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Building a One-Dimensional Teacher: Technocratic Transformations in Teacher Education Policy Discourses

Elena Aydarova
Auburn University

ABSTRACT
In the context of neoliberal reforms, teacher education policy discourses have shifted away from social justice imperatives toward technocratic approaches. I examine these shifts by applying the tools of critical policy and discourse analysis to accreditation standards and other policy texts of the last decade. Using Marcuse’s theory of one-dimensional subjects, I analyze how teacher education policy discourses position teachers as agents of social control whose work is to preserve the status quo and to legitimize the current structures of domination. This positioning is accomplished through the technocratization of teacher knowledge and depoliticization of diversity and equity in teacher preparation. The significance of this analysis lies in establishing connections between the technocratization of teaching pursued by the recent wave of teacher education policy discourses and the maintenance of inequality that teacher education redesign is expected to support.

Over the last 20 years, university-based teacher education has come under attack (Sleeter, 2008; Weiner, 2007). With support from venture philanthropists, intermediary organizations (IOs)—nonprofit organizations, think-tanks, advocacy groups, research institutes, and alternative private sector providers—have used these attacks to promote teacher preparation models that produce a “teacher-as-technician” (Aydarova, 2013, 2014, 2019; Lubienski & Brewer, 2019; Zeichner & Conklin, 2016; Zeichner & Pena-Sandoval, 2015).

At the same time, professional accreditation emerged as a strategic mechanism for redesigning teacher education based on reformers’ agendas (Cibulka, 2013). Despite promises of affording more voice to teacher educators as professionals, a relatively new accreditor—the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)—chose a course of action that went counter to the positions articulated by the profession (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018), reducing the field’s autonomy and authority over the direction of change (Bullough, 2016). CAEP emphasized technocratic approaches (Schwarz, 2015, 2016), which resulted in the decline of liberal education in teacher education and the near elimination of social foundations, including history, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology of education (Graves, 2014).
The influences of intermediary organizations and the redesign of teacher education based on CAEP principles have often been treated as separate processes (see Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Floden, 2017). Departing from that tradition, the purpose of this paper is to present a critical analysis of the transformations in the construction of teacher knowledge and diverse learners captured in both CAEP standards and in the teacher education policy texts produced by intermediary organizations. I examine the intertextual connections between the texts produced by CAEP and IO policy actors to underscore their interconnections and oblique influences on the future of the teaching profession.

Because intermediary organizations’ work is rooted in technocratic ideology (Aydarova, 2020), I draw on Marcuse’s (1964) theory of technocracy to address answers to the following research questions:

1. How is teachers’ professional preparation conceptualized in the webs of interconnected teacher education policy discourses of the last decade?

2. What constructions of teacher knowledge serve as the foundation for the production of new teachers captured in these discourses?

3. How do these discourses position teachers in relation to students from diverse backgrounds? What constructions of diversity, equity, and justice is this positioning based on?

Using Marcuse’s (1964) theory of one-dimensional subjects, I examine how teacher education policy discourses position teachers as agents of social control whose work is to preserve the status quo and to legitimize the current structures of domination. This positioning is accomplished through the technocratization of teacher knowledge and depoliticization of diversity and equity in teacher preparation. The significance of this analysis lies in establishing connections between the technocratization of teaching pursued by the recent wave of teacher education policy discourses and the maintenance of inequality that teacher education redesign is expected to support.

In what follows, I provide an overview of organizations shaping teacher education policy discourses. Then I present a synthesis of theories of technocracy, with a specific focus on Marcuse’s (1964) writing on one-dimensional subjects. Following the description of critical policy and discourse analysis as methodological approaches in this study, I show how standards in place before the appearance of CAEP upheld an expansive vision for teacher professionalism, knowledge, and diversity. Next, I demonstrate how CAEP standards prioritized content knowledge over other professional knowledge and rest on depoliticized constructions of diversity and equity. Finally, I situate CAEP standards within the web of interconnected policy discourses produced by intermediary organizations that support and advance CAEP priorities. I conclude by suggesting that instead of engaging in performances of compliance with accreditation standards, teacher educators and social foundations scholars need to reenvision the purposes and designs of teacher preparation.

**Policy context**

Prior to their merger in 2013, two organizations offered accreditation to university-based teacher education programs. The National Council on Teacher Education...
Accreditation (NCATE) was established in 1954 and roughly 700 programs held NCATE accreditation. The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) established in 1997 accredited close to 200 programs around the country. In 2009, these two organizations were merged into a sole accreditor—the Council for Educator Preparation Accreditation. CAEP standards were developed by a group of commissioners, among whom were long-standing critics of teacher education: Arthur Levine of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Benjamin Riley of the New Schools Venture Fund (NSVF), Annie Lewis O’Donnell of Teach for America (TFA), and Terry Ryan of Thomas B. Fordham Institute. NSVF, TFA, and the Fordham Institute have played a major role in promoting alternative routes into teaching (Zeichner & Pena-Sandoval, 2015; Lubienski & Brewer, 2019). A number of intermediary organizations that promoted neoliberal reforms celebrated the creation of CAEP and the introduction of CAEP standards in 2013 due to “their potential to change teacher preparation across the country” (Walker, 2013). Among those organizations were the Fordham Institute, National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), Center for American Progress, the New Teacher Project (TNTP), and others.

