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CATÓLICAS DE AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL  
CARIBE**

**AGENCIA ACREDITADORA  
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**QUALITAS**

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**ASEGURAMIENTO DE LA CALIDAD EN PROGRAMAS DE FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORES**

**Title slide:** First my thanks and then my apologies. My thanks to Judith Scharager, to Qualitas and to ODU CAL for inviting me to discuss this important topic of assuring teacher quality with you. And my apologies: I hope you can forgive me for being unable to speak to you completely in Spanish. Many years ago I learned to speak Spanish in Colombia. However, it's has also been many years that, little by little, the grammar and vocabulary for academic and professional speaking have faded away. For this reason, I will speak in English and we have the help of a translator. Again, my apologies.

Something occurred to me as I was putting this presentation together. My realization was that the title and the topic could potentially have a negative effect. Like this....

**Sleeping audience:** Not everyone may find my topic or its content as interesting as I do. So I decided to frame this presentation as a set of questions and to conduct it as a collaborative thought experiment.

So here is my first question....

**IDK slide:** Show of hands please.

How many believe, Yes, we can improve teacher quality with standards and accreditation?

How many believe, No, we can't improve teacher quality with standards and accreditation?

Finally, how many of you aren't sure if standards and accreditation would raise teacher quality?

**Book cover slide:** For some time now in the US, the belief is that teacher quality is a strong contributor to student achievement and, thus, the issues around teacher quality, including the role of accreditation, has escalated in fervor and in furor to the level of a national debate and a rallying cry for reform. Not unlike here in this symposium where we are debating teacher quality, its criteria, processes and practice. So, too, these issues are of primary importance in the United States.

**Latin America Issues:** As I prepared for this event, I read similar papers on teacher training and teacher quality here in Latin America. As I discovered in these papers and in yesterday's presentations the issues confronting you are not unlike our issues in the United States. Here are some quotes:

*That pre-service teachers are poorly prepared to perform within the classroom.* In the United States there is a similar belief and it is based on student achievement. If the students in American schools are not at the top of the list of rankings, from PISA for example, then it is the instruction of those students that is failing and it is the teachers who provide that instruction. Thus, the teachers must be poorly prepared if they cannot teach effectively.

Another issue for you is that *the teaching profession pays little and lacks prestige.* This is true in the US as well. Often the admissions to teacher preparation programs comes from those who cannot get into programs for other more prestigious professions, such as engineering, medicine, or law. Teaching pays far less than other professions and today is not increasingly less respected as a career choice.

Another issue in Latin America appears to be *low quality training courses and processes.* There is great variation in the courses offered to teachers in the United States as well, and even greater variation exists in how those courses are delivered. As an example, there are programs where a pre-service teacher will take academic courses, a limited number of pedagogical courses and student teach for 180 hours to become a teacher. There are other programs where a pre-service teacher will have an academic major in education and spend four years taking integrated academic and pedagogical courses and spend their final year of study working full or part-time in a school. And there are wholly on-line programs to become a teacher. The variety in curriculum, programs of study and course content is tremendous. So much so that a well-known scholar of education names Art Levine, former President of Teachers College at Columbia University, called teacher education "the wild, wild West."

Another issue for Latin America is a related one concerning low academic credentials of teacher educators. Often in US university or college-based schools of education, the teacher educators are the least published, considered the least scholarly, and are the least respected colleagues in the university. Thus, we share similar issues not only here in the US and in Latin America, but I

hear similar stories from our colleagues in Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, where I have also travelled and worked.

Thus, our challenges are similar and our solutions might be shared. Today I will tell you some of what we have done in the United States and hope that you will learn some things of interest and I learned from you yesterday.

**High performing:** The US has turned to the teacher quality practices in other countries that do not seem to have similar problems with teacher quality because their student achievement results are the highest in the world. So, I ask you the second question of my thought experiment ...of the four highest performing nations on international comparisons of student achievement, such as PISA, how many have professional teaching standards and/or accreditation to which the teacher preparing institutions are held accountable? I am using Finland, Korea, Japan and Singapore as the four high-performing countries.

