and the lowering of its socioeconomic status. All these conditions, among others, contribute to the Portuguese teacher crisis. The official data point to the need to recruit over 34,000 teachers by 2030/2031 (an average of 3,450 per year) due to retirement (Nunes et al., 2021). Another study estimated that around 110,000 students will have no teacher in at least one subject area (Loura, 2022).

Recent figures show that in 2020/2021, 55% of the teaching workforce were 50 years old or above (Conselho Nacional de Educação [CNE], 2022). This situation is not new as it has been identified in several national and international documents. In a report published by the CNE (2019a), teaching was described as a profession marked by the aging of the teaching workforce stating that by 2030, more than half of the teachers will have

retired (57.8%). In addition, the last TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) report (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019) highlights a “dramatic change” which is associated with a significant increase of teachers aged 50 and above in Portugal from 28% in TALIS 2013 to 47% in TALIS 2018. Another report stressed the lack of valorization of the teaching profession, fatigue and burnout, precarious working conditions at the beginning of career, and the lack of career prospects (CNE, 2019b). As a matter of fact, recent figures only accentuate the teacher shortage problem, which parallels the reality of other European countries and the United States as well.

In such critical scenarios, how is teacher recruitment and retention framed within educational policy? What kinds of investments are being made at the policy and practice levels? What kinds of strategies are being developed to face the problem internationally? What does research tell us about quality retention? An earlier JTE editorial highlights the significance of international collaboration to face global challenges and the need to address them from a wider and more sustainable perspective considering “the global” and “the local” in teacher recruitment and retention emergency (Williams et al., 2022). There is a need to look in greater depth at the standing of the teaching profession globally and how teacher professionalism is defined alongside the modes of government intervention in teacher education (Craig et al., 2022) to deal with issues of quantity and quality in teacher recruitment and retention in times of crisis (Flores, 2023). Empirical evidence shows that low salaries, quality of teacher preparation programs, overwhelming workload, poor working conditions, pupil behavior, and issues of performativity and accountability are critical factors that may lead teachers to leave the profession (Barmby, 2006; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

Early career support and relevant professional development have been identified as key elements in retaining teachers in the profession (Flores, 2019; Madalinska-Michalak et al., 2022; Sullivan et al., 2019). Another related concept is teacher attrition which has intensified and has become more complex internationally (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Craig, 2017; DeMatthews et al., 2022). As an educational issue, it relates to *the need to prevent good teachers from leaving the job for the wrong reasons* (Kelchtermans, 2017, p. 965, emphasis in original). Kelchtermans stresses the importance of social relationships and teachers' need for social recognition as well as the sense of belonging and he argues for the need to develop induction schemes that may keep the good teachers in teaching. In a similar vein, Geiger and Pivovarova (2018), in a study in Arizona, conclude that schools where teachers rated their working conditions as more satisfactory had lower attrition rates and also were schools with higher rates of low-income and/or minority students. Also, Goldhaber et al. (2022) using a database of over 15,000 teacher candidates from 15 teacher education programs in Washington found that candidates with

endorsements in hard-to-staff subjects like math and special education are more likely to enter the public teaching workforce than other candidates. They also concluded, among other issues, that candidates hired into the same school type (elementary, middle, or high school) or into schools and classrooms with similar student demographics as their student teaching placement are more likely to stay in the teaching workforce than candidates who experience less alignment.

The presented research provides some answers concerning the potential for educational policy serving as a guide for informing the efforts of those responsible for ensuring a quality educator for every classroom. Educational policy developers working to realize this purpose at a systemic level will be better positioned to prompt change if they work collaboratively and access research from across the globe to gain a better understanding of the concepts and related issues contributing to their local teacher shortages. Their policies have the potential to ensure a quality teacher for every classroom by including attributes that have been shown elsewhere can assist local designers of policy-driven, postpandemic responses, lower levels of unfinished learning, and make progress toward ensuring a quality educator for every classroom. In the next section, we consider the role of inclusive processes in increasing the likelihood of local buy-in.

