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Title of your paper: *The Logics of “Effective” Teaching: Investigating the Relationship Between Teacher Education Program Missions and Observational Protocols and Practices*

Abstract (286/300 words):

Over the last several decades, research on teacher observations has emerged as a central focus of research on teacher education. Teacher education programs have leveraged observation protocols in order to operationalize their conceptions of “effective teaching” in their preparation of teacher candidates. However, in the US context, “effective teaching” is a highly-contested topic, shaped by the complex policy environment of teacher education. The field has yet to explore the ways in which teacher education programs’ use of observation protocols are shaped by these conceptions of “effective teaching” and may come to shape the ways teacher candidates understand and enact “effective teaching.” To investigate these questions, this multiple-case study of three teacher education programs in the US investigates: (1) How do teacher candidates, teacher educators, and program leaders in each of the studied programs conceptualize “effective teaching”?, and (2) To what extent are these conceptions reflected in and/or shaped by the teacher observation protocols and practices employed in each of the studied programs? To examine how these logics shape the observation protocols and practices of programs, I draw on institutional theory on “institutional logics” to investigate how the broader US teacher education reform agendas shape the ways in which different teacher education programs conceptualize “effective teaching” and operationalize those conceptualizations through their observation protocols and practices. The emerging findings suggest each of the three programs use vastly distinct observational protocols with their teacher candidates, which reflect differing logics of “effective teaching.” This paper contributes a novel perspective on how to consider the relationship between programs’ conceptions of “teaching quality” and their teacher observation protocols. Understanding how the policy environment shapes teacher education programs’ missions and observation systems offers important insights to practitioners working across other international contexts.

Extended summary (998/1000 words, excluding reference list and appendixes):

Over the last several decades, research on teacher observations has emerged as a central focus of research on teacher education. This scholarship has largely focused on validating observation protocols (Grossman et al., 2013; Pakarinen et al., 2010) and leveraging these protocols to develop teacher evaluation systems to measure “effective teaching” (Cohen & Goldhaber, 2016; Hill & Grossman, 2013). In turn, teacher education programs have leveraged observations to operationalize their conceptions of teacher quality.

However, in the US context, “effective teaching” is a highly-contested topic, shaped by the complex policy environment of teacher education and the largely deregulated marketplace of over 26,000 programs nationally (Wilson & Kelley, 2022). The competing US reform agendas of teacher education—professionalization, deregulation, and democratization—are each implicitly organized around different conceptions of “effective teaching” (Zeichner, 2006). Those calling for professionalization posit that high-quality teaching depends on developing a professional knowledge base for teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1985), whereas those calling for democratization posit that effective teachers must learn from the diverse communities which schools serve (Zeichner et al., 2015). Those calling for deregulation have focused more on producing large numbers of teachers to fill teacher shortages than defining teaching quality (Walsh, 2001).

The field has yet to explore how teacher education programs’ use of observation protocols are shaped by these conceptions of “effective teaching” and may come to shape the ways teacher candidates understand and enact “effective teaching.” To investigate this question, I conduct a multiple-case study of three teacher education programs in the US, guided by the following questions:

RQ1. How do teacher candidates, teacher educators, and program leaders in each of the studied programs conceptualize “effective teaching”?

RQ2. To what extent are these conceptions reflected in and/or shaped by the teacher observation protocols and practices employed in each of the studied programs?

Theoretical Background

The missions of teacher education programs carry with them particular logics of “effective teaching,” which are shaped by the broader policy environment surrounding teacher education. To examine how these logics shape the observation protocols and practices of programs, I draw on institutional theory. Theory on institutional logics provides a useful lens through which to understand how the underlying “logics” guiding teacher education reform shape teacher education programs. Rigby (2016) defines logics as the “bundles of ideas and associated beliefs and practices that come together at particular periods of time and enable certain kinds of actions and not others” (p. 435). Put another way, logics set the “rules of the game” within a given field (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). Institutional logics are the ideal framework for this study, as they provide a conceptual link between the *values and norms which shape teacher education* and *organizational actions* (i.e., how teacher education programs employ observation protocols) (Reay & Hinings, 2009).

Methods

I employ a multiple-case design (Yin, 2009) to examine the ways in which programs’ logics of what constitutes “effective teaching” shape the protocols they use to operationalize those conceptions. I employ a purposive, criterion-based sampling strategy (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021), to select three sites which reflect the range of logics of “effective teaching” in the US. The three programs I study (all pseudonyms) include: *Alcott*, a private, university-based program organized around student-centered teaching; *Herbert*, a public, university-based program organized around anti-racism and bilingualism; and *Porter*, a for-profit, online program committed to getting large numbers of teachers quickly in the profession to address teacher shortages (Appendix A).

I triangulate data from diverse vantage points across the three programs, including: semi-structured interviews with program leadership ($n=15$), teacher educators ($n=20$), and teacher candidates ($n=38$); observations of coursework ($n=75$ hours); and program artifacts ($n=75$; e.g. observation protocols, program handbooks, course syllabi).

I analyze these data in two stages. To address RQ1, I draw on all of the data, apart from the observational protocols, and conduct an initial round of coding, drawing on inductive codes derived from the theoretical literature, and taking note of emergent codes. Then, I conduct a second round of coding, using both the inductive and emergent codes, and develop an analytic matrix to characterize the logics of “effective teaching” of each of the three programs (Miles et al, 2018). To address RQ2, I then take the program’s observational protocols and code these materials using the logics which emerged from the first stage of analysis and compare the programs’ underlying logics and the logics reflected in their protocols.