Show of hands again, please,

One of the four countries has teaching standards?

Two of the four countries have teaching standards?

Three of the four countries have teaching standards?

All of the four countries have teaching standards?

None of the four countries have teaching standards?

**The Answer:** And the answer is? Not so fast.

In 1960 Finland wasn't doing so well, but it didn't devise a set of standards. Instead it instituted a number of national policies and practices that guide the education of teachers including:

Establishing teacher Education as a University-based profession

Ensuring teacher education became highly selective at admissions and that the profession was well-paid, on the same level as medicine or law.

AND supporting the promotion research and innovation on the part of teachers and in their classrooms as part of the curricular content of teacher preparation. So, Finland has no teaching standards but has elevated prestige in admissions, preparation, and the practice of the profession.

In Singapore it is a slightly different story, Singapore only has one institution that prepares teachers, so its curriculum is uniform. The university's expectations for what pre-service

teachers must know and be able to do might as well be a set of national professional standards because the university's expectations are the only expectations in the entire city-nation. So, Singapore has no teaching standards but it does have shared expectations and curricular cohesion.

Japan **does** have teacher standards and accreditation, but more highly prized in Japanese teacher education is their system of in-service training and ongoing professional development. Through in-service education teachers obtain more advanced degrees **and** a higher teacher license. So, Japan has standards "on steroids" (maybe that is not such a funny joke as it would be in the US). Teacher preparation extends well beyond initial preparation to continue professionalism. Japan also has a well-developed culture of meeting collective expectations which also helps to maintain the quality of its teachers.

And Korea?...it is a puzzle. Although the students are high performing Korea views its teacher preparation as a problem, particularly the curricular diversity of its various preparation programs. Consequently, Korea is moving toward designing a set of national teaching standards and requiring accreditation.

**Two lessons:** From these particular international examples, we see that the level of teacher quality is equated with the level of student achievement. Poor students means poor teachers, good students means good teachers, excellent student outcomes means excellent teachers. The second lesson so far is the meeting expectation that may be in a set of standards or not **can** have an important influence on teacher quality.....BUT

**Factors in teacher preparation:** There are some key factors in teacher quality that are coming together in the US, are evident in Latin American papers on reforms needed, and were included in many of the remarks in yesterday's presentations. To raise teacher quality there is a focus on:

Selectivity...In the US as part of the new accreditation standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, of which I was the Senior Vice President, the new standards include a standard on selectivity. Higher standards for admission were one of the non-negotiable issues for the Council for Chief State School Officers when the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CAEP) was crafting its new standards I don't know how much you may know about the US education system, so let me digress for just a moment to explain this point. In the US, each of the 50 states has the authority over education in that state. The US Federal government is not SUPPOSED to have any power in this area. Education is a States' right. So, each state has a person in charge of all the education in that state. This person is called the Chief State School Officer. And there is a Council of all of the 50 Chiefs called the Council of Chief State School Officers.

When the new standards for the US teacher education accreditor were drafted, there was a commission of 41 people appointed to write the new standards. This Commission had Broad and deep representation from across the United States and throughout the professions associated with education, including university administrators, presidents, deans, faculty, teachers, teachers unions, professional associations, and government liaisons in addition to public members. There was also representation from the Council of Chief State School Officers, along with two chiefs of schools and one state governor. The Chiefs were insistent. The new standards MUST include rigorous selectivity at admissions or they would NOT approve or adopt the standards. I am sure you have no such similar, political pressures in your own countries?

Increasing selectivity at admission to teacher preparation programs is a wise policy and standard to have but there are two challenges:

- 1) The standard calls for selectivity at admission and throughout the preparation programs up to and including graduation. The standard expects that you get the best and the brightest to come into teaching, as Jorge noted in his remarks yesterday. The standard also expects that you continue to hold high expectations throughout the programs of study so that students who do not excel are advised out of the programs. By the end of the preparation programs, you are assured that you are truly graduating pre-service teachers who you believe to be the most effective beginning teachers possible. For some teacher education programs this standard goes against their mission to admit low-performing students or students from under-represented groups. But I see this standard as a call for innovation and here I will digress, again, to tell you a personal story.