### *The Process: How Can We Increase the Likelihood of Local Buy-in of Systemic Level Policies?*

Developers of initial teacher education policy have access to research on almost every aspect of teacher preparation. Sufficient literature (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Tan et al., 2017; Yanling et al., 2021) exists about the various systems of teacher preparation and development around the world. Finland presents a promising approach of creating a balance between teachers' personal and professional competencies through a special clinical training approach. Singapore provides a practical approach of how one institute of education can provide high-quality education to prospective teachers and a flexible career ladder to support their careers over time. The province of Alberta in Canada has institutionalized an extensive preservice teacher education system, while the University of Toronto in the province of Ontario has created a 2-year master's degree program that extends the clinical experience to teach diverse learners. In Victoria, Australia, clinical systems of teacher preparation also feature strong university and school partnership. In the United States, attention is being paid to teacher development through clinical practice and taking a lead in the creation of national professional standards for teachers. Research (OECD, 2023) has illustrated that teachers, who have received initial education and are certified, are more successful with students than teachers without this formal preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Despite such evidence and system cases, local

dissatisfaction with teacher education has continued, mainly fuelled by dissatisfaction with student outcomes and the perennial problems associated with how to better prepare preservice teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Goldhaber, 2019). In the United States, *A nation at risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), a historical policy document produced during the Reagan era, fueled the deep-seated distrust in education that has plagued local communities across the country since then. Systemic Policies have overtaken local priorities where public education is concerned.

Increasing local buy-in of system-level initial teacher education policy may be possible through the use of a more inclusive policy development processes involving those responsible for local implementation. Including voices and perspectives of local stakeholders in the development of an initial teacher education policy should prompt a focus on who defines the attributes of initial teacher education policy—that is, governments, teachers, candidates, learners, academic administrators, parents, or the community members? The fluid nature and inclusive principles of education (Hill-Jackson & Craig, 2023) require ownership among stakeholders responsible for connecting systemic level policy to local practices. Hill-Jackson and Craig's old quests for new reforms propose teaching as a moral enterprise connecting human endeavor and profession in a dynamic, liberative, and value-laden work. The ownership question is also fundamental to promoting localized ecological approaches (Priestley et al., 2015) to teacher agency, which requires rich experiences grounded in affordances and constraints of the school and the communities environments and policy enactments (Cochran-Smith et al., 2022). School and community environments and policy enactments are culturally grounded and, therefore, the developers of initial teacher education policies needs to be sensitized about the implications of teaching and learning taking place in and through diverse cultures (Vass, 2017), and the initial teacher education curriculum needs to be infused with multicultural and urban issues (Villegas & Lucas, 2002)—not to mention rural issues found in some parts of the world.

Insomuch as teacher education policy is cognizant of the diversity of educator preparation issues found within a certain bounded nation, it is also important to search ways of creating spaces for formal and informal groups of educators with common interests—sometimes called invisible colleges (Merton, 1973; Shulman, 1978)—to emerge. The purpose of these spaces is to create a forum for transnational dialogues that elevate local voices from countries around the world undertaking educator preparation policy reform based on lessons learnt from various global models (Canen, 2007). A comparison of local teacher educators' perceptions of initial teacher education in Jamaica, Greece, and Nigeria illustrated that the challenges facing initial teacher education are not defined by boundaries. These are rooted in the design, implementation, and delivery of local educator preparation

programs (Chalari et al., 2023). In Pakistan, initial teacher preparation is grounded in reforms in teachers' certifications, teacher licensure, and the institutionalization of National Professional Standards for Teachers (Rizvi, 2015). While there is sufficient evidence of the various policy initiatives to reform educator preparation in different contexts, the success of such initiatives will ultimately depend on the judicial foundations based on the principles of democracy, trust, justice, and equity (Groundwater-Smith & Sachs, 2002) and enacted via a process prioritizing teacher empowerment, agency, and inclusion (Cochran-Smith et al., 2022; Korthagen, 2017).