An intermediary organization that is closely linked to CAEP is the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)—a nonprofit organization that brings together chief state school officers from across the nation. A representative of CCSSO has had a position on CAEP’s Board of Directors since its inception. In 2012, CCSSO issued a report titled Our Responsibility, Our Promise that included ten principles for teacher education reform. Among them was the proposal to use program review and approval as a lever of change, with CAEP accreditation emerging as one of the options supported by CCSSO. The report also captured the web of interconnections among various nonprofit and for-profit groups. The expert advisory board for that work included not only representatives of teacher education, but also the president of CAEP, vice president of the NCTQ, and the president of iTeachUS—a for-profit teacher preparation provider.

To translate those reform principles into action, CCSSO created the Network for Transforming Educator Preparation (NTEP) that brought together teams from fifteen states (Aydarova, 2020). Network participants designed teacher education reforms based on CCSSO’s (2012) ten principles. In conjunction with that work, CCSSO (2015) offered additional guidelines for preparing teachers to work with diverse learners.

During the 6 years of its existence, CCSSO’s Network for Transforming Educator Preparation developed actionable reform steps, implemented them across participating states, and organized events to disseminate policy measures developed by the network among its partners and policymakers. Networks’ partners included such organizations as CAEP, NCTQ, TFA, and the New Teacher Project (TNTP). These intermediary organizations have promoted deregulation and the redesign of teacher education based on neoliberal technocratic principles (Aydarova, 2021). The collective nature of these actors’ policy activities placed CAEP’s accreditation standards in a self-referential and reinforcing web of interconnected teacher education policy discourses.

**Theoretical framework**

Technocracy is a form of social organization that gives primary decision-making power to technocrats (Fischer, 1990). As Centeno (1993) observed, technocrats are driven by a
shared belief that social problems have depoliticized solutions and that value-free procedures can increase efficiency of social institutions. In contemporary educational policy, technocratic controls have shifted from state-run bureaucracies of educational institutions to intermediary organizations and venture philanthropies that shape policy discourses through knowledge production, evaluation tools, and policy advocacy (Lubienski & Brewer, 2019; Zeichner, 2017).

Technocratic change in society is achieved not only through overt policies and reforms, but also through what Marcuse (1964) called technological forms of social control that “introject” into individuals a belief that “all contradiction [is] irrational and all counteraction impossible” (p. 9). This introjection happens through the work of social institutions—education and media—that shape consciousness and present social critique as futile. These influences lead to mimesis or the condition where people identify with the whole of society and accept the belief that resistance cannot produce any meaningful change. As a result, “the ‘inner’ dimension of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take root is whittled down” (p. 10). Marcuse argued that,

Thus emerges a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension. (Marcuse, 1964, p. 12)

Marcuse’s (1964) analysis illuminates how this reproduction takes place. First, public discourses depoliticize social problems and elevate the focus on concrete experiences. When subjects focus on concrete experiences as isolated instances disconnected from wider social processes, they rely on the use of “reduced concepts”—or ideas that render invisible the relationships between social problems and inequities of social structures. Marcuse noted,

Where these reduced concepts govern the analysis of the human reality, individual or social, mental or material, they arrive at a false concreteness – a concreteness isolated from the conditions which constitute its reality. In this context, the operational treatment of the concept assumes a political function. The individual and his behavior are analyzed in a therapeutic sense – adjustment to his society. Thought and expression, theory and practice are to be brought in line with the facts of his existence without leaving room for the conceptual critique of these facts. (emphasis added, Marcuse, 1964, p. 107)

The reduced role of deep theoretical analysis of how social systems operate works to eliminate the critical dimension of engaging with the world and understanding how systems of oppression work.

This loss of critical dimension in education allows “advanced industrial society [to] silence and reconcile the opposition” (p. 11) and facilitates the emergence of one-dimensional subjects lacking the ability to question the world around them and imagine alternatives to the established social order. In other words, one-dimensional people conform and refuse to critique social conditions; they are trained to observe change but not act to intervene in realities around them (Marcuse, 1964). As a result, technocratic educational policies and practices become “a strategy to impede this process of political activation and to facilitate the maintenance of a depoliticized mass public” (Fischer, 1990, p. 30). Working in tandem, these processes ensure perpetuation of the status quo,
the reproduction of whiteness, and the retrenchment of existing social hierarchies, inequalities, and injustices under the mask of positivity and scientific rationality. To counteract the spread of technocratic logic, Marcuse (1969) argued for an intentional refusal to engage in one-dimensional thought, commitment to hope, “inclusive ethics of caring” (Shel, 2009, p. 118), radical imagination engaged in envisioning new forms of relationships and economic structures, as well as an activist stance in seeking to disrupt systems of oppression. In short, *multidimensionality* is necessary to undo one-dimensional societies and the oppression they perpetuate.

