

# The Examination of the Decline of Philosophy of Education with Institutional Theory: A Focus on the Last Three Decades

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Résumé de l'article

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# *The Examination of the Decline of Philosophy of Education with Institutional Theory: A Focus on the Last Three Decades*

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*Abstract: Many symposia and special journal issues over the last several decades have been devoted to concerns about the decline of philosophy in teacher education programs. I pursued an answer for my doctoral project and found institutional explanations are rarely invoked in the “decline literature.” I have sketched here the theory and have shown it to be equally applicable to the last several decades of this literature. I argue that institutional organizational theory (IOT) shows how teacher education institutions have changed over time in a way that has ultimately rendered the environment less and less hospitable to philosophy of education curriculum and faculty. Particular attention is paid to the educational context of Ontario, Canada, but I also include the wider American and British decline literature. In the final pages, I offer de-institutionalizing solutions that, if realized, could provide a new soil in which philosophy and other educational humanities fields could take root again in teacher preparation programs.*

## **Introduction**

Many symposia and special journal issues over the last half century have been devoted to the question, “What has happened to philosophy of education in modern faculties of education?” I became aware of these frequent investigations as philosophy of education declined in my own faculty of education in terms of dedicated coursework and faculty expertise. I pursued a theory to understand this trend, noticing that institutional explanations are rarely invoked in the “decline literature.” Institutional organizational theory (IOT)<sup>1</sup> seems to provide a new perspective. In this context, this theory focuses on how teacher education institutions have changed over time, and what factors ultimately render the environment less and less suitable to philosophy of education curriculum and faculty. Particular attention in this article is paid to the educational context of Ontario, Canada, but IOT appears to be a fruitful analytical tool in the American and British contexts as well.

My previous work (Colgan, 2017) has examined the hypothesis that the decline of philosophy of education is connected to the increasing institutional character or nature of modern faculties of education. The condition of school teachers begets their training, and this begets the composition of teacher preparation institutions. My investigation in Colgan (2017) began with the nineteenth century, a period

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account of the theory than presented here can be found in Perrow (1986).

in which teachers can be characterized as “schoolkeepers,” and I provide evidence of the philosophical literature made available to teachers in “teacher libraries,” the first professional development of the time. Teacher preparation occurred in the sparse but growing normal schools that provided “pedagogy,” a rule-of-thumb training provided by a veteran teacher, with apprenticeship-style practicums. Moving into the twentieth century, many of these normal schools were “upgraded” to teachers’ colleges, often attached to universities that fostered a research orientation in public school teacher training. This research orientation resulted in the development of the field introduced and named the “study of education,” splitting theory and practice from their synthesis in pedagogy. This split considerably narrowed and specialized the expertise of those who would become education professors compared to their normal school counterparts.

Before moving to the decline literature, it is important to briefly review the historical context of the rise of public school systems, for these systems provide the base for teacher education institutions. As these institutions have developed, their changing climate has forced philosophy of education into a struggle for survival.

### **Background of Political Changes to Education**

The following is a general background or context of education needed to make sense of the theory I introduce. Bringing together the historical context of professionalization, the K–12 education system, teacher education programs, and higher education more broadly reveals the gauntlet that philosophy of education must run, contributing to its reduced status (or, more precisely, the loss of its implicit unquestioned status) in teaching culture and teacher education.

Overall, the story of “public” or state education—as they say, history is written by the victors—is the story of the colonization of a relatively decentralized cottage industry of schools, industrialized into a public school system ready to be used as a means to achieve various economic, social, and political ends, and by the end of the twentieth century expanding in scope to include global aims. Much of the emphasis in education throughout the twentieth century was on efforts that supported this industrialization. The next few pages elucidate this history.

The first quarter of the twentieth century was infused with the promise of the sciences in the organization of human capital, which culminated in the “scientific management” movement, later documented by Callahan (1962). The middle of the century featured constant war, Sputnik and the space race, and civil rights movements. These events, in part, led governments to make stronger connections in school operations and curriculum to improve the economy, national security, and social order, efforts later studied in the Coleman Report.<sup>2</sup> Standardized testing, first used in the army, was now being administered in schools to place students in optimum educational streams. C. P. Snow warned of the creation of “Two Cultures” in 1959 as economic concerns and war measures accelerated the sciences, while faculty in the humanities were viewed with suspicion, as made explicit in the McCarthy period in the United States. War and foreign competition were driving the agenda at the federal level in many nations, and this led to a trend, developing since Horace Mann in the nineteenth century, of education not as a humanistic service for individual growth and enlightenment, but as a dial used by central planners

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<sup>2</sup> The 1966 report entitled “Equality of Educational Opportunity,” led by James Coleman, studied “school effects” and found that school spending made little difference to student achievement relative to the much larger factors of socio-economic status and family background.

to work toward economic or social goals to serve “interests in the nation-state” (Brint, 2006; see also West, 1994), later expanding these targets in the twenty-first century to include globalization.

Ontario’s education context echoes this broader history. A series of policy reports after the Second World War remobilized schools to deal with changing demographics and fill much-needed teaching positions. The later 1960s saw the apex of the child-centered movement with the Hall-Dennis report (*Living and Learning*) in 1968, later checked by the 1987 Radwanski report (for a discussion, see Allison & Paquette, 1991), which was followed by the creation of an arm’s-length college of teachers and a provincial testing organization, as well as goal and curricular tightening. The teacher’s role as “schoolkeeper” diminished over the next half century, and teacher education became increasingly focused on limiting the sphere of judgement to policy prescriptions and “best practices.”<sup>3</sup> This agenda was fueled by politically-sourced “accountability” movements, which funneled research into a “science” of education, excluding or de-valuing humanities work in education.<sup>4</sup>

For example, in the United States, the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report placed continued emphasis on teachers meeting benchmarks, a trend that would continue until *No Child Left Behind* decades later—literacy, math, and science test scores satisfied administrators that (short-term) learning had taken place. As Clifford and Guthrie report, the 1980s “turned much of the then-young science of education into a crusade for efficiency that promoted the bureaucratic, top-down controls that have limited teacher professionalism” (1988, p. 9). Likewise, in Ontario, efficiency was pursued by tighter coupling<sup>5</sup> within the education system, such as through consolidating school boards, eliminating grade 13, and limiting curricular electives by making more credits compulsory. While the board exams required for entry into the public high schools were ended in the 1950s, the standards for entry were revived by using psychometrics for the purposes of collecting information, but also as a way of standardizing schools by monitoring their test scores.<sup>6</sup> Not long after, while teacher federations had acquired bargaining power in 1975, government stepped in to somewhat check teacher unionization by establishing an “arms-length” college of teachers, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) in 1997.