The lessons learned from national and international approaches to educator preparation policy reform highlight some potential benefits incorporating inclusive social dialogue between the policymakers and those responsible for implementing the policy during the reform process. Educational policy developers, who create opportunities for local dialogue and ownership among stakeholders responsible for connecting systemic policy to local implementation, contribute to the success of a process for increasing the likelihood of local buy-in of systemic level policy. While the ultimate outcome of the local process will be influenced by local perceptions of democracy, trust, justice, and equity, prioritizing teacher empowerment, agency, and inclusion during all phases of the policy reform process should increase the likelihood of local buy-in of systemic level policies for ensuring a quality educator for every classroom. In the final section of this editorial, we expand our discussion of local buy-in of systemic level policies by exploring the use of standards within plans for ensuring a quality educator for every local classroom.

### *The Plan: How Can We Position Teacher Standards as a Foundation for Quality, Regulation, or Professionalization?*

Educational policy developers signal their intentions and expectations through the language they use in policies. Their language typically includes a rationale for change and a framework of domains and accompanying indicators for assessing the quality of implementation during and after the implementation process. During this process, the potential exists for variations between the intent and enactment of a policy, especially when those involved in the enactment have not been included in the development process. In the case of teacher education, teacher standards provide a foundational framework for reducing variability by presenting the domains and indicators of quality educator preparation and inservice professional learning (i.e., Menter & Flores, 2021).

However, while educators and the public widely agree that standards have a purposeful role to play, there is, as already noted, little consensus concerning who should control them and whose purposes they should serve (i.e.,

Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). In Darling Hammond's (2010) view, the times we live in are the best and the worst. On one hand, a great deal of teacher education program development has occurred (i.e., Holmes Group, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Santa Cruz New Teacher Project, etc.), which has presumably raised teaching standards. On the other hand, accountability demands have intensified, meaning that those outside the profession are more intently surveilling teaching and teacher education and what teachers and prospective teachers should know and do (Zuboff, 2019)—even to the point of what they can say and cannot say about particular issues as reported in the media (i.e., Natanson, 2022). Further to this, other “forces in the environment are conspir[ing] to undermine [positive] efforts” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 35)—for example, the fact that teacher education policy is hammered out in highly divisive political contexts where political expediency often trumps the public good.

The paradox is that standards are both “a way to improve the teaching profession *and* to control teachers' practices” (Hilton et al., 2013, p. 432, italics added). Laura Curtis, a middle school teacher in Greater Houston in the United States, for example, felt the force of both influences. She claimed she used to feel “in charge of her teaching,” but now she feels like “a butterfly under a pin” (Craig, 2012, p. 90), a defenseless teacher crushed by overwhelming accountability demands “sucking the life out of [her]” and speeding up her early retirement plan (Craig, 2012, p. 98). Laura's metaphor has spread in the education literature (Lee, 2019; Rosiek & Clandinin, 2019; Wei, 2022). To Darling-Hammond (2010), “the political will and educational conditions for strengthening teaching are substantially absent” in the United States (p. 35). The perennial “struggle for the soul of teaching and teacher education” wages on (Zeichner, 2014). JTE's editor-in-residence, A. Lin Goodwin (2021), has examined teaching standards in three different systems: Australia, Hong Kong, and the United States, with an eye to the conceptions of teacher professionalism the standards convey. In addition, Goodwin and Ee Lin Low (Goodwin & Low, 2021) have compared the educational systems of Hong Kong and Singapore. In Goodwin's view, the American and Australian standards “depict teachers as deliverers of content, knowledge brokers; [and] effectiveness, *stated without definition* . . . seems to place a premium on measurement, accountability and research-based practices” (Goodwin, 2021, p. 14, italics added). Case in point is the United States's Race to the Top policy initiative (2008–2015) that linked student achievement and teacher performance. By way of contrast, Hong Kong has a self-reflective tool for determining stages of professional growth that is “not evaluative and data and results generated by the tool should ONLY be used as reference for professional development planning for teachers and schools” (Goodwin, 2021, p. 15, emphasis in original). Although there are significant differences between Hong Kong and Singapore, Goodwin and Low (2021) found that “both HK

and Singapore view standards not as universal benchmarks but as guideposts that should be responsive to the needs of each jurisdiction." While the language of a common standard is vital for shared communication, it is equally important "to ensure that standards can be customized so that local adaptations and interpretations are supported." Furthermore, quality is ensured if there is "a balanced and appropriate standard that guides educators towards specific goals, while giving them enough autonomy to work within their specific contextual spaces" (Goodwin & Low, 2021, p. 375).