Marcuse (1968) underscored the importance of the educators’ role in breaking the mold of social domination and control in order to produce subjects able to pursue social transformation and collective liberation. To accomplish this goal, Marcuse (1964, 1968, 1969) showed that teachers need deep theoretical knowledge and critical political consciousness to support the liberation of students who come from oppressed and marginalized communities. Even though teachers’ role in social transformation and anti-neoliberal resistance has been widely discussed (Anderson & Cohen, 2018; Apple, 2012), Grant (2009) observed that “teachers … with a few exceptions, do not seem fully engaged in an active struggle for social justice” (p. 654). Along the same lines, Sleeter (2017) noted how teacher education continues to reproduce whiteness in education despite stated commitments to equity and diversity. In this context, Marcuse’s (1964, 1968, 1969) writing offers useful conceptual tools to interrogate teacher education policy discourses with an eye toward their role in disrupting or perpetuating the status quo.

**Methodological approach**

I draw on methodological tools of critical policy analysis (Fischer, 2007) and critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011, 2014) to examine the expectations for teacher education and teachers’ subsequent roles in society according to policy discourses of the last decade. Critical policy analysis conceptualizes policy texts as “textual interventions into practice” (Ball, 1993, p. 12) that “posit a restructuring, redistribution and disruption of power relations” (p. 13). As a methodological approach, critical policy analysis examines how policies seek to transform societies by “producing structural change with implications at the collective or individual levels” (O’Connor & Netting, 2011, p. 206). In order to critique domination and interrogate forms of oppression (re)created through policy discourses, critical policy analysis draws on critical theories (Fischer, 2016), such as Marcuse’s (1964) theory of technocracy and its role in the production of one-dimensional subjects used in this paper.

The focus on meanings and their connections to social practices in broad socio-political contexts deployed in critical policy analysis aligns with critical discourse analysis that “treat[s] social practices … in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power” (Gee, 2011, p. 28). In utilizing critical discourse analysis, I draw on the works of James Gee to explore how language is deployed to “build things in the world” by shaping contexts, building significance, and valuing some forms of knowledge over others (Gee, 2014).
Data sources and data analysis

The focus of my analysis are transformations in constructions of teacher knowledge and diversity in a set of policy texts that emerged as governance tools for U.S. teacher education over the last 20 years. The focal policy texts are standards issued by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2013, 2015). Those were presented to the professional community as an outcome of consensus-building and became a galvanizing force after their implementation. I position those standards in the web of other interconnected policy proposals that either preceded CAEP standards, were cited in CAEP standards, or were related to those standards through policy activities of other intermediary organizations connected to CAEP, such as CCSSO, NCTQ, Fordham Institute, and others (Figure 1). I focused on these reports and proposals because unlike other state-level texts, they capture national-level discourses around teacher education in the U.S (Aydarova, 2020; see Table 1 for a sample list of policy texts included in the analysis).

During the data collection stage, I assembled documents, reports, and presentation materials available through CAEP, CCSSO, NCTQ, the Fordham Institute, and other intermediary organizations’ websites. Out of the overall database that included 605 texts, I selected 30 texts linked to CAEP standards. These texts were uploaded into NVivo for analysis that proceeded through two stages. First, I annotated the texts using Gee’s (2011) discourse analysis tools. For example, “the context is reflexive tool” (p. 85) invites the analyst to consider how the text “is helping to create or shape … what [readers] will take as a relevant context.” “The significance building tool” focuses on how “we use language to make things significant in certain ways or to downplay their significance” (p. 92). The salient themes that emerged out of these annotations were

Figure 1. A web of interconnections among policy actors shaping teacher education discourses.
mapped onto Marcuse’s theory (1964, 1968, 1969) to identify the subject positionings these texts create and the level of social critique they afford.

In addition, I utilized the notion of “intertextuality” to examine how “the text quote[s], allude[s] to, or otherwise borrow[s] words from other oral or written sources” (Gee, 2014, p. 78). Establishing intertextual connections required reading across texts with an eye toward textual allusions, discursive borrowings, and ideological echoes (Gee, 2014). For example, CAEP (2015, p. 12) standards reference NCTQ among “professional efforts to define standards for teaching.” This reference reveals a connection between these texts that becomes evident when both texts use the same criteria and similar language to describe how teacher education programs should be evaluated. Tracing intertextual links between various policy texts helped me show how various policy texts create webs of meaning that result in alleged consensus or a widely accepted course of action, despite objections from the educational community (Aydarova, 2020). Finally, critical discourse analysis afforded me an opportunity to examine what text authors left out or avoided, revealing textual silences on matters of social concern (Huckin, 2002).