Overall in Ontario, by the mid-twentieth century, a tripartite institutional power structure had emerged: the Ministry of Education, host universities, and the several teacher federations were set as the main players in the institutional environment for Ontario’s teacher education institutions for some time. Faculties of education, which were upgrading from teachers’ colleges, were compelled to forge new departmental structures. This broke down their common, well-rounded, liberal arts organization, often containing philosophy (of education) departments, and forged specific new scientific research clusters meant to satisfy the institutional demands of these institutional players.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> It’s important to point out that, in the past, a “best practice” was determined by the teacher and improved over time based on what worked for them and their students. Eventually, a “best practice” has come to refer to that found effective by research, and teachers simply need the skills to *apply* the research findings according to the particular needs of their class.

<sup>4</sup> As philosopher M. J. Adler noted about the condition of his field in 1940, “philosophy, at its best, can be nothing more than a sort of commentary on the findings of science” (1988, p. 11f).

<sup>5</sup> Coupling is a term used in institutional theory to refer to (increasing) controls over the task performance of an institution by external administrative bodies.

<sup>6</sup> This testing was formalized in the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in 1996, and its first round of testing began a year later with grade 3 students, testing literacy and math skills; a far cry from the target and purpose of high-stakes testing a half-century earlier.

<sup>7</sup> A particularly impactful change was the implementation of graduate programs, to which philosophy of education temporarily escaped as its courses were driven out of teacher preparation. For a case study of a faculty of education

While these larger moves were taking place at the governmental and institutional levels, philosophers of education at the faculty level during these decades were still indecisive about what their role ought to be. While philosophers of education have made plenty of good arguments for philosophy of education to have an important role in a good teacher education program, the evident decline of philosophy of education coursework and faculty, including the “educational foundations” consolidation, suggests these arguments have not been enough. This point must be emphasized, as many in the field still suggest a perceived “lack of rigor” in philosophy of education literature is the primary cause of its decline. My own findings suggest an entirely different, perhaps more insidious cause, in the environment of faculties of education themselves. More specifically, changes to the construction of teacher education programs began displacing philosophy due to what I and others have called “institutional forces.” These forces have transformed the curriculum of teacher education at the expense of philosophy and other humanities subjects, such as history of education.<sup>8</sup>

### **The State of Philosophy of Education from the 1980s to the Present**

There are several early Canadian studies of the health of philosophy of education. McKenna (1981) assessed Canadian philosophy of education as “alive and well” up to the end of the 1970s. Another comprehensive study was produced by Hare in 1991 reaching a similar conclusion, also noting a “strengthening” of connections between mainstream philosophers and philosophers of education.<sup>9</sup> In the same year, Beck published a review of the historical roots and mixtures of “North American, British and Australian Philosophy of Education,” unfortunately lumping Canada in with the United States. In particular, Beck notes that analytical philosophy was well underway in the United States prior to Peters via Scheffler. Hare, in response, notes that Canada was influenced by American and British philosophy of education, as was the Australasian scene. The United States and Britain had sent out philosophy of education settlers to the satellites of Canada and Australasia, the latter having a journal and a society set up by 1969 and 1970, respectively, while in Canada these institutional landmarks were delayed until 1987 and 1976, respectively.

The lateness of these institutional assets for philosophy of education on the Canadian scene is the reason for the rosy picture reported by McKenna and Hare, for most of Canada’s faculties of education at this point were only several decades old. In the American, British, and Australasian literature, philosophers of education consistently suggest decline started earlier, but differ to a great extent on the cause. My own particular explanation has focused on the view from institutional organizational theory,

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as it went through this transition from a liberal arts college to a research-based faculty of education, see Colgan (2017).

<sup>8</sup> A study of the decline of history of education is urgently needed. For those who may be interested, some useful material can be found in Kerr, Mandzuk, and Raptis (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Hare’s (1991) study mentions all the philosophers at Althouse College, including Barrow, who was a visiting professor from 1977 to 1978. Barrow is particularly noted for his analytical swashbuckling in Canadian curriculum theory literature, producing several books. Hare also highlighted Barrow’s work *Giving Teaching Back to Teachers*, quoting from Barrow that “the judgement of the individual teacher ... must be paramount in deciding how to proceed, rather than the generalized demands of some curriculum design or otherwise imposed rules of educational experts” (Barrow, 1984, as cited in Hare, 1991, p. 81). As I argue, the trend of outsourcing decision-making from the teacher leads to an illiberal teacher education (Colgan, 2017).

which looks at institutions not only as (1) primarily interested in their own survival in dealing with a coercive environment of often competing and demanding interest groups, but also, (2) over time, having their institutional boundaries breached and their technical cores, where their products are created, raided, ultimately conceding to rather than tempering demands. In other words, it seems time to question the academic independence of the makeup of faculties of education in terms of their support for research in traditional university disciplines. Certainly, throughout their history, teacher education institutions have been “questioning” their academic identity, having emerged from a balanced variety of fields resembling a mini-university or a liberal arts college, before developing into their present state.

In order to analyze this institutional change, it’s important to look at the institution’s basic structure. Sociologist Talcott Parsons (1960), particularly in his first two essays, created a schema identifying three “levels” that make up an institution: the technical level (or core), the institutional level, and the managerial level, the latter of which sits between the other two and attempts to negotiate demands made by one on the other. Faculties of education as early as a few decades ago may have, as members of the university, lost the power needed at their managerial level (Lea, 2011) to scrutinize the agendas of external political or government organizations, teachers’ unions, and other interests seeking to foster particular kinds of teachers. In other words, the balance of power has shifted in their institutional structure. Clifford and Guthrie similarly find an alliance between certain parts of the institutional level and the managerial level meant to check it, noting in the 1980s that “deans are today attempting to exert the dominant influence over the restructuring of teaching, in ways that continue to celebrate researchers over teachers, educational science over eclectic craft knowledge” (1988, p. 4). Burkhardt and Schoenfeld (2003) notice a similar trend, reporting that education research is not influential, useful, or well-funded, and arguing it should be more practical for practitioners and policy-makers, rather than speculative. With this narrowing of teacher “education,” practical interests have taken over, resulting in the technical core of teacher preparation institutions being hollowed out as they change from centers of liberal education to manufactories of technical teachers. This may have, in part, been the cause of a considerable faction of postmodern philosophers of education (and others) placing the blame for the decline of philosophy of education on corporate interests (Kennedy, 2011) as teacher education becomes less and less liberal.

