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# The Academic Development of Education Faculty: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

*A 2003 study about the lives of retired leaders in teacher education reminds us of the significant role that others play in the academic development of professors of education. That study also reveals significant changes in the nature of our work as teacher educators. The authors stress the need for universities to pay greater attention to the academic development needs of beginning teacher educators. Although many research-based universities offer programs for beginning faculty, the focus appears to be on teaching effectiveness. The authors make the case that beginning professors of education are different from those of beginning faculty in other disciplines. An argument is made that many beginning education professors need less support in teaching and service and more in the area of research.*

*En 2003, une étude portant sur la vie de chefs en formation des enseignants et maintenant à la retraite nous rappelle le rôle significatif que jouent les autres dans le développement académique des enseignants en pédagogie. L'étude fait également ressortir les changements importants dans la nature de notre travail comme formateurs d'enseignants. Les auteurs soulignent le besoin pour les universités de porter plus d'attention aux besoins en développement académique de ceux qui débutent comme formateurs d'enseignants. Bien que plusieurs universités orientées vers la recherche offrent des programmes pour les professeurs débutants, l'on semble s'y concentrer sur l'efficacité de l'enseignement. Les auteurs exposent leur point de vue selon lequel les professeurs en pédagogie qui débutent leur carrière ne sont pas comme les professeurs qui débutent dans d'autres disciplines. Ils maintiennent que plusieurs professeurs en pédagogie qui commencent leur carrière ont davantage besoin d'appui dans le domaine de la recherche et moins dans celui de l'enseignement.*

## Introduction

A recent study on the career experiences of retired teacher educators reaffirmed what Ducharme (1993) and others have studied (and most of us have experienced) regarding the significant role others play in the academic development of university-based teacher educators. However, there appears to be little evidence of formal support for the academic development of education faculty. Although many universities offer programs to beginning faculty, the focus of such programs appears to be mainly in terms of teacher effectiveness

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with little or no attention given to the other aspects of work in the academy. We suggest that although many professors of education are experienced and skilled teachers, their needs are different from those of beginning faculty in other disciplines. This is particularly true for the large proportion of education professors whose careers started in primary and secondary education systems where good teaching and service, but not research, were primarily expected and rewarded. Although we are not suggesting that education faculty do not benefit from discussions of teaching practice, we believe there is a great need for more formal efforts aimed at supporting beginning faculty in addition to providing effective university teaching. Our view is shared by Ducharme, who wrote a series of recommendations that universities might act on to strengthen teacher education faculty. Specifically, Ducharme recommends that education faculties "Develop a mentor program whereby mature faculty work with new faculty" (p. 71). Wimmer (2003) echoes Ducharme and similarly recommends that faculties of education develop more formalized programs supporting the academic development of beginning professors.

In this article we make the case for universities to provide more support to the academic development of beginning education faculty. We do so by taking a look at the past and share highlights of the careers of some retired leaders in teacher education. We contrast these findings against what we know about the current and future contexts of the work of teacher educators. We draw implications for leaders of university-based teacher education as well as make suggestions for future research.

*Scholarly Context*

Little research has addressed the lives of university-based teacher educators. This lack of scholarship is acknowledged by Ducharme (1993), Lanier and Little (1986), Weber (1985), and more recently by Wimmer (2003). Tierney (2001) writes, "that there is very little research that outlines what education faculty do, or how different roles are changing" (p. 79). Although much has been written on the subject of mentorship in the corporate sector, in preservice teacher education and for beginning teachers, little has been written on the role of mentors as related to the academic development of university-based teacher educators. Although he was writing over a decade ago, we find that Ducharme contributes the most to scholarship related to the academic development of education professors. Thus we begin with relative findings from his work and extend our review with literature pertaining to the current state of the work of teacher educators and beginning faculty more generally. We delimit our review of literature to the context of the university setting.

In his 1993 study, Ducharme asked each of 34 participants from a variety of university-based teacher education programs to comment on the role that others played in their academic development. "Nearly all interviewees had experience with mentors and many were the traditional ones of an older person providing help or advice to a younger, usually less experienced person" (p. 73). The participants in Ducharme's study spoke both of their experiences with mentorship as doctoral students and later as faculty. Despite what Ducharme found regarding experiences with mentorship, evidence of experience with more formal programs of support for faculty was sparse at best.