When I was a dean of education at a college in New York City, part of the City University of New York, I worked in the Bronx. The mission of the College was to educate students from the Bronx. And the Bronx was known to have a section, called High Point, with the highest poverty level of any neighborhood in the United States. The worst schools in New York City were known to be located in the Bronx. The Bronx had the most unlicensed teachers, the highest teacher turnover, and the highest level of violence of any other borough in New York City. How would I ever meet admission standards so high as to be able to attract the top third of a college entrance exam when the college accepted students from the lowest performing schools in New York City as a part of its mission?

But I realized there was an underlying prejudice in my thinking: The prejudice being the assumption that no Bronx student could meet higher standards. So, I wrote a grant in which we set admissions to the teacher education program at unprecedented levels:

Admitted students would need to show a high school average above a B; evidence of having taken rigorous high school courses including algebra, and a college grade point average of 3.0 or better. We set out to find these students through an intense recruitment campaign. We wrote to every college student about to enter their third year of college who had a grade point average of B or better and we invited them to an open house to learn about our teacher education program. We told them we only wanted the best and brightest and that so far they had qualified. We recruited them with a slogan of “Bronx Teachers for Bronx Schools” and urged them to give back to the community that had raised them; to become a leader and a role model; and to be a part of creating the changes in the Bronx that they wanted to see.

We could only accept 25 students. 350 qualified. Over 100 applied. Higher admission standards can be a stumbling block or it can be an opportunity to transform your practices in teacher preparation.

- 2) The other challenge in this standard on selectivity is the working environment for teachers. When the working conditions for teachers in the United States, and in Latin America, remains unchanged with lower pay than other professions, with excessive pressure for performance, and with diminishing respect for the profession there is little long-term incentive for a bright student to become a teacher. Here as with no other standard there is an intense need for the teachers unions and the government to partner together, as Finland did, to improve the working conditions for teachers, such that the best and the brightest will consider teaching as a worthwhile and rewarding profession.

The second key factor influencing teacher quality is the level of content and pedagogical knowledge acquired during preparation. And this is related to admissions to some degree because if you admit the best and the brightest they tend to be well-prepared in content knowledge. But it is possible for teacher preparation programs to do something about the level of knowledge acquired by their students by modifying or revising their programs.

Here, again, I will digress to continue my story. In designing the new preparation program we went to five of the lowest performing elementary, or primary, schools in the Bronx. We asked them, “what kind of teachers do you need most?” The school administrators, every one, told us that their students were making progress in reading but failing at mathematics. They also told us that 95% or more of their student were English language learners and needed teachers who knew bilingual and second language methods of instruction.

So, we knew that we had a content challenges in mathematics and a pedagogical challenge to include second language and bilingual methodology. Working with the faculty of education we completely redesigned the traditional curriculum. We added three new course in mathematics and mathematics instruction. We added a course in bilingual instruction and modified all other pedagogical course to integrate second language strategies of instruction. The result was a tightly focused, integrated and coherent curriculum that met the needs of the Bronx schools. We held ourselves accountable to develop and deliver the content and pedagogical knowledge that these new teachers would need to be effective. Not the content or pedagogical content we imagined that they needed. Not the content or pedagogy that matched the expertise of the faculty's typical course content. We gave them what the schools told us they needed.

Let me add that at graduation, in a climate where no new elementary level teachers were finding jobs, all but one of our graduates was hire by the time schools began in September. I attribute this incredible hiring rate largely to the specialized content knowledge and pedagogical skills that our graduates offered and that set them apparent from other applicants.