In other words, I challenge the dominant narrative used to explain the decline of philosophy of education faculty, often blamed on a failure to define the discipline, the quality of its scholarship, or its members’ academic backgrounds. Instead, I find a stronger explanation when unearthing what was first pointed out in the 1980s, identified then as “institutional forces.” In particular, two separate educational researchers in the United Kingdom, Hamlyn and Wilson, both point to the settings in which philosophers of education are expected to work. Hamlyn references this twice, first in what he called “institutional factors” and second in his description, pointing out that the “concerns of philosophers were to some extent influenced, or even dictated, by the institutional settings in which they had come to work” (1985, p. 163). He also finds that philosophy of education has been pinched in a university system between (1) its parent discipline, philosophy, which is largely disengaged from and unwilling to lower itself to the level of practical questions that philosophy of education has been expected to address, and (2) the practice orientation and presentism of its supposed home in faculties of education. In other words, philosophers of education have had difficulty both cohabiting with educational colleagues and being appreciated for their career choices by their purist parents.

Wilson, while complaining of the quality of philosophers of education and seeing “little hope” for improvement without a revival of interest in the “rational and intellectual discussion of educational

issues” (1980, p. 51), points to the debilitating effects of “institutional pressures” and various educational bodies that “force philosophy into various straight-jackets” (p. 51). Since “so much of philosophy is necessarily informal ... [it is] likely to disappear under the influence of over-organization, external assessment, and cost-benefit analysis” (p. 47). And, perhaps most powerfully, since “education is a natural stage for the dance of fashion and fantasy” and philosophers of education have a “missionary instinct” that make them want to see their ideas come to light, the decline of the discipline is “the price to be paid for refusing to turn philosophy into something else” (p. 47). This points out the problem of how adaptable philosophy of education should be in faculties of education, suggesting its decline might be a point of principle; in other words, decline as protest, and perhaps an indicator of change in the study of education! Finally, Wilson points out that faculties of education “earn their bread and butter by preparing teachers rather than by studying education” (p. 48), which surely harkens back to the early institutional form of the teachers’ college, but more importantly reveals what counts as institutional survival today.

From both Hamlyn and Wilson can be seen a struggle that philosophers of education are having to endure while failing to take root in the new institutional soil of faculties of education. And, perhaps more disheartening, by the 1980s and beyond, an increasing number of philosophers of education would have received their doctorate from another philosopher of education, which should have increased the habituation of this new breed of faculty to its environment. Therefore, something else must be wrong—yet philosophy as training is not necessarily anathema, since philosophy can offer “truths” and critical thinking about educational issues.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, philosophers of education continue to report consistently on poor times ahead.<sup>11</sup>

Nearing the end of the decade, Wilson's (1988) assessment of the situation has changed little, finding philosophy of education “squeezed out” of practical decision-making in education, encouraging philosophers of education, as if waiting for relief or rescue, to adapt and be prepared to “function ... where they can” (p. 83). Wilson bemoans the loss of transcendental senses of “philosophy,” an absence Scheffler calls the problem of “provincialism” of practice in education faculties; Scheffler recalls in the mid-1980s creating a “post-doctoral research centre” (2004, p. 130) as a shelter for philosophy of education that it might survive the coming winter.

Another philosopher of education from the United Kingdom, John White, brings a particularly interesting explanation of the situation. He notes that philosophy of education was more or less the basis of policy-making in education up to the mid-1980s in the UK but has fallen away since then. The key

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<sup>10</sup> Adler (1942) was an early defender of philosophy of education, both from the scientific takeover of the study of education and from philosophy of education's loss of unity via pluralism, arguing that philosophy has truths to offer, something similar to facts. I have discussed (Colgan, 2017) how the introduction of “critical thinking” as curricular content in teacher preparation taught by philosophers of education was not necessarily aligned with the new wave of education policy. It would seem critical thinking most benefits decentralized arrangements where decisions rarely deal in ordinary, predictable situations (making inefficient the use of only the most general of policy or rules). One type of professional, the “schoolkeeper” or teacher of the past, needed the good judgement of navigating mostly uncharted waters, teaching multiple grades in the rural schoolhouse with at most the “little grey book,” as it was known in Ontario, containing the entire curriculum. Today, a new kind of professional is needed to navigate charted waters of policies and standards, and multiple booklets of curriculum for each subject. The role of critical thinking for teachers would seem to have changed. For a discussion of this in the 1970s, see McPeck and Sanders (1974).

<sup>11</sup> White (1987) disagrees with Hamlyn that the field currently is in a problem state, suggesting instead that it has failed to adapt and create lively new issues to continue at the pace of change in education research, with the added problem that “so few younger philosophers can get posts,” (p. 162) which still points to institutional attrition.

reason, he argues, was “pre-1988 governments were not responsible for the content of the school curriculum. Decision-making about aims and curricula was left to schools themselves. *Each had its own policy on this*” (2012, p. 504, emphasis in original). Under such conditions, it is unsurprising that philosophy of education was in such good standing in teacher education as teachers were analogous to schoolkeepers.<sup>12</sup> According to Wilson, after 1988 a national curriculum “began to move policy-making upwards from school to [the] central government level, with teachers increasingly becoming implementers of decisions made elsewhere rather than policy-makers in their own right” (p. 506; see also Hayden, 2012, who tracked changes in article topics). This marks the institutionalization of teacher preparation, which began the erosion of philosophy of education, previously as a guide for teachers, but is now outsourced to the government or policy-making level. Who was expected to do philosophy of education in the classroom was changing.