> Only one interviewee experienced an institutional mentoring program in which she was the specific mentoring responsibility of a mentoring senior faculty member. In all other instances in the study, faculty experiences with mentors from their own institutions appeared to be largely the result of either serendipity or the initiative of an individual senior faculty member because he or she had taken an interest in a junior faculty member. (p. 78)

Durcharme's study forecasted not only a change in the composition of education faculty, but at the same time suggested change in terms of the standards for tenure and promotion for those newly hired to faculties of education. One participant said, "the provost, apparently convinced that the rigorous pressure necessary for promotion and tenure was growing ever more difficult for junior faculty, developed a formal mandatory structure linking senior faculty members with junior faculty members" (p. 82). As articulated by two other participants, the standards for tenure and promotion for faculty in education have shifted from teaching and service to research intensification and productivity by way of publication.

> The first, a veteran male faculty member, noted that when I came to this university, publishing was not emphasized, as a matter of fact, it was incidental. If you did, it was OK, but the emphasis was on service, on work in the schools. The second, an untenured female faculty member, commented the provost made it clear when we came in … now that we spent lots of money to bring you here … like Harvard, we want you to get tenure here and the way you get tenure is to publish. (Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996, p. 704)

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge literature that deals with academic development of university faculty more generally. Here literature relating to developing new and junior faculty seemed to echo what Durcharme suggests regarding the tension between teaching and research.

> Few would deny that [university] teaching requires more emphasis than it received in the 1970s and 1980s, but neglect of the development of faculty scholarship is counterproductive for academia … improvement of scholarship skills have more prestige, interest, and long-term value than do those restricted to teaching alone. In other words, most professors love teaching, but research provides clout. (Jarvis, 1992, p. 63)

Jarvis goes on to say that although most graduate programs do a good job of providing learners with the skills necessary to engage in research, the contexts of being a graduate student and beginning faculty member are vastly different. "A young academic leaves graduate school and its relatively structured contact with peers and teachers for a relatively lonely struggle with pressing new demands at the first job: new classes, advising of students, a new home, and perhaps a dissertation to complete" (p. 63). Creswell (1985) warns that choices soon become habits and that those who fail to establish effective habits of research and writing early in their careers probably never will.

Literature about the academic development of new faculty across disciplines addresses the importance of collegiality. "Perhaps the most important single factor in faculty development is the concept of collegiality" (Jarvis, 1992, p. 65). Creswell (1985) notes that for scientific researchers, personal contacts with colleagues appear to be more important than printed and other impersonal matter. Jarvis remarks similarly that contact with colleagues stimulated

research in the humanities. Zuckerman (1977) notes that the presence of intensive interaction and competition in Nobel-quality research indicates that in more cases than not, such research was often more collaborative than individual. Jarvis reports that well over half the participants in his study felt that mentors were important in their own development.

The literature reviewed above shows a positive relationship between the academic development of new faculty and the role others play in this development. Further, we note changes in the role of faculty, namely, in the increased expectation for research and publication. Below we look at the current and future contexts of being a teacher educator.

## A Look at the Future

### Education Faculty

Tierney (2001) provides some of the most comprehensive and current context for the work of education faculty. Although most education faculty view their work as teacher education, given the multidisciplinarity aspects of the education professorate, "the definition one uses to say that he or she is a faculty member in education is a bit looser than one finds in other areas" (p. 83). With this in mind, he points out that education faculty are getting older. "When compared with other fields we find that education has become the field with the oldest faculty" (p. 86). With respect to rank, "education has a smaller percentage of full-time faculty as full professors than any other field and they spend 53.8 percent of their time on teaching activities compared to 13.1 percent on research" (pp. 88-89). Finally, the number of part-time faculty in education more than doubled from 1987 to 1992. Of the large number of part-time faculty, more are employed as sessional lecturers and "Less than 5 percent of them are on tenure track and 68 percent do not hold a doctorate" (p. 91).

Kennedy (2001) describes the tension between education faculties and other university faculties where "Education programs lack the intellectual traditions of the liberal arts but have tried valiantly to conform to university norms" (p. 29). In doing so, standards for the work of education faculty typically adhere to university norms where "research is the principal method used to evaluate the truth of ideas" (p. 31). Although this is typically the case, there have been moves to better align the work of education faculty with the needs of the field. Lincoln (2001) provides an excellent survey of innovative practice in this regard.