Findings

I organize the findings into three sections. First, I describe the constructions of teachers’ knowledge as well as diversity and equity in teacher education standards that preceded CAEP. Next, I analyze how these constructions were transformed in CAEP standards. Subsequently, I position these transformations in the context of other policy texts to demonstrate the interconnections between CAEP and proposals promoted by intermediary organizations.

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Table 1. A sample of data sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/organization</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation</td>
<td>2013/2015</td>
<td>CAEP Accreditation Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Chief State School Officers</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Chief State School Officers</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Promises to Keep: Transforming Educator Preparation to Better Serve a Diverse Range of Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Learned Societies in Education</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Standards for Academic and Professional Instruction in Foundations of Education, Educational Studies, and Educational Policy Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Accreditation Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council on Teacher Quality</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Teacher Prep Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council on Teacher Quality</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Research Council</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Building Evidence for Sound Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Education Accreditation Council</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Accreditation Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas B. Fordham Institute</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Cracks in the Ivory Tower? The Views of Education Professors Circa 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constructions of teacher knowledge and diversity in TEAC and NCATE standards

To understand the scale of change introduced by CAEP, it is important to consider how NCATE and TEAC standards approached the construction of teacher roles and knowledge. These agencies saw their role as ensuring that teacher education programs produce “competent, caring, and qualified educators” (NCATE, 2008, p. 1; TEAC, 2005, p. 13). The use of the word “care” across the standards is particularly telling of the expansiveness of how teachers’ roles are constructed. “Care” and its derivative “caring” in contexts where they are used to describe teaching or teachers’ work appeared eight times across the 98 pages of NCATE standards and 5 times across the six pages of the TEAC standards. This frequent reference to a caring professional demonstrated expectations beyond a narrow focus on technical aspects of teaching. These expectations revealed the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching not easily measurable or quantifiable but important for educating children, particularly those from oppressed groups (Noddings, 2013).

Multidimensional professional knowledge

NCATE and TEAC standards constructed teachers’ professional knowledge along multiple dimensions. First, both sets of standards argued that educators needed a broad liberal arts education. Brown (2011, p. 126) showed the importance of liberal arts in counter[ing] the one-dimensionality of homo economicus. They speak to, cultivate and elevate precisely what a neoliberal rationality would extinguish in us individually and collectively – not only historical, philosophical and literary consciousness and viewpoints, not only notions of the political exceeding interest and featuring shared power and purpose, but the play of ambiguity, vulnerability, awe, ambivalence, psychic depths, boundary, identity, spirit, and other elements foreign to neoliberal rationality.

The dispositions described above provided a strong foundation for teachers’ professional practice and for their ability to contribute to society as individuals, professionals, and citizens. Liberal arts afforded an opportunity for teachers to refuse one-dimensional thought and develop “consciousness and viewpoints” that make critique and social change possible (Marcuse, 1964, 1969).

Second, multidimensionality emerged in descriptions of professional knowledge each set of standards presented. TEAC standards identified three dimensions of teacher knowledge: subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching skill. Those dimensions were supplemented with cross-cutting themes of life-long learning skills, which included critical reflection, multicultural perspectives, and technology. NCATE standards from 2008 provided a much more detailed list of requirements for candidates’ knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. The list included such elements as “content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and skills, pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn” (p. 12). Each element was addressed through a separate strand with detailed explanations of how that form of knowledge manifests itself in the teaching practice. Both NCATE and TEAC standards underscored the multidimensional nature of knowledge that included a variety of complementary elements working in tandem to create a broad and expansive knowledge base necessary for professional practice. This
multidimensionality afforded opportunities for teacher education to prepare teachers for a potential transformation in professional or social practices.

Important for the current discussion is the construct of “professional knowledge” in NCATE’s standards that included the following elements:

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other school professionals need a sound professional knowledge base to understand learning and the context of schools, families, and communities. They understand and are able to apply knowledge related to the social, historical, and philosophical foundations of education, professional ethics, law, and policy … They understand language acquisition; cultural influences on learning; exceptionality; diversity of student populations, families, and communities; and inclusion and equity in classrooms and schools. (NCATE, 2008, p. 22; emphasis added)

Gee’s (2011) context-building tool is helpful for understanding how NCATE standards approached teaching as intricately linked with the wider world. The quote above illustrates that teaching was not limited to the four walls of the classroom or school, but spanned wider contexts that included families, communities, and the society at large. At the same time, teaching was not seen merely as a momentous activity that occurred in the present and vanished once completed, but rather as an expansive process linked to historical events, social processes, and philosophical traditions. Thus, being equipped for teaching entailed more than just knowing the subject; it called for mastering social, historical, and philosophical foundations of teaching as well.