Even after the fallout in the universities from Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, philosophers of education continued to report decline as if unaffected by the closer public scrutiny of higher education. In Australasia, McCann and Yaxley found a “growing rejection of the value of the philosophy of education within pre-service programs,” pointing out its crucial benefit of “disciplined discourse which recognizes the problematic, ambiguous, tentative and uncertain nature of human action” (1992, p. 51). In the United States, similar arguments were made, if not for philosophy, at least for educational foundations courses, yet one survey found these courses dissatisfying to both faculty and students (Sirotnik, 1990). In their defense, Kneller states,

What use are Foundations courses? ... To the [modern] teacher as teacher, very little. To the person and the scholar, very much. They introduce the student to the study of Education as a discipline on a par with other disciplines. (1994, p. 53)

This certainly reflects a bygone era, where preparation was for the person to become a teacher, rather than the modern conception of teacher education fostering skill development and law navigation.<sup>13</sup> This is consistent with Wilson's judgement on the situation in the United Kingdom, finding “(to put it bluntly) that we have now a generation of educators who are themselves largely uneducated in the educational disciplines” (1993, p. 41). Certainly, the role of teachers has changed, but it seems that the “decline” literature has largely ignored the powerful impact of the contexts in which modern teachers teach and their teacher education institutions; the particular perspective on the decline provided by IOT is rarely invoked. Instead, it is almost universally assumed that the latest institutionalization of teacher education, the university-embedded faculty of education, remains devoted to and protective of a liberal form of teacher education and a balance of disciplines in education research. Those writing on the “decline” often fail to consider how criticism or perspective-taking of philosophers does not serve the new interests found in wider policy and the goals of public education systems. The outcome of this most recent

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<sup>12</sup> See chapter 2 of Colgan (2017). “Schoolkeepers” is a term denoting the level of responsibility and control teachers working in schools of a “cottage industry”-status vs. modern industrial schools. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and in Ontario, up to around the 1970's), these were often, rural, multi-age, one-room schoolhouses overseen by local trustees, contrasting greatly with modern teachers who work within large multi-staffed graded schools with local administrators, regional school boards, central state or provincial education authorities, and other overseeing interest groups.

<sup>13</sup> Or the transition from aretaic ethics (virtue, moral person), to utilitarian (results via science), and to today's deontological tendencies (formalize results into rules). I have discussed this idea briefly elsewhere (Colgan, 2017, chapter 6).



institutionalization has nonetheless been clear: the attrition of philosophy of education faculty and the compacting of their contribution to teacher education into “foundations” to make room for new initiatives. And as space recedes for philosophy, the little room left eventually dissuades future hiring of philosophers of education, inevitably trivializing if not eliminating educational disciplines such as philosophy of education from the education of modern teachers.

### Philosophy of Education in the New Millennium

As teacher education has shifted to offering foundations courses, and the smaller allotment given to a variety of subjects now compacted into “foundations” has increased alarm for philosophers of education, there are considerably fewer posts for new faculty in the field. Nevertheless, philosophers of education hired under different circumstances have kept their posts but, perhaps saddened that their posts would disappear when they retired, have come together to argue for a continued place in these new omnibus courses.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, somewhat akin to relief efforts, yet not at the stage of refugee camps, academic journals have responded by devoting full issues to the fate of the discipline, as well as countless conference themes, all for the purpose of allowing philosophers of education to pause and perform some maintenance on their field.<sup>15</sup> To name a few, these journals have included *Educational Philosophy and Theory* in 1996, *Educational Theory* in 2002, *Educational Philosophy and Theory* in 2009 on the topic of the fate of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA),<sup>16</sup> also in 2009 the *European Educational Research Journal*, the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* on recovering the place of educational philosophy in education policy in 2012, and *Theory and Research in Education* in 2014 on the purpose of philosophy of education.

Quite lively were the articles across multiple issues published by *Educational Theory* in 2002. A controversial one by Arcilla (2002) bluntly declares that “by and large, the philosophical community expresses no interest in thinking about education. The educational community does not seem to care about philosophy” (p. 1).<sup>17</sup> It is suggested that disdain from both of these communities is marooning philosophers of education on their own desert island, becoming an “increasingly marginal and shrinking community” (p. 1). This perspective triggered a series of response articles which comprised the third issue of that year, including one authored by Ellett, who provides a more hopeful account despite “fragmented, limited, and restricted” (2002, p. 325) lines of communication between the two groups. Another rejoinder, by Bredo, suggests that philosophy of education should exhibit “lowered ambitions” and, in grabbing the “two horns” that philosophers of education face, the apathy of both philosophy and education, seek to meet the “set of constraints, if at a lesser level” (2002, p. 264). Yet another respondent, Fenstermacher

<sup>14</sup> For example, in Canada, from four prominent faculty: Chinnery, Hare, Kerr, and Okshevsky (2007).

<sup>15</sup> For example, the Canadian Society for the Study of Education’s Philosophy of Education division held a panel on the fate of philosophy of education in 2012 at the University of Waterloo. Having attended this, two years later I presented the proposal for my doctoral dissertation (Colgan, 2017) to this same audience at Brock University.

<sup>16</sup> Clark (2009) notes that, when those who had founded PESA in 1970 were not replaced by institutions in Australasia, the society suffered. This appears to be around the early 2000’s when attendance dropped considerably, and James Marshall was considering a motion to disband the society (Haynes, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> This disdain from philosophers continues to persist. An anthology edited by Rorty in 1998 entitled *Philosophers on Education* precluded philosophers of education and rather provided a historical account of the philosophies of over 25 Great Educators by specialists on each thinker’s philosophy. A tribute to Scheffler is included by the editor, whose recent retirement may have in part encouraged the book’s creation. White (1999) wrote a lengthy and interesting review of this work.

(2002), identifies “scripted[ness]” in the work of teachers which has reduced the advantage of philosophy for them. This is certainly a further example of the consequences of the institutionalization of education, which then affects teacher education.