### The Academy

We provide readers with a discussion of the academic development of education faculty by considering the past and future. The former is discussed by way of highlights from a study about the careers of retired teacher educators. The context of the future is set by findings from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2004, hereafter referred to as the Federation), which suggest that "Canadian universities will see a turnover of approximately 30,000 faculty in the next decade" (p. 2). Considering Tierney's (2001) observation that education has the oldest faculty, these figures present faculties of education with considerable challenges in the near future. The Federation goes on to reveal that "new scholars often experience significant feelings of alienation, uneasiness, and frustration—feelings which are not always effec-

tively dealt with by current institutional practice" (p. 2). In addition to a concern for the loss of a great number of senior faculty, they point to "the increasing emphasis upon research as the key element of promotion and tenure" (p. 22). In relation to what Tierney says about the heavy teaching loads of education faculty and what Kennedy (2001) determines as the direction of faculties of education to adopt university standards for tenure and promotion, we again stress that faculties of education will be under even more strain than their university counterparts. Finally, the Federation report supports our argument in that it addresses the significant role that others can play in the academic development of beginning faculty and recommends mentorship for new scholars as a way to "ease the transition from graduate student to faculty member" (p. 3). The Federation acknowledges that mentorship can take various forms and like this article recommends no particular form.

## A Look at the Past

### A Recent Canadian Study

In 2003 Wimmer (1993) responded to Ducharme's (1993) recommendation that, "It would be of value to conduct a study at a specific type of institution and focus on the lives of teacher educators within very carefully limited environments" (p. 111). Converging this suggestion with his own wonder about the career transitions of teachers who became university professors, Wimmer completed a study that told the stories of the career experiences of retired education professors who moved from teaching in schools to work in the academy. In addition to satisfying the researcher's own goal of telling the stories of leaders in teacher education, the work provided insight into the nature of the work lives of teacher educators, an approach advocated by scholars in teacher education such as William Pinar, Madeleine Grumet, and Richard Butt, where they "advocate that biographies are the best sources for understanding educators. This work is influencing teachers, supervisors, administrators, teacher educators, educational researchers and theorists, and educational policy makers" (Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p. viii).

The study described above resulted in the writing of three biographies. We clarify that Wimmer's (2003) study did not set out with a research question aimed at the academic development of professors of education. Instead, that study documented the career experiences of retired leaders in teacher education. From that study, the themes of (a) the role others play in academic development, as well as (b) a description of a different set of standards for assessing the work of education faculty, were two that overwhelmed all others in the study. Although we do not in this article address the entirety of the original study, we develop these two themes and discuss them against what we know about the work of education faculty in today's academy. Thus the method employed for this article is best described as a textual analysis of the three biographies taken from a larger study.

A comment about the participants in the original study is needed before learning what their stories told in relation to the two themes identified above. The three participants in this study were retired men. Each had been a primary or secondary classroom teacher for one to four years, and each had been promoted to full professor at the same university. Whereas only one had spent his entire professional life at the same university, the others spent most of their

academic lives at the university from which they had retired. The participants retired from the same faculty of education, but were not from the same department. Throughout their tenures at a university, each of the participants held one or more administrative appointments (assistant dean, associate dean, associate chair, program coordinator) in teacher education. The apparent tightness of the participant group is deliberate in that it responded to Ducharme's (1993) recommendation of "a study at a specific type of institution [that would] focus on the lives of teacher educators within very carefully limited environments" (p. 111).

## Discussion

*Role of professional others*. From each participant's story was overwhelming evidence that illustrated the roles that other people had played in the participants' transitions from being a classroom teacher to becoming a professor of education. This category[1] was left quite general and included the role of mentors, colleagues, university administrators, friendships developed from work, teachers, and other professors. The category did not, however, include the role of spouses and family for each participant reported *personal others* as another important role. Evidence in this regard was so significant that it was reported as a separate category. Thus for this category the discussion is limited to the role of others as related to professional life.

In some cases the role was specific in that it took the form of contact with another person at a point in time. In other cases the role of professional others took the form of what became lifelong relationships. In still other cases the category took the form of what others saw as potential in each participant that even the participant himself might not have recognized.