Australia and the United States appear to privilege the image of teacher as curriculum implementer from a policy perspective, whereas Hong Kong and Singapore promote the image of teacher as a curriculum maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Craig & Ross, 2008; Leeman et al., 2020). The curriculum implementer image stamps the teacher role on teachers, predestining what they should know and do (and say—[i.e., scripted curriculum]), whereas the curriculum maker image respects the qualities of the person in the teacher role (Hansen, 2017) and the decisions made by that teaching professional. The first image standardizes teachers with government requirements in mind whereas the second one allows teachers to reciprocally shape and be shaped by standards. In the first instance, standards are "piled on" (Craig, 2020). In the second one, standards become "baked in" (Cochran-Smith & Reagan, 2022) via the shaping and being shaped process, given that both teaching images have contributions to make to teacher preparation and development. A holistic focus on processes and policies that favor high-quality teachers rather than a relentless focus on student outcomes could assist Australia and the United States (and other countries) plan for the future, while acknowledging that each is a distinct context with its own history and culture in the same way that Hong Kong and Singapore are.

On the whole, Cochran-Smith and Reagan's idea of standards (in their case, equity-related ones) becoming "baked in" could be fully explored to more clearly understand how standards can influence and be influenced by teachers and how holistic policy efforts could be more productively spread to other local, national, and international milieus to sustain and shape the teaching profession. We wonder: What are the "connective tissues" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) integral to "baking in" standards? How might standards become more adaptive to teaching contexts and less about standardizing teachers working in those contexts? How might educational policy move beyond vacillating between regulation (control), on one hand, and professionalization (professional freedom), on the other? How might future plans free teachers instead of positioning them in ways that frame and blame them and downgrade their profession by disregarding their and its input?

The likelihood of educational policy for teacher standards providing a foundation for quality throughout the process of preparing educators depends on the nature of the processes used during the development and implementation phases. As discussed previously, prioritizing teacher empowerment,

agency, and inclusion during all phases of the policy reform process should increase the likelihood of local buy-in of systemic level policies, including policies on teacher standards. In practice, standards may be seen to be an opportunity for governments either to control education activity through the reporting requirements of student learning outcomes and teacher performance or to improve the provision and outcomes of schooling. The former focuses on regulation, enforcement, and sanctions to ensure compliance (Sachs, 2005). The latter is more focussed on "development and improving teacher quality" (Sachs, 2016, p. 417).

The likelihood of this outcome could be further enhanced if the leaders of the educational systems, governed by these policies, position teacher standards as a reflective framework for use by teacher educators exercising their professional judgments while implementing this systemic level initiative locally. Positioning teacher standards as reflective tools for teacher educators to guide their development through an inclusive process involving shaping and being shaped increases professional participation and in doing so increases the likelihood of buy-in from those responsible for interpreting and breathing life into teacher standards in local teacher preparation programs and classrooms by prioritizing teacher empowerment, agency, and inclusion during all phases of the policy reform process.