Connections to social foundations of education represented the third way in which multidimensionality of teachers’ knowledge was constructed. NCATE standards did not specify what should be included in the study of foundations, but they provided references to the social foundations of education standards (Council of Learned Societies in Education (CLSE), 1996). These standards emphasized the need for education professionals to develop “interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives on education and schooling” (CLSE, 1996, n.p.). Furthermore, to evaluate educators’ professional knowledge, CLSE (1996) put forward six principles that assessed such skills as “apprais[ing] conceptions of truth, justice, caring, and rights as they are applied in educational settings” (n.p.), “understand[ing] and apply[ing] critical perspectives on education and schooling” (n.p.) as well as “understand[ing] the full significance of diversity in a democratic society” (n.p.). Based on CLSE standards, educators were expected to “specify how issues such as justice, social inequality, concentrations of power, class differences, racial and ethnic relations … affect teaching and schools” (n.p.). Even though NCATE standards themselves did not emphasize critical analysis of social structures, this connection to the social foundations standards provided room for teacher education programs to foster teacher candidates’ critical consciousness and help them develop the tools for being agents of social transformation.

Constructions of diversity

Apart from a multidimensional model of teachers’ professional knowledge, NCATE standards emphasized the importance of teachers being able to reach “all” students. Even after NCATE dropped the social justice requirement in 2008, standards still referred to the importance of fairness and called for teachers to enact practices based on a belief that “all students can learn.” NCATE defined diversity as “differences among
groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender,
exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area” (NCATE, 2008, p. 86), providing a focus both on groups and individuals. Among professional dispositions expected of teachers, NCATE included fairness as “the commitment demonstrated in striving to meet the educational needs of all students in a caring, non-discriminatory, and equitable manner” (NCATE, 2008, p. 86).

Diversity was also included as a separate standard—not just an element of pedagogical knowledge, but as a stand-alone requirement that all teacher education programs had to attend to. It is in the context of the diversity standard that issues of equity and “discrimination based on race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and language” emerged. Teachers had to understand students’ identity markers and issues of discrimination associated with these markers. This framing revealed how identity matters at the individual, institutional, and cultural levels (Adams et al., 2013). The framing of identity as relevant beyond the individual level coupled with multidimensional constructions of teacher knowledge afforded more opportunities for teachers to become multidimensional subjects equipped to critique social systems and engage in social transformation.

**CAEP standards**

CAEP standards introduced a reorientation in priorities for teacher education. Four of five CAEP standards focused on candidates and their performance as educators: standard one assessed candidates’ content and pedagogical knowledge, standard two evaluated candidates’ clinical preparation, standard three addressed selectivity and diversity among candidates, and standard four called for measures of effectiveness of candidates’ performance in the classroom. Standard five focused more globally on the quality assurance systems that programs utilize for continuous improvement.

Unlike TEAC and NCATE standards, CAEP standards did not provide a broad vision of what teacher professional programs should produce. Instead, CAEP standards focused on “the impact of program completers on P-12 student learning and development” (CAEP, 2015, p. 1). This reorientation toward outcomes represented the first step toward technocratization of teacher education—professional preparation emerged as a formula that when tweaked appropriately can guarantee certain outputs (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Apart from eliminating any ambiguities or ambivalences inherent in complex systems of professional practice in social domains, this shift placed the responsibility for the effects of social inequality, segregation, poverty, racism, and xenophobia on individual teachers and programs that prepare them by disregarding broad sociopolitical and socioeconomic contexts of teachers’ practice (Kumashiro, 2015).

The vision for the educational professional endowed with liberal education and demonstrating care disappeared from the standards. Liberal education was no longer included in discussions of necessary professional preparation. Instead, a focus on teacher effectiveness as measured by test scores emerged as a separate standard. Despite numerous critiques, value-added measures and growth scores of K-12 students taught by programs’ graduates were introduced. This introduction reflected most clearly the technocratic turn for the field. “Care” was absent from the standards themselves and the accreditation handbook, underscoring the fact that in technocratic regimes that
which cannot be measured and evaluated as a program outcome becomes eliminated from the framework of teacher professionalism. After much criticism, CAEP added on its website that one of the principles that the standards were based on was “solid evidence that the provider’s graduates are competent and caring educators” (CAEP, 2019, emphasis added), but this revision did not affect any other texts or tools.

**Narrowing constructions of teacher knowledge**

The construction of teacher knowledge presented in CAEP’s standard one became much narrower than constructions that were used in NCATE and TEAC standards. First, the primary focus was on content knowledge. Providers were held responsible for ensuring that “candidates develop a deep understanding of critical concepts and principles of their discipline” (CAEP, 2015, p. 2). Iterative mentions of teachers’ “strong foundation of content knowledge” and its links to P-12 students’ ability to “move significantly forward” built up the significance (Gee, 2011) of content knowledge. Using Lee Shulman’s and Linda Darling-Hammond’s scholarship, standards made causal claims about the impact of teachers’ content knowledge on students’ academic growth, despite the fact that both of these scholars repeatedly argued for an expansive construction of teacher knowledge. Shulman (1987), for example, described “minimum” of teacher knowledge as content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge (classroom management), curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts, as well as “knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values and their philosophical and historical grounds” (p. 8). Despite the multiple dimensions of teacher knowledge that Shulman (1987) argued for, only the quote focusing on content knowledge was used to build up the significance of content knowledge in CAEP standards. This narrowing laid the foundation for producing one-dimensional teachers focused primarily on content instruction.