Content and pedagogical knowledge is the first standard for CAEP accreditation. And it is expected that the pre-service teachers will be monitored throughout their programs to ensure that, over time, they develop the knowledge and skills they need.

The third key factor in teacher quality, whether in the US or Latin America, is the quality of the clinical, or practical, experience. In the papers on teacher training policy in Latin America the transition between school-oriented and academic rationales in teacher training was mentioned as being disconnected. This point was mentioned in yesterday's presentations as well. Too often teacher preparation programs and the schools seem to be at odds. The schools and the pre-service teachers were telling us that teacher preparation was too theory heavy and not practical enough. The universities were telling us that the schools were too theory-light and overly practical in terms of "what works with kids". There was pressure from the Teachers unions and school practitioners on the new standard commission to ensure that PARTNERSHPS with schools and teachers, NOT just clinical practice, was a central factor in the standards themselves. And we achieved this. Partnerships is listed first in the clinical standard, and the expectation that schools and universities will work together in deeper and boarder ways is a clear expectation. In fact the new wording in the standards is that schools and universities share accountability for success of the pre-service teachers and for the school children in the schools. Again, I will digress as my story continues and I promise that after this bit of story I will "shut-up" about the program we developed.

I mentioned already that to improve the admissions and to transform the content and pedagogical knowledge developed during out teacher preparation program, we turned to five low-performing Bronx schools and asked them what kind of teachers they needed. And they

told us. But we didn't stop there. Those same five Bronx schools became the sites for our practice experiences. The school administrators met with us every two weeks to discuss the students, the program, and our progress. They met us at 7am before school began. We rotated our meeting place each time from the University through each of the five schools and then back to the university.

In our program the teachers-in-training chose a mentor teacher to live and work in her classroom for a full year: teaching, learning, studying the children's learning, and taking classes at night. The teachers in those Bronx school participated in professional development in mathematics and attended inquiry and mentoring sessions with us in their school buildings. We often held our university pedagogical classes in their classrooms. We offered summer mathematics camps for their students and we were as committed to the success of their students' learning as they were committed to the learning of our pre-service teachers. We shared success and we owned our failures together. And what I learned was that this was how teacher preparation should be done. Working together with the schools was not easy, but it made us all better...together.

All three of these factors are expected to equate to high levels of student performance, for ALL students, after the pre-service teacher is graduated and employed. In fact, every single one of the new CAEP standards includes this expectation of higher student achievement as a result of preparation. AND the standards hold out the expectation that systems are in place to monitor all of this.

One of the papers, released in 2012, by OREALC/UNESCO makes a big point of this for Latin America as well. They state that one of the goals in Latin America in the future is to provide regulatory systems on quality of training programs and **graduates**. In the new CAEP standards there is one standard that is weighted more heavily than any other and that is standard 4. Standard 4 is called Program Impact, and to be accredited an institution must meet this standard and all of its components. The standard states that an institution must provide evidence of the IMPACT of its GRADUATES on student learning, teacher effectiveness, employer satisfaction, and the satisfaction of the graduates with the preparation they received. IN other words the new accreditation standards reach outside preparation to the effectiveness of graduates once they become teachers. It is no longer acceptable to graduate beginning teachers, hand them a diploma, and wish them luck as they head out the door. We need to know how well they perform on the job and to hold ourselves accountable if they fail. The Dean of the School of Education at the University of California at Long Beach believes that all of her graduates are well prepared to teach. She believes this so strongly that each of her graduates comes with a Long Beach School of Education Guarantee. If a graduate does not perform effectively on the job, the Dean will take the graduate back and retrain him or her in



the areas of skill deficiency. Interesting idea, isn't it? And clear evidence of this university's commitment to the quality of their graduates and to a deepened and shared responsibility to the schools.