## Where Do We Go From Here?

This issue highlights the contributions of teacher educators engaging in some aspect of holistic policy development teacher preparation addressing teacher shortages in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. Our goal in writing this guest editorial was to position teacher educator engagement with holistic educator policy development as a promising mitigation strategy and potential way forward for addressing current concerns over the increase in educator resignations and their impact on an education system's capacity to address unfinished learning by ensuring a quality educator for every classroom. In this special issue, we have carefully curated seven articles that align with the four Ps introduced earlier. In *Mapping the Indigenous Postcolonial Possibilities of Teacher Preparation*, the literature includes examples of teacher education programs that transcend dominant colonial educational paradigms. Such teacher education programs provide us with a more comprehensive Purpose in teacher education. The next two articles in this issue examine Process in an effort to ensure diverse voices are reflected in those who we prepare as teachers and those that are already in the field. *Attention to Equity in Teacher Education Admission Processes* offers a compelling investigation into how K–12 mathematics and science teacher preparation programs address matters of social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in their admissions practices. And, *Leaning Into Difficult Topics: Inquiry Communities as Teacher Professional Learning for Turbulent Times* challenges us to consider how

teacher inquiry groups can be powerful vehicles for transformative and critical conversations in extremely difficult educational contexts.

Instructional coaching and parental engagement are paramount to how we Plan for holistic approaches that develop quality educators, the next P we center on. In this special issue, *Coaching Teachers in Document-Based History Instruction* presents research on coaching and how it supports teacher inquiry and robust student discourse in the history classroom. *Teachers and School Leaders' Readiness for Parental Engagement: Critical Policy Analysis of Canadian Standards* queries how teacher standards address parental engagement and involvement by examining Canadian education policy and its capacity to prepare teachers to center parents and families. Finally, two articles offer concrete Pointers that can help guide the field to the holistic Policies we champion in this special issue. *Study Program Leaders' Perception of Coherence and Strategies for Creating Coherent Teacher Education Programs* shares how study program leaders in Norway work to achieve coherence in their teacher education programs, and *Centering Equity for Multilingual Learners in Pre-Service Teachers' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)* presents examples from educational technology coursework that encourages you to integrate and model more equitable, humanistic, and linguistically sustaining technology practices for preservice teachers.

We invite readers of this special issue to consider the criteria of strategy, feasibility, sustainability, and relevance (context sensitivity) as they evaluate the educational policies included in the articles of this issue under the lens of a fifth “P,” Possibility. Doing things differently calls for levels of creativity, artistry, and imagination that transcend what we conventionally think of as teaching and learning. What are the plans, processes, and purposes of creativity in education and holistic education policy? What does it look like for holistic educator policy to center and support the creativity and imagination of both teachers and students? How do we capitalize on the innovative strategies that educators used and continue to use as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? We encourage readers to reflect on how creativity and imagination are vital parts of the possibilities in the teaching profession and its holistic policy development. Finally, we invite readers imagining new possibilities to include the “Giving Tree” definition of promoting justice (Maeda, 2019) in their design process to increase the likelihood of achieving an outcome that results in expanding possibilities for improving access to the programs and lowering levels of unfinished learning in local classrooms.

As the guest editors of a special issue on holistic policy development in teacher education for JTE's 75th publication year, we hope this editorial will motivate teacher educators to engage in local policy-driven, postpandemic responses aimed at lowering levels of unfinished learning and heightening the Possibility of a quality educator for every classroom.

## Conclusion

Increasing the supply of high-quality educators to ensure a quality education for every classroom is a perennial problem in global education preparation and will continue to be a long-standing problem unless we start doing things differently. The post-COVID-19 era, a period characterized by unfinished learning and educator resignations, is the ideal time to adopt new approaches for ensuring a quality educator for every classroom. Holistic educator policy, and the associated four P's,—*purpose, process, plan, and pointers*—represent a way forward through more community and teacher engagement. We believe that this type of engagement in holistic policy development has the potential to positively impact the number of quality educators available. Furthermore, increasing this number will positively impact the levels of unfinished learning in classrooms. We also believe that unless teacher educators take up the challenge to actively engage in all five P's of holistic teacher policy development, any policy-driven, post-pandemic response, may result in a limited impact as a result of not preparing and nurturing quality educators for all. We invite you to explore our ideas and propose new ones of your own. For if it is not us, then who will take the lead? And, if it is not now, then when will teacher educators begin influencing efforts to address unfinished learning by ensuring a quality educator for every classroom?

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