Other forms of knowledge came into play in the standards with a similar function of building significance for content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge was mentioned as a means of transmitting knowledge to students, whereas the discussion of teachers’ professional knowledge moved into considerations of neuroscience so that teachers would be “well-versed in findings from brain research, including how to facilitate learning for students with varying capacities, experiences, strengths, and approaches to learning” (CAEP, 2015, p. 5). The focus on content and on facilitating learning of that content reduced the significance of other dimensions of teacher knowledge, such as professional knowledge or pedagogical knowledge. The evoking of neuroscience was also important. As Davies (2015) showed, in the last decade psychology and neuroscience have become the tools of diverting attention away from the cracks in social structures and the failure of neoliberalism to deliver the promised social goods. The focus shifted toward individuals who fail to advance in the existing social structures. These individuals were called to better manage their emotional states despite debilitating uncertainties or dehumanizing conditions. This deployment of psychology and neuroscience to manage individual responses to deteriorating social conditions works in “a therapeutic sense – adjustment to … society” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 40).
The call for stronger content preparation echoed some of the policy proposals ema-
nating from the field of teacher education (e.g., Wilson, 2009). Despite CAEP’s claims, 
however, the role of content knowledge in teacher preparation was not a settled issue. 
The National Research Council’s (2010) report Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for 
Sound Policy that CAEP standards referred to as one of the foundational texts argued 
that more research is needed to determine whether stronger content area preparation 
produced better teachers. In the society with long-standing issues of racism, sexism, and 
classism, content knowledge alone may be insufficient to undo implicit biases that shape 
teachers’ interactions with their students (Sleeter, 2017). CAEP standards with their 
focus on outcomes, however, left little room for the type of critical work necessary to 
address those biases, instead presenting content knowledge as a panacea for educational 
and social ills.

The absence of any substantive mention of social foundations of education in CAEP 
standards makes this point salient. While originally there were assurances that CAEP 
would keep the same focus on social foundations as the one that was found in NCATE 
(deMarrais, 2013), final standards text mentioned “social foundations” only in a title of 
a paper listed in footnotes. The disappearance of philosophical, historical, and socio-
logical foundations as areas that foster critical examination of injustices and inequality 
reveals how teachers’ one-dimensionality is produced. Aspects of teacher preparation 
that were meant to prepare teachers to critique social structures and understand the 
interconnectedness of social processes were removed from the standards and, in many 
instances, from teacher preparation at large (Aydarova, Newcomer, McNelly, Nuñez-

This narrowing of teacher knowledge reveals growing technocratization of teaching 
that CAEP standards promoted. By focusing on content knowledge and clinical prepar-
ation, the new standards positioned teacher education programs as producers of one-
dimensional teachers trained to deliver content knowledge to their students without 
interrogating broader socioeconomic contexts of their practice. At the same time, by 
erasing social foundations of education, standards placed on teachers the expectation of 
accepting the status quo of the unequal society and recreating existing social structures. 
This shift in standards—as imperfect and ineffective in creating change as previous 
standards were—shows that CAEP standards sought to prepare teachers who maintain 
the status quo instead of attempting to transform the world through their work.

**Depoliticized notions of diversity and equity**

Unlike NCATE standards, CAEP did not include diversity as a separate standard. While 
teacher candidates were expected to know how to teach “all P-12 students,” diversity 
appeared as one of two “cross-cutting themes,” on par with technology. This change 
reflected the decreased significance of diversity as only candidate diversity was included 
in the actual standards.

Apart from being downplayed in the process of evaluating programs, diversity also 
shifted conceptually. On the one hand, CAEP listed categories of children under the 
umbrella term “all”:

**All P-12 students**: Defined as children or youth attending P-12 schools including, but not 
limited to, students with disabilities or exceptionalities, students who are gifted, and
students who represent diversity based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, language, religion, sexual identification, and/or geographic origin. (CAEP, 2015, p. 3)

This definition and the rest of the standards placed the emphasis on students as individuals, rather than members of social groups positioned differently in hierarchies of an unequal society (Adams et al., 2013). This reconceptualization reflected how issues of diversity and subsequently equity became depoliticized: if diversity matters only at the level of individual markers, then no righting of political, cultural, or economic wrongs is necessary to address the injustices experienced by students from oppressed communities (Fraser, 2008).