Throughout many of the conversations, John spoke about a number of teachers, professors, and colleagues who had played a significant role in his first choosing to become a teacher, beginning and completing graduate work, becoming a teacher educator, and moving through the ranks to become a full professor. Many examples from the story of another person called John provided evidence of how others had played a role in his becoming an education professor. For example, although John did not call Dr. B. a mentor, it was clear that from the time the two met that Dr. B. became a significant influence on his completing a doctoral program. Dr. B. later served as a teacher/mentor model in terms of how he conducted university classes and how he worked with graduate students. Later, Jean's story provided the most explicit evidence related to the role of others. Early in Jean's work life and before he considered graduate work, he had positive experiences with scientific research. A large part of his enjoyment of this was the influence of the work of a prominent scientist. Just a short time later, Jean was influenced by the research work of another leading scientist. The story revealed how these two people were significant influences on Jean's thinking about research even though he would not pursue a career in scientific research. Later a dean of education contacted Jean (who was a graduate student at Harvard at the time) to consider a teacher education assignment at a well established Canadian university. It was this dean who influenced Jean to pursue teacher education actively as an area of scholarship. Two established professors proved major influences in Jean's doctoral research and in his lifelong approach to teacher education through their

mentorship, scholarship, advice, and in opportunities they provided. As we neared the end of our conversations, Jean talked specifically about the role that mentors (a word used by Jean during our interviews) had played throughout his academic career. He clearly articulated the names of the people and carefully described how they had influenced his work as a beginning academic and similarly throughout his career as a professor. Finally, unlike what Ducharme (1993) found for some of the men in his study, none of the participants commented on invitations to participate in lucrative ventures. However, all the participants provided much evidence that suggested that others had enhanced their careers. Both John and Jean spoke a great deal about the role of others in collaborative work. Jean specifically indicated that others had played a significant role in his getting work published. When asked about influences and motivation for research and publication, Ducharme (1993) found that "for other faculty, the urge to conduct scholarly work came from their doctoral advisers and was sustained by associates and colleagues" (p. 60).

*Teaching, research, service.* One of the participants declared that perhaps he was the wrong person to participate in the study in that he could only remark on how positive his career had been as a university professor and teacher. For John it had been the "best and most wonderful work in the world." The other participants would describe their experiences of work in no less positive terms. Many years before, Beck (1957) described his career similarly: "My life as a teacher of tomorrow's teachers is replete with experiences that are stimulating and rewarding. I love to teach, teaching is my life" (pp. 8-9). All participants in the study unequivocally regarded teaching as the source of greatest satisfaction in teacher education. All participants rated service as important, although they did not rate it as highly as their teaching. The same was not true for the respondents' view of the research component of their work.

Although there was no need to ask specifically how teaching was a significant part of each participant's work as a professor, there was a need to press each to comment on his research work. None of the participants could describe a program of research that they had initiated, developed, and sustained. Nor could any report substantial externally grant-funded research as a part of his research work (although two did receive small amounts of research funding from a national funding agency). Finally, without any probing, all participants suggested that their research would not measure up to today's standards for beginning and experienced professors. Clearly this evidence supports what Ducharme and Ducharme (1996), Tierney (2001), Kennedy (2001), and the Federation (2004) said about how education faculty spend their time and the growing emphasis on research and publication for education faculty. Much like the findings presented here, Ducharme (1993) suggests that there is a wide range of scholarship in educational research and found that his participants "had the general feeling that something must be done, so they did something the value of which they questioned later in life when they had accumulated some experience and a little wisdom" (p. 43). The statement "questioned later in life" is particularly supportive of how our participants described their own research. This uncertainty of our participants about their own research is not unique. Like Kennedy, Clifford and Guthrie (1988) argue, "education faculty are an intellectually fragmented group, more divided into sects than their

nineteenth century medical counterparts … some [faculty] are former elementary or secondary school teachers or administrators who have carried a particular orientation into the college and university world" (p. 40). Like Tierney, Clifford and Guthrie go on to say that education faculty are "drawn to higher education less to promote scholarship than to improve the quality of teachers by teaching future teachers and they are likely to spend longer hours on the campus in teaching and advising than on research projects" (p. 80). From Clifford and Guthrie not only does one learn of a concern with educational research, but the literature suggests a connection between what one held as a priority in schools (teaching students and service) and what one brings with him or her into university-based teacher education. Other research supports this connection in that Durcharme found his participants "unprepared to meet the demand for research and scholarship when they began careers in higher education, in part, as a result of their previous experience in lower schools, where there are no such expectations" (p. 54).

