American Educational Research Association Releases Book on Teacher Education—Proposes New Research Agenda


Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Boston College, and Kenneth M. Zeichner, University of Wisconsin-Madison, co-chairs of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, served as co-editors of the book. To outline the panel’s assignment, Professor Cochran-Smith notes that “data on prospective teachers are less comprehensive than the data on practicing teachers. A major challenge is developing an accurate national picture of teacher candidates in many different types of certification programs.”

The result of a four-year effort, *Studying Teacher Education* examines what is known from research about the preparation of the nation’s teachers and the links between their academic study and teaching. “The panel selected a number of key topics that policymakers, the public, and the education community seemed particularly interested in and focused on these questions,” states Professor Cochran-Smith.

Published for AERA by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, *Studying Teacher Education* cites a need for research on teacher quality that expands the concept of pupil achievement beyond standardized test scores. Among the findings on teacher profiles and teacher performance, the research shows:

- More teachers major in academic subjects, such as English or biology, rather than in education, a response to changes over the last two decades to state and institutional subject-area requirements.
- College graduates in secondary education programs have Scholastic Aptitude Test/ACT test scores comparable to other college graduates.
- Studies show a correlation between prospective teachers’ college study of mathematics and the mathematics learning of their high school pupils.
• Evidence favors teacher certification in the field of mathematics as one measure of successful achievement by their students.

Proposed areas for additional research include the linkage between teacher education and students’ learning; preparation of teachers to help close the achievement gap; reliable measures of teachers’ knowledge and skills; and teacher preparation in academic subject areas.

In comments on publication of the book, AERA Executive Director Felice J. Levine said, “We are pleased that the American Educational Research Association did what a national research organization can do best—that is, serve the public good by ensuring that research knowledge is rigorously assessed and made accessible in a timely way to inform discussion and decision making.”

In addition to the editors, the book includes the contributions of Kim Fries, University of New Hampshire; Karen Zumwalt and Elizabeth Craig, Teachers College, Columbia University; Robert Floden and Marco Meniketti, Michigan State University; Renee Clift and Patricia Brady, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign; Pamela Grossman, Stanford University; Etta Hollins, University of Southern California and Maria Torres Guzman, Teachers College, Columbia University; Marleen Pugach, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee; Suzanne Wilson and Peter Youngs, Michigan State University; and Hilary Conklin, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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The American Educational Research Association (AERA), founded in 1916, is the national research society for more than 22,000 members. AERA is dedicated to advancing knowledge about education, to encouraging scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promoting the use of research to improve educational processes and serve the public good.