Discourses of depoliticized individualization permeated CAEP standards. For example, the description of the knowledge that candidates are expected to have included the following explanation: “Teachers must understand that learning and developmental patterns vary among individuals, that learners bring unique individual differences to the learning process…” The pattern of elevating the individual over social group membership or position in the social system remained consistent throughout the CAEP standards. As a result of this shift, CAEP decontextualized diverse students’ experiences from the systems of oppression and injustice, slipping into ahistorical and nonsystematic analysis of their conditions. The continued evoking of “achievement gaps” and theories of “grit” throughout CAEP materials underscored underlying assumptions that the problems students experience do not emerge out of systemically unequal distribution of resources but rather out of students’ own personal pathologies and inability to pull themselves by the bootstraps. This depoliticization and decontextualization of diverse students’ struggles worked to reproduce whiteness in teacher education.

When it came to considerations of equity, CAEP standards linked it to access to technology and identify students’ unequal access to technological resources as a key determining factor of preventing them from being college- or career-ready. The underlying assumption here was that it was not educational debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006), inequitable distribution of resources, or systems of de facto segregation among privileged and underprivileged students, but rather access to technology that hampered students’ ability to succeed. The broader systems of oppression were erased, leaving atomistic individuals to pursue private goods through the use of technology. Together with the narrowed teacher knowledge, depoliticized constructions of equity and diversity contributed to the emergence of one-dimensional teachers who preserve the status quo of unequal societies as agents of social control (Marcuse, 1964).

**Interconnections of teacher education policy discourses writ large**

**Constructions of teacher knowledge**
CAEP standards’ focus on measurable outcomes and content knowledge echoed policy recommendations produced by CCSSO (2012, 2015) and other intermediary organizations involved in the advocacy of deregulation, charter schools, vouchers, and union busting, such as Fordham Foundation, American Enterprise Institute, and the Hoover Institution. Policy analysts affiliated with these conservative think-tanks claimed that public education is in crisis because of low quality teachers and argued that alternative
routes into teaching, such as TFA, would bring teachers with stronger content knowledge into classrooms (Chubb, 2012; Kanstoroom & Finn, 1999; Shober, 2012).

The most striking intertextual links emerged between CAEP and NCTQ’s Teacher Prep Review. Selection, Content Knowledge, Professional Skills, and Outcomes (NCTQ, 2013), heavily resembled the four CAEP standards that focused on teacher candidates. For example, NCTQ’s (2013, p. 8) “selection” standard called for screening candidates for “academic caliber” (p. 8) and “academic aptitude” (p. 37). CAEP (2015, p. 8) standard 3 “candidate quality, recruitment, and selectivity” similarly prioritized the selection of candidates with “high academic achievement and ability.” More importantly, both CAEP (2015, p. 13) and NCTQ (2013, p. 8) standards emphasized holding programs accountable for “a positive impact on student learning” – an intertextual link that captures the primacy of tests and value-added measures in determining what matters in education. It goes without saying that social foundations were absent from NCTQ evaluation tools, just as they were absent from CAEP standards.

The absence of social foundations in NCTQ’s policy texts is not an accident but a part of advocacy for teacher education reform based on outcomes. For instance, in an interview for the Philanthropy Roundtable, the President of NCTQ Kate Walsh criticized curricula in university-based teacher education:

Much of the course work at today’s education schools is about how and why children learn, and the role of public education in society. This can be fascinating material, but it doesn’t much help a teacher walking into a class of 20 third graders know what she should do Monday morning to keep them engaged. (Vanderkam, 2014, p. 34)

Using “Monday morning” as a marker of what Marcuse (1964) calls “false concreteness,” this quote illustrates the move away from critical theories toward “reduced concepts” of what works in any classroom with any students. In this case, arguing that informing teachers about the role of schools in society does not prepare them for the work they need to do in the classroom, NCTQ’s president justified the erasure of social foundations from the teacher education curriculum. The assumptions embedded in this argument indicate that theories used to analyze purposes of schooling—whether in upholding democratic ideals or contributing to economic structures—have no bearing for what teachers do in the classroom. This means that the concepts that illuminate for teachers how social reproduction works and the role schools play in maintaining social inequality by valuing certain forms of knowledge over others (Bourdieu, 1973), by punishing students for not adhering to dominant norms (Adams et al., 2013), or by silencing those who do not have the mastery of the codes valued by dominant groups (Bernstein, 2000) are not necessary in teachers’ toolbox. Yet, without the knowledge of these theories and concepts, a teacher is more likely to reproduce the sociocultural scripts that perpetuate social inequality (Marcuse, 1964; Sleeter, 2017).

The links between false concreteness and the preservation of the status quo in the society are most clearly stated in a report by the Fordham Institute (Farkas & Duffett, 2010) that heavily criticized university-based teacher education. Drawing on focus groups with university faculty, the authors praised teacher educators for wanting stronger content preparation but criticized them for being disconnected from the world of classrooms and not being interested in teaching preservice teachers the techniques of classroom management or reading instruction. The most striking charge, however, was
the attack on teacher educators for preparing teacher candidates to be “change agents.” The authors denigrated university faculty for sharing that they prepare teachers to challenge the status quo in schools and in the society at large. The overt message of the report was that faculty’s attempts to prepare teachers as change agents increased the divide between schools and universities. Faculty’s perspectives that social change was necessary were described as naïve and self-serving. The corollary to this critique was that teachers should be prepared in such a way that the existing social structures would remain intact. A teacher that protects the status quo was presented as a far better alternative than “change agents” prepared by university-based programs.