Far more perilous was Burbules (2002). In the same special issue, he identifies what we haven’t seen substantially discussed since the 1980s: “institutional factors” that have led to the field’s decline, stating that, other than the odd scholar who was valued personally by a faculty, “there was never a deeply held commitment by most faculty or administrators in schools and departments of education to the value of philosophy of education” (p. 350). Further, he argues that philosophers of education can no longer hide behind “teacher certification requirements [to] mandate a course in ‘philosophical foundations of education,’ or [even expect] the course will be taught by someone with a doctorate in this area” (p. 350). This point is particularly important, suggesting the previous lifeline of institutional sanction can no longer be depended on, aligning with my thesis of institutional change in the conditions of teaching,<sup>18</sup> and further, that this decline has done irreparable damage as scholars with expertise in philosophy are less available in faculties of education, and thus less likely to attract interest in philosophy of education, let alone produce future philosophy of education doctoral students.<sup>19</sup> Burbules confirms my fears that “the self-concept and intellectual vitality of the field of philosophy of education and its institutional viability do not necessarily run on the same tracks” (p. 351). This important statement counters much of what others in the field tend to blame for the decline. Moving beyond Orwellian “I will work harder”-type suggestions, whether these entail more rigor in academic work, better philosophy of education faculty, or more “relevance” in coursework, we arrive at what appears to be a devastating situation, suggesting the field could still perish due to the poisoning of its soil over time, sourced in a kind of anti-academic (or anti-foundations) movement opposite to the hopes and ideals used to justify the initial incorporation of teacher preparation into universities! It seems this justification has been re-purposed, legitimating the marginalization or elimination from the technical core of academic fields that have not fitted comfortably into the recent broader agenda of education. Or, perhaps more simply, philosophy of education (and history of education) is no longer an institutional asset as it was in the past while scholarship in the “study of education” was struggling for recognition, importing traditional university disciplines such as philosophy to add rigor.

Continuing with the literature, little has changed over the last decade and philosophers of education continue to blame themselves for the decline while pointing out the little help afforded from philosophers or educators. More institutionalization can be seen from articles published in the twenty-first century: Guzenhauser (2003) argues that high-stakes testing has infected lower and higher education and has set a “default philosophy of education,” limiting thinking and reform in education.<sup>20</sup> Carr (2004) in the

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<sup>18</sup> I have elsewhere described further the slow process of “coupling” teacher preparation to teacher certification requirements, resulting in the erosion of the place of philosophy of education (Colgan, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> As an important personal caveat, I was lucky that my own doctoral project occurred at all. Around the time I began, the last philosopher of education had retired from taking on new graduate students, though I was very fortunate to enlist a supervisor, who became emeritus about half-way through my project, with a background in institutional and policy research. In addition, a few years after I had begun, the faculty reorganized its doctoral program and required students to join research clusters, which somewhat constrained their choice of topic. In other words, my selection to study this decline may have been impossible had I started a few years later. This reveals again the ramp of descent the field appears to be in: education students are losing access to study the field of philosophy of education, whether from disappearing courses or expert faculty.

<sup>20</sup> Alfie Kohn (2000) is also of interest here in terms of testing regimes as institutional coupling, setting assessment and outcomes as monitors of task performance, which seems to limit a teacher’s control of curriculum delivery. In

United Kingdom declares an “inevitable manifestation of a fundamental intellectual disorder” within the field because of the intellectual split of education from philosophy as the former entered the universities for study. This initiated a joint article discussion between Hirst and Carr (2005) on the limits of the field. Van Goor, Heyting, and Vreeke (2004) provide a somewhat more eccentric suggestion that a *comp d'état* by “anti-foundationalist” philosophers of education has, in a sense, sabotaged the field in the eyes of the wider public and the scholarly community, and these victors now presumptuously ask *educators* to adjust to postmodern philosophy (see Barrow, 1999; Greene, 1993). Clark (2006) in New Zealand discusses how philosophy of education can “fit” in today’s world, but remarks that the topic is considered a “luxury” and of no interest to teachers focused on “enhanc[ing] their employment opportunities” (p. 25). This is in considerable contrast to Tozer and Miretzky (2005), who argue that “dedicated study in Foundations elevates the knowledge of the teacher to a distinctive professional level” (p. 22), echoing my consistent remarks that it is foundation subjects, like philosophy, that are the essential ingredient in making a profession, as opposed to the creation and imposition of a rule-bound technical workforce.

There are other areas where the continued absence of philosophy from teacher education programs can be revealed. In *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World*, a textbook contributed by notable teacher education researchers Linda Darling-Hammond and Lee Shulman, a chapter specifically devoted to teacher education programs ignores the place of philosophy of education!<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Darling-Hammond’s (2006) article entitled “Constructing 21st-Century Teacher Education” makes no mention of philosophy, and “foundations of education” ominously appears only in the keywords but nowhere in the article. Perhaps not surprising to some, a consequence of the loss of philosophy is shown here: A survey of 2600 student teachers in Ontario from 2002 to 2007 found 90 percent aligned with progressivism as a philosophy of education (Ryan, 2008). Perhaps more interesting would be comparing a pre- and post-test, for it is likely that most students enter with these views, find they are not substantively challenged, and exit with them reinforced. This is because, and I think most would agree, the philosophy of any field, such as education, cannot be eliminated; it can only be made implicit, or smuggled into educational policy taught to aspiring teachers. I have yet to discover any university administrator citing this as a problem of either teacher education or intellectual diversity, for such a high degree of political homogeneity does not exist in other professions, whether medicine, law, engineering, or the like. Since we do not have pre- and post-tests, it can only be speculated, but either explanation is problematic: (1) If students enter teacher education programs with political views proportional to the wider public, the outcomes from the study show teacher education programs to be highly effective at political manipulation, akin to past and present societies we would not wish to reproduce; or (2) if students overwhelmingly enter with a belief in progressivism, teacher education programs are intellectually weak and seldom challenge incoming views. Both point to an absence of sound, contemplative philosophy of education, both *in* teacher preparation for the students, and *of* the preparation as part of its program design. For who would advocate for philosophy if not philosophers of education, as the loss of philosophy of education faculty would, it seems, mean a loss of philosophical consideration in teacher

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other words, if test scores garner institutional rewards, schools will naturally become more test-focused, and teachers increasingly prepared to meet this need. As schools miss targets, they comply with further policy controls.