Preliminary Findings

The emerging findings suggest each of the programs use vastly distinct observational protocols with their teacher candidates, which reflect differing logics of “effective teaching” (Appendix B). While Alcott and Herbert were strongly guided by distinct logics of “effective teaching,” Porter did not embrace a consistent conception of teaching quality. Rather, Porter saw ensuring a baseline level of “teacher quality” as in tension with its missions of producing as many teachers as possible to fill teacher shortages and making a profit.

The protocols the programs employ mattered insofar as they influence how teacher candidates and teacher educators come to understand “effective” teaching. For example, in Herbert, the observational protocol integrates Muhammad’s (2022) historically-responsive literacy framework, so candidates culturally responsive teaching practices as central to being an effective teacher. In Porter, on the other hand, the protocol was very high-level and open-ended. In this case, candidates developed more disparate conceptions of what “effective teaching” entails, disconnected from the mission of their program.

Significance

Although a coherent vision of teaching quality is critical for teacher education programs, the ways in which this vision becomes instantiated in the structures of teacher education programs remains an under-studied topic (Hammerness & Klette, 2015). This work builds on previous scholarship on how the underlying logics of teacher education programs shapes their evaluation practices (Bernhard, 2022) to help fill this gap.

Relevance to QUINT Conference

This paper presents a novel perspective on how to consider the relationship between programs’ conceptions of teaching quality and their teacher observation protocols. Understanding how the policy environment shapes teacher education programs’ missions and observation systems offers important insights to practitioners working across other contexts internationally.

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Appendix A. Site Descriptions

	Alcott Teacher Prep	Herbert Teacher Prep	Porter Teacher Prep
Program Setting	In-person, cohort-based	In-person, cohort-based	Online, asynchronous
Program Type	University-Based	University-Based	Alternative certification, non-IHE based
University Type	Private university	Public	n/a
Program Tax Status	Non-profit	Non-profit	For-Profit
Program Length	1 year	1 year	Self-paced (150 hours)
School Level Certification	Elementary, Middle, Secondary	Elementary	Elementary, Middle, Secondary
Cost to Teacher Candidates	~\$50,00	In-state: ~30,000 Out-of-State: ~\$40,000	~\$300 upon enrollment, \$5,000 total (if candidate becomes a teacher)
Teacher Placement	Student teaching	Student teaching — including in community-based organizations and bilingual elementary schools	Teacher of record through probationary certificate
Field Based Requirements	~800 hours	~800 hours	30 hours (some variation by state)
Enrollment	50-100	50-100	5,000+
Instructional Focus (as represented in public-facing documents)	Organized around core practices which promote student-centered teaching and active learning, and identity-based work	Organized around decentering whiteness in teacher education, promoting bilingualism, and identity-based work	Organized around “research-based curriculum”
Degree Granted	M.Ed.	M.A. in Teaching, Teaching certificate	Teaching certificate with optional endorsements

Notes. (1) The cost to teacher candidates assumes the teacher candidate receives no financial aid and/or fellowship support. (2) “IHE” stands for “institute of higher education.”

Appendix B. Summary of Preliminary Findings

	Alcott	Herbert	Porter
<i>Prevailing logic</i>	Democratic Professionalism (hybrid logic of democratization and professionalism)	Democratization	Deregulation
<i>Definition of logic</i>	Belief that teacher education should be organized to promote the professional status of K-12 teaching and to help cultivate a professional knowledge base of teaching AND Belief that teacher education should be grounded in local community knowledge and expertise, and local communities should have a say in how teacher are prepared	Belief that teacher education should be grounded in local community knowledge and expertise, and local communities should have a say in how teacher are prepared	Belief that teacher education should be regulated by the free market
<i>Conception of “effective teaching”</i>	Knowledge as set by professional organizations and other universities; focused on “core teaching practices” AND Culturally responsive teaching which disturbs existing systems of oppression	Culturally responsive teaching which disturbs existing systems of oppression	None
<i>Example quote from research participant</i>	“At its heart, we are a practice-based teacher education program [...] We're teaching our novices to do student-	“Our goal is to diversify the teacher workforce and put teachers out there that are disrupting anti-racist systems of	"Now, I'm embedded in a for-profit company [...and] their customer is a prospective teacher. And so it is about the

	<p>centered practice vis-à-vis learning from their own practice. And we're focused on serving what my words would be, poverty-impacted, culturally and linguistically diverse communities. [...] We're talking about poor kids. We're talking about culture and language complexity within the system. And we're teaching often largely white populations because that's who goes into teaching. “</p> <p>- Alcott Program Leader</p>	<p>oppression and giving all children, irrespective of race or sociopolitical background, an opportunity to succeed and really think about what does equity mean for students in public education and really emboldening and empowering teachers to be that change maker.”</p> <p>- Herbert Program Leader and Teacher Educator</p>	<p>bottom line. <i>It's about making money.</i> [...] The work is, you know, wonderful and good and good for society, and [...] we're producing a great product: a teacher.”</p> <p>- Porter Program Leader</p>
<p><i>Example language of observation standards from program's observation protocol</i></p>	<p>“[The teacher] supports students to engage in rigorous, disciplinary work as appropriate for their developmental stage.”</p> <p>“[The teacher] demonstrates knowledge of students and community [and] collaborate[s] with families and communities through authentic engagement practices.”</p>	<p>“[The teacher] integrates diverse languages, dialects, and cultures into instructional strategies to respond to individual learner needs (e.g. language, thinking, processing), promote the value of multilingual and multicultural perspectives, and facilitate learners' development of cultural competence.”</p>	<p>“The teacher exhibits professional demeanor and behavior.”</p>