Finally, Weber (1985) says, "teaching and other pedagogical concerns are the most important aspects of our professional identity as teacher educators and that teaching rather than formal research determines the way we set our priorities" (p. 163). This statement supports our participants' assessment of teaching as being highly rated. In terms of pedagogical concerns, both John and Jean engaged in scholarship directed to curriculum development and teaching resources for particular subject areas.

### *Implications for Policy and Practice*

Clearly the review of the literature and document analysis of the biographies point to implications for leadership in faculties of education, especially in research-based universities. This is particularly the case as we recognize the changing nature of our work and the role that others play in the academic development of education faculty.

To recapitulate, we argue that although many new professors of education are experienced and skilled teachers, their needs related to support for their academic development are different from those of beginning faculty in other disciplines. We believe that there is a great need for more formal support programs for beginning faculty in their scholarly work (e.g., developing a program of research, writing grant proposals, getting published, maintaining a balanced life, etc.), in addition to effective university teaching. Wimmer (2003) reminds us of the significant role that others play in the academic development of new faculty and echoes Ducharme (1993), and more recently the Federation (2004), in urging faculties of education to develop more formalized mentorship programs for beginning professors. The Federation provides strong endorsement of our recommendation and reports, "too many new faculty are not offered the support they need in the critical first few years of their careers." Although the message of that report is particularly clear (and, we hope, will be taken with the highest degree of seriousness), when considered against the fact that university-based teacher educators come to their work with needs different than those of other scholars and that great numbers of our colleagues will soon retire, our message is not only consistent with that of others, but begs even more attention from leaders in faculties of education.

*Directions for Further Research*

The ideas and issues we raise in this article warrant matters that require further investigation. As we conclude, we openly admit a need for further investigation.

We need to investigate further the current context of higher education, specifically university-based teacher education, and see this work taking at least two directions. First, we would like to gain a sense of what, if anything, faculties of education are doing to provide support to new tenure-track appointments. We are particularly interested in learning about formal programs developed for beginning professors in faculties of education. Thus there is a need to obtain survey-type data from Canadian researched-based faculties of education. Second, like Tierney (2001), we know that there is a need for a more current understanding of the work lives of beginning teacher educators. Again, although the existing research sheds light on our ideas, it would be of great value to conduct a study to investigate the current context of the work lives of tenure-track faculty in teacher education. From this work we speculate that a clearer sense of the needs of beginning faculty in education would be identified.

Ducharme's (1993) research reveals that the experiences of male and female faculty differ significantly, particularly as related to the role of others. A striking comment from one of Ducharme's participants on the question of mentor relationships lingers, "The further I've gotten involved in higher education, the more I've had nasty experiences with men" (p. 83). Ducharme concludes "that the conditions for mentoring are not equal for males and females" (p. 84). The data from which we provide evidence came only from men. Thus it would be of value to conduct a comparable study that would explore the academic careers of women.

*Conclusion*

We return to what we view as key ideas raised in this article. We argue that beginning faculty in university-based teacher education programs would benefit greatly from more formalized relationships created and fostered in faculties of education. We believe that faculties of education and their departments ought to look no further than their own resources in providing support to their beginning faculty. We assert that one of the greatest sources of support for beginning scholars would be to give careful consideration to creating and fostering mentoring relationships in faculties of education.

We conclude by stating *We Are Different!* That is, unlike our colleagues in other disciplines, for those of us who have taught in elementary and secondary schools, we typically come to our university classrooms with a sense of comfort, confidence, and skill. This is a reflection of how we were rewarded for our work in schools. Yet for many beginning education faculty, we remain less confident in our roles as researchers as this part of our work as teachers was not expected or rewarded until we entered the academy. Yet all signals point to a direction of research intensification in the work of the education professorate. Our own contexts certainly reveal such to be the case. Other venues echo this direction: The 2004 theme of *Enhancing the Visibility and Credibility of Educational Research* at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association supports our case well. Cursory glances at the advertisements for tenure-

track appointments in education speak volumes to the research and publication priority set by most research-based places of teacher education.

<div align="center">*Note*</div>

1.  The term *category* comes from grounded theory, the technique used in the original study. In this article, theme and category are used interchangeably. The authors recognize the methodological differences between the two.

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