<sup>21</sup> The chapter notes that programs should require a “shared vision,” suggesting that if philosophy exists at all, it’s not to be presented openly to students, but rather through a single, pre-determined vision of the program (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). The title of this volume does not hide the authors’ view of professionalism, reinforcing the idea of teachers as technicians, their prescriptive training providing what they “should learn” and what they should “be able to do.” Such a title might appear on a dog handler’s manual.

education program design and faculty complement. It may also mean a lack of foresight that issues of ideology might return to these programs, as a look through course calendars might reveal.<sup>22</sup>

### **Decline Literature of the Last Decade**

Continuing with samples from the literature, Nelson (2008) in Canada finds philosophy of education becoming unrecognized by both philosophers and educationists and left “on the sidelines” (see also Coombs, 2010), and Hare finds “philosophy has all but disappeared from such programs as teacher education” (2007, p. 149). Barrow, writing in a special issue devoted to R. S. Peters in 2009, attempts to correct a slow misunderstanding of the London Line in a new generation of philosophers of education, who he notes have replaced their lack of expertise in analysis with writing from a particular ideology.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, it is Waks (1988)<sup>24</sup> who claims analytical philosophers have been the cause of this alienation from philosophers and educators now being experienced by philosophers of education. It may, indeed, have been an institutional power strategy when analytical philosophers attempted to infiltrate policy-making, but ultimately it was short-lived and not sustained. Perhaps in part due to lack of outside support, philosopher Harvey Siegel (2009) confirms as editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Education* that philosophers, since the 1990s, continue to “not recognize” philosophy of education as part of philosophy. While Siegel notes the handbook was created in part to remedy this rift, the irony is he also notes the handbook contains only authors who have made contributions to academic philosophy, perhaps to insinuate a debt (or a tithe) that philosophers of education must pay. This is made worse as philosophers of education seldom cite each other (Frank & Rukki, 2016), perhaps indicative of being a lone philosopher in “survival” mode, seeking to fit in with the other education faculty and publish in more general education journals.

Duemer and Simpson (2010) find philosophy of education “intentionally eliminated” in many institutions, naming the “evolution of educator preparation” as “a major factor in the perceived death of philosophy of education” (p. 199). This latter point is consistent with my own wider finding that philosophy of education undergoes attrition as the conditions of public school teaching change, since teacher preparation is changed in response in ways that make philosophy at best obsolete, and at worst detrimental to the interests of policy-driven maintenance of education systems. On this point, Griffiths (2012) interviewed policy-makers and philosophers of education about how philosophy could become

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<sup>22</sup> Courses, for example, that do not primarily have an educational aim, but rather are meant to train the teacher in the (often political) techniques needed to be a certain kind of educator, may be ideological courses, especially if students are pressured and dissuaded from writing papers overly critical of a position (due to remaining unconvinced of its merits), and are, instead, expected to emerge as supporters.

<sup>23</sup> If Barrow (2009) is correct, by what criteria can teacher preparation still be called teacher *education*?

<sup>24</sup> Waks suggests the problem is that philosophers of education cannot fit nicely into separate disciplines, but rather must be “nosy,” in the sense that their work is always on other people’s work—philosophy’s raw material is issues and problems of practice and life itself. A further problem is that, while it doesn’t function well when separated as the university system is structured, it also demands an expert, and the idea of training or liberally educating every profession on the use of philosophy in their work may be impractical, even if the practitioners concerned are decorated with PhDs. Perhaps the university “straight-jacket,” as has been mentioned before, is inappropriate in faculties of education, and education as a field requires more blending of experts to be productive, bringing back the idea of synthesis to education.

relevant to policy-makers. However, implicit in the article is that policy-makers are able to construct policy without philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

Another instructive source is contained in the anthology devoted to Robin Barrow published as part of the Routledge International Studies in the Philosophy of Education. In his own chapter (Barrow, 2014), he spends a few pages describing in great detail the problems in today's universities and how philosophy of education has fared. It is impossible to sum up his remarks here, except to say that he finds overall the situation akin to a circus: financial interests have clearly run the agenda for some time, fueling a process in which fields that are most profitable in terms of garnering research dollars are selected over others. Philosophers of education rarely have backgrounds in philosophy and deal in issues tangentially and in piecemeal form, and where there are pockets of light and academic rigor, these soon give way to educational interest groups parading new movements with their slogans and emotional appeals. He even suggests, given we are in a "commercially orientated, anti-humanistic, and even anti-intellectual culture" (p. 144), philosophers of education ought to find the courage to turn their attention to higher education itself!<sup>26</sup>

One final article I wish to highlight is the empirical work of Hayden (2012) studying trends in the topics of philosophy of education journals. The study found that the topics addressed by philosophers of education have changed over time, becoming more reactionary, which again is indicative of being pushed "to the periphery" and grasping for attention and territory in the education world. We might ask, for example, under what conditions would an education faculty member seek out a philosopher of education to assist with a collaborative research project? It would be interesting to compare research collaboration in other faculties as well. Indeed, the results of this survey may reveal the form educational research takes today.<sup>27</sup>

This body of academic "decline" literature eventually culminated in two important anthologies: Waks's 2008 edited collection, *Leaders in Philosophy of Education*, and Kincheloe and Hewitt's 2011 edited collection, *Regenerating the Philosophy of Education*. Both are important texts which seem to have been coincidentally designed with one another in mind; the former capturing the past and present, and the latter addressing the present and future of the field. To highlight a few unique points, Barrow, writing in *Leaders*, is especially well-suited, as a highly published author himself, to observe how the publishing situation has drastically changed. He also suggests it may be time to close the experiment with faculties of education—that the tactics of institutional survival of faculties of education *qua* university faculties has been detrimental as compared with a humbler and less institutionalized existence as separate teachers' colleges or teacher education provided in liberal arts colleges.<sup>28</sup>

The anthology *Regenerating the Philosophy of Education* contains particularly blunt accounts of the decline of philosophy of education and the consequences for teachers and calls for everything from triage to

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<sup>25</sup> However, as sociologist Hodgkinson aptly puts it, "administration is philosophy in action" (1978, p. 3). Likewise, can teachers become professionals, a long-term commitment, without a philosophical understanding of education and teaching?

<sup>26</sup> For another career-view of the field, John Wilson (1993), also a highly productive philosopher of education, provides his assessment of philosophy and the decline of educational disciplines in faculties of education in the United Kingdom.