The interconnections between CAEP, NCTQ, and the Fordham Institute extended beyond mere intertextual connections. A representative of Fordham Institute served as one of CAEP’s commissioners and participated in the design of CAEP standards, whereas both CAEP’s and Fordham Institute’s founding presidents served on NCTQ’s board of directors.

**Diversity as pathology**

The pattern of pathologizing diversity (Annamma, 2017) appeared as a consistent discourse across the web of interconnected policies connected to CAEP standards. CCSSO’s (2015) proposal for reforming teacher education to better meet the needs of diverse students included national accreditation, such as CAEP, as one of the levers of change. The report repeated the technocratic tenets of CAEP standards described above by calling on teacher education to focus on content instruction and using value-added scores to hold teacher education accountable for K-12 students’ results. Most of the language used to describe diverse learners throughout the text focused on deficits (Table 2). In a similar vein, NCTQ standards for teacher preparation included a separate strand focused on “struggling readers” where culturally and linguistically diverse students were described as “not making adequate progress” (NCTQ, 2013, p. 40) and being at the “risk of failure” (p. 8).

When diverse students’ experiences and needs were constructed as problems, diversity became pathologized and teachers emerged as interventionists who focus on challenges rather than students’ strengths and cultural assets. For example, in its summary of the knowledge and the competencies teachers need to meet diverse students’ needs, CCSSO’s (2015) report described teachers’ responsibility to change diverse students’ behaviors:

General education teachers must provide core instruction that is accessible and differentiated. Special education teachers, ELL specialists, and other school personnel must

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“struggling learners”</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“students who struggle”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“students who experience learning and behavioral challenges”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes“</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“students who need intervention despite the presence or absence of disability”</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>“students who demonstrate lower achievement than their same-age peers“</td>
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be ready to provide the increasingly intense academic and behavioral instruction that these students require. (emphasis added, CCSSO, 2015, p. 1)

CCSSO (2015) called on teachers to use data to create individual learning plans for all students, provide multi-tiered systems of interventions, and produce “a school-wide system of effective behavior management” (p. 6). Together, these calls reflected teachers’ roles in changing students’ behavior as a form of “therapy [that] aims at curing the individual so that he can continue to function as part of a sick civilization without surrendering to it altogether” (Marcuse, 1955, pp. 245–246).

**Conclusion**

This paper has documented a technocratic turn in teacher education discourses in CAEP standards and intermediary organizations’ calls for teacher education reform. Together these elements demonstrate that the emergence of technocratic regimes results in the production of a one-dimensional teacher—a spectator and a passive observer (Debord, 1994) who focuses on transmitting knowledge instead of considering how education with its moral, political, and ethical imperatives can transform societies. It is a spectator whose attention is focused on test scores rather than issues of justice or diversity; who in turn uses neuroscience and psychology as a tool for disciplining those who stray away from dominant norms and adjusts them to the existing society. Such one-dimensional teachers are more likely to become agents of social control who seek to adapt students to the world, rather than equip them with knowledge and skills necessary to transform the world around them to make it more justice- and equity-oriented. These changes can have particularly deleterious effects on students from oppressed communities, as the new constructions of diversity in teacher education policies individualize diverse students’ struggles and decontextualize their experiences from broader systems of social injustice. Future studies should explore how the technocracy affects practices within teacher education programs and how it impacts the divide between university- and school-based teacher educators.

Scholars across the U.S. have issued calls to resist CAEP and other technocratic teacher education reforms (Hayes & Yang, 2018). Despite these calls and criticisms, many programs around the country pursue CAEP accreditation and redesign curricula to meet its expectations. In this context, some teacher educators continue teaching about issues of social inequality, power, and privilege, but with the rise of social conservatism their work is subject to greater attacks. When teacher education standards no longer include substantive focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity, the pursuit of social and racial justice becomes a matter of personal commitments rather than a professional responsibility (Gorski & Parekh, 2020).

This paper then is a call against accepting technocratic discourses as common sense and against compliance with policies that present them as such. Not to become complicit in the reproduction of inequality, teacher educators have much reckoning and critical reflection to do. New visions for teacher education and education at large are necessary (Kretchmar & Zeichner, 2016). As these visions are articulated, it is important to consider how new designs for teacher education equip teachers to disrupt the status quo and cultivate radical imagination of a more just world. With that, I urge teacher
educators and social foundations scholars to consider how to dismantle technocratic constructions of teacher education and join social movements in their political struggle for global justice (Bourdieu, 1998). After all, preparing multidimensional teachers for a critical analysis of realities and social transformation requires that teacher educators model the stance of critique and action for them.

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**ORCID**

Elena Aydarova [http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0387-2889](http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0387-2889)

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