The Latin American papers also point out that there is a dire need to develop a comprehensive system to assess future teachers, and we heard about one of those possible systems yesterday. The 2011 paper on the new agenda for teacher policy, by ESOSOC-RMA in Argentina, underscores the need for performance assessment of teachers and their competencies upon graduation, including the rules for gathering evidence on that performance (such that there is a valid system for judging performance). The new process for accreditation in the United States is emphasizing the need for high quality evidence, submitted in the self-study. In fact, the self-study is dramatically changed to begin with evidence, not narrative. Accreditation of specialized professional programs began in the United States in 1905 as part of a review of medical programs. Teacher Education accreditation began in 1952 and since 1952 universities have submitted lengthy self-study reports about all of the things that they do in the programs of study. They tell us about courses, instructors, practical experiences, and their missions. They describe monitoring systems and benchmarks. And then, and only then, do they insert documents or evidence as examples of what they are describing. Now, however, they are being asked to upload data, explain what the data is, describe the process for how they ensured data quality, and then explain how the data demonstrates that a standard is met.

Student portfolios are a good example of a great idea gone bad. For years now universities have provided student portfolios as evidence of impact on student learning. I remember an accreditation visit in which a student's portfolio was being showcased as an example of excellence for elementary education. It had all the required sections: philosophy statement, autobiography, lesson plans, unit plans, examples of assessments used, examples of students work, and personal reflections. But what I remember the most was the kitty cats. It had kitty cat borders on every page. I must admit that I was stunned. I like cats. I have a cat. But kitty cat borders are not markers of excellence in teaching. Furthermore, even more importantly, when faculty were queried about the fundamental principles underlying the portfolio's organization and about how inter-rater reliability was established, the faculty produced an outline of the required content and a rubric for its evaluation. How can we hope to raise the quality of and the respect for the profession if kitty cats and rubrics are the summative evidence of excellence?

#### **Future Roles for accreditation:**

I want to conclude my remarks today by discussing the potential of accreditation to take on new roles. Currently accreditation serves two functions: public accountability and program

improvement. We provide the public with assurance that accredited programs meet, at the very least, the minimum criteria of quality and compliance with regulations, as so eloquently pointed out by our Argentinian colleague yesterday. And with our accreditation reports we provide preparation programs with an external evaluation that can be used for improvement purposes. But as accreditation standards change and processes evolve, accreditors are also teachers. We have an obligation to provide guidance and support around changes, such as the US emphasis on data quality. To help preparation programs meet these expectations we host conference, webinars, summer trainings, and institutes to raise awareness, provide expertise, and establish opportunities for networking and building professional learning communities.

Preparation programs differ in their missions, in the kind of teacher they purport to prepare, but they also differ in their vision for where they want to go in the future. Thus, accreditation is becoming a catalyst for change. In US teacher education accreditation, preparation programs can now choose one of three pathways of emphasis for their self-study report.

1. A continuous improvement pathway present the opportunity to identify a standard in which the preparation program acknowledge the need for improvement. In the self-study the institution presents its own plan for improvement, provides a baseline data set, and describes its goals.
2. An inquiry pathway present the opportunity to “test” a preparation programs own claims about its graduates. For example, if my claim is that my program’s graduates are adept at teaching mathematics to primary students, then my self-study emphasis would be on the data and analysis that allows me to prove or disprove that claim.
3. A transformation imitative pathway present the opportunity to conduct research on practice in preparation that an institution believes can be a model for other programs.

In this way accreditation respects an institutional mission and its vision by providing choices in how to approach its accreditation process.

Lastly, the US teacher education accreditor is serving as a research center of sorts. With over 950 of the 1400 US teacher preparation institutions in its database, including all of their self-study reports and data, the accreditor is uniquely positioned to issue research reports on the state of accredited teacher education programs and to serve as a data source for educational researchers.

Teacher education is at a critical point in its development. We need to be much more focused in using data to tell the story of the quality of our programs, not just tell the stories. Accreditation can help to accomplish that goal.

**Gracias:** I am going to stop here. I have talked for a long while, I expect our translator is exhausted. And I want to allow time for questions, with the sincere hope that I can answer them. I hope I have not bored you and I expect that we will have much to discuss in the years ahead.

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