<sup>27</sup> The trend of education research becoming more scientific with the cost of purging its non-scientific faculty and research seems inconsistent with the fact that science faculty tend to have philosophers of science!

<sup>28</sup> Barrow (2014) further argues that teachers' colleges would gain a great deal if they exited the university scene. I can foresee a great deal of political opposition, and a loss of the illusion of a "university" standard to research.

revival methods. Some authors find even foundations courses to be in decline! As a somewhat tragic opening, Hewitt in the preface makes the following remark: “I never thought I would ever have to justify the moral importance of social foundations courses—particularly philosophy of education courses” (2011, p. ix). He is discussing his experiences in front of a committee considering cutting the philosophy course from a Doctor of Philosophy program!

A consistent theme, as suggested in the subtitle *What Happened to Soul?*, is philosophy as the “soul of foundations” (Steinberg, 2011, p. 7), the “soul of educator preparation programs,” and the “soul of colleges of education” which has been “purge[d]” (Simpson & Duemer, 2011, p. 199). I cannot think of a better reference to what I have been describing throughout my previous work and this article: the problem is an alteration of the technical core or soul of these institutions, where at one time philosophy (or, more specifically, *phronesis*) rather than psychology was the natural framework upon which teacher education functioned, and, for the same reason, was the professional mark<sup>29</sup> of a teacher. From Ancient Greece to the early university AB degree, and perhaps fading away in the twentieth century, we have this notion of the “philosopher” as the thinking or educated person, trained in rhetoric as the sophists were to eloquently speak what they know.

Without philosophy, and continuing with the metaphor, a soulless person is basically a zombie, one who lacks higher functions yet carries on performing its more basic, technical tasks. Historically, this culminated in the behaviorist psychology movement of B. F. Skinner, which, beyond training teachers in technical “best practices,” found even that wanting and created teaching machines! Rather than single dimensionality or risking the creation of “pancake” teachers (Theobald & Tanabe, 2011, p. 42), Petrovic suggested foundations or philosophy provide “dimensionality to schooling” versus a “flattening out” (2011, p. 71) of education practice with a technical-orientated workforce. Thankfully, philosophers of education in the 1970s and 1980s had the numbers to decisively criticize the behaviorist movement, steering a generation of educational psychologists into cognitivism. It remains to be seen, however, if sufficient philosophers will be on hand to defend the annex of education from a new behaviorist movement, should neuroscience mature and garner sufficient educational scientist and educational research interest.

Finally, Carlson (2011) points to financial interests’ invasion of the universities, which has corrupted education. In particular, faculties of education are “losing control over [their] curriculum” due to “performance-based certification standards.” Faculty are expected to “compete for funding dollars,” which will eventually “seal” the fate of foundations. Overall, he finds a “dumbing down” of teacher education through a narrow emphasis upon technical pedagogical knowledge” (p. 21). Swain (2013) finds this process, the “slow and steady elimination” of the concession course that is foundations, to be already well underway. While some philosophers of education have tried to appeal to the more practical interests of modern faculties of education, others have suggested they must return to theory (Keehn, 2016), and that perhaps their criticisms should cut more deeply in order to garner attention (Duarte, 2012).

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<sup>29</sup> I have also argued (Colgan, 2017) that, in the past, when teachers were seeking a field as their professional identity—as doctors claimed medicine, and lawyers, law—they (or perhaps educational researchers) ended up claiming psychology. I think this was a mistake, for psychology is a tool. The basis of a profession cannot be one that merely aids technical skill, for it then lends to that profession’s flexibility to tightly couple to external government demands, undermining the profession. Instead of psychology, *phronesis* or practical wisdom ought to have been claimed, and would have empowered teachers to act as the autonomous experts that professions demand, hence a considerable role for philosophy of education as teachers would have claimed the professional territory to make decisions in the classroom that demand philosophy. For further discussion of these ideas, see Pitman (2011).

A more local phenomenon that seems to have had a ripple effect for philosophers of education is a series of departmental amalgamations at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto.<sup>30</sup> At one point in time, separate departments existed for Sociology and Equity Studies in Education (SESE) and History and Philosophy (H&P). By 2014, however, both of those departments were residing under one (long) banner: Humanities, Social Sciences, & Social Justice Education (HSSSJE).<sup>31</sup> In addition, all admissions to graduate studies in philosophy or history of education had “ceased” and students were being asked to apply to the department of sociology. In 2011, an online petition (Bai et al., 2009) helped save OISE’s history and philosophy doctoral program which was to be cut. The Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) website cited low staffing levels and imminent retirements as sufficient reason to declare the program as lacking a sufficient “intellectual climate for a doctoral program” (para. 1). Faculty members supporting the petition to save it came not only from OISE but also Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and universities in the United States, including professors emeriti.

As a complementary summary note regarding the above “decline” literature, I wish to offer a personal anecdote from my experience teaching social foundations at my own doctoral institution. During our instructors’ meeting prior to beginning the 2014 school year, the administration handed out a four-page list of seventy-five curricular expectations required of our teacher education program. The document was entitled “Learning OUTCOMES required for OCT ACCREDITATION” (capitalization retained). Each of the three divisions at my faculty (curriculum, psychology, and policy) were required to rate their current contribution to each curricular point, though divisions were not expected to meet every point—psychology did not need to meet the “Ontario context” point, for example. Unsurprisingly, philosophy was not listed anywhere, and the curricular points related to policy were mostly referencing law and a teacher’s duty to be aware of and support current mandates from the Ministry, whether aboriginal education, social justice, special education, safe schools, or the like. In other words, professionalism was conceptualized as prescriptive and rule-bound.<sup>32</sup> As an example of a curricular point, teachers were expected to understand “equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice and the key role of teachers in identifying and eliminating barriers and creating social change.” This point and others seemed to me to presume a great deal, either of what teachers were expected to already know and accept or of what foundations instructors could impart in a 0.75 credit course. This would be an onerous task—much is

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<sup>30</sup> In 2009, a website and Facebook group were created to “save the humanities at OISE.” See <https://savethehumanitiesoise.wordpress.com/2009/11/11/letters-of-support-for-history-and-philosophy-of-ed-from-around-the-globe/>

<sup>31</sup> Such groupings of terms, suggesting they are complementary, seem to convey a “miscellaneous” or “other” status. The HSSSJE website can be found here: <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/hsssjje/index.html>

<sup>32</sup> A contrast to this might be the suggestion to reintroduce professional ethics to teacher preparation (Maxwell, 2013; 2017). It is certainly a common, mandated part of the preparation of other professions, such as medicine. A difficulty may be that documents such as the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*, which are mandated by the OCT to be part of teacher preparation programs, narrows the scope of ethics education. Ultimately the *Standards* are ready-made prescriptions or “duties,” and where time and courses are limited, the task of memorizing these codes of conduct will always be the priority. This is less pervasive in medicine, as doctors can sometimes invoke “rights of conscience,” but few if any of these potential circumstances exist for teachers. The fundamental issue is the philosophy of the teaching program: some programs deploy “ethics” as educational and properly philosophical, and some programs deploy ethics as practical (potentially uncritically accepting of policy and standards). The institutional issue is, over time, that the latter will tend to not require a professional philosopher to teach its courses, whereas the former will. If the trend in professional ethics courses takes this latter approach, so will the trend in the expertise of who is hired to teach these courses.

smuggled into this package deal of ideas: for example, the ethics of teachers as social change agents, or whether the wider society would endorse them in such a role with its children. Or could a teacher be a conscientious objector as in the military? It would do a teacher—not to mention the politicians and bureaucrats who create and enforce these and related mandates—much good to unearth the political, ideological and, dare I say, philosophical nature of these concepts before attempting to enact them in the classroom. A great many of these “standards” reveal a current, implicit state of philosophy of education, unquestionably enforced upon teachers who find themselves less able to access the expertise in faculties of education that may shed some light on these standards as part of their teacher education.

### Summary & Suggestions Toward Recovery

As the latest Canadian foundations of education textbook notes, the decline of philosophy of education is “perhaps reflective of a global trend—increasingly evident in Canada—which promotes a narrow view of education” (Gereluk, Martin, Maxwell, & Norris, 2016, p. x). At a time when it seems the responsibilities of teachers have exploded, certainly beyond the literacy and numeracy of a bygone era, their *education* (if it’s still right to call it that) has taken a particular route at the fork in the road; a trend toward preparation less for the classroom and more to navigate working in an education system and its policies. An important theme predicted by institutional theory is overgrowth, institutional dysfunction, and goal displacement, which promote a trend away from task performance and toward compliance with environmental demands, in this case becoming the most important objective of teacher preparation.<sup>33</sup> The key to understanding the decline of philosophy of education (and other humanities fields, such as history of education) in teacher preparation programs is understanding the changing occupation of teaching. Like a canary in a coal mine, the decline of philosophy of education is a signal, an indicator of unintended consequences in other areas; it urges us to re-evaluate the kind of teacher professionalism being fostered, and the conditions of the study of education as an academic field.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when teachers often worked alone in rural settings, the nature of the occupation required a great deal of autonomy and professional judgement, but their lack of social standing and the poor public value ascribed to schooling tended to de-value their efforts and dissuade dedicated teachers. Nevertheless, a culture of teaching formed spontaneously; teachers at this time sought out inspiration (and help) in the pedagogical frameworks of the Great Educators, forming societies dedicated to the study of Pestalozzi, Herbart, and others. With the onset of complicated education systems, maintained by centralized policy-making with the purpose of organizational health and conflict minimization, teacher preparation became overwhelmed with having to inculcate laws and policies, whereas teachers previously had to rely on individual, professional judgement.

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<sup>33</sup> One way to test this is to ask administrators to rank the importance of various content in teacher preparation, removing the lowest priority until a final one is left. Many might think this would leave psychology standing, but I predict it would be a course comprised mostly of educational law and policy, suggesting that the highest priority, with all things considered, is to maintain rule-compliance in the education system at all costs. In the past, the highest priority would have been philosophy or principles of education courses, synthesis courses to prepare the teacher to be a “schoolkeeper.” A theme of my analysis has been that, in the modern era, the needs of the burgeoning education system drives teacher preparation, especially interested in fostering managers necessary to make sense of teaching in school complexes and systems.



Teacher preparation institutions, attached to research-intensive universities, initially leaned on traditional disciplines (philosophy, history, and the early science of education, mostly psychology) as approved methods for studying “education,” but soon the dreams of authority and prescription vaulted scientism as the preferred method and the best capturer of research dollars. This survival mechanism put philosophy of education at a disadvantage. The role of philosophy of education as part of a liberal teacher *education* fostering an autonomous professional is clear, but its role necessarily diminishes in a trend inevitable in the maintenance of public education systems: increasing needs of “accountable,” technocratic, and prescriptive task performance via a hierarchy of growing numbers of administrators, in addition to the attention paid to government promises to improve social, economic, and political ends, the scope of which has increased to the global level. This has exiled philosophy of education from the technical core of teacher education institutions, just as a pedagogical approach to teachers’ work has been replaced with a new meaning for “professional practice:” compliance with policy prescriptions and standards of practice. In some ways, the “philosophy” of educational work has been outsourced, now performed at the institutional level, and its performance by teachers themselves is a distraction at best, and a tool of dissension at worst; with modern eyes, neither of these outcomes are practical.

A number of factors have caused the decline of philosophy of education. I have tried to emphasize, in contrast to my colleagues’ usual ascribing of blame to supposed poor scholarship or inadequate academic backgrounds of philosophers of education, that the main cause has been institutional changes to teacher preparation institutions. But these institutions are not autonomous; they are pinned between the horns of education systems and the research university.

The rise of mass education systems, including the complexity of their maintenance, has considerably changed the occupation of teaching, which impacts teacher preparation programs and the meaning of teacher professionalism, especially by lessening their range of action and discretion. Systems, like the education system, demand managers and policy so that action might be predictable, and thus delegated and efficient. This is, in part, why providing a liberal or foundational education for teachers has declined in importance—it is not conducive to standard, predictable action, for what a teacher obtains from a general education cannot be known. Rather than providing an education that allows teachers to construct their own toolboxes, public school systems demand limitations on the diversity of tools and their use. Under these conditions, philosophy has limited scope and is easily replaced by coursework that defines tools already approved by policy, research or the latest political agendas.

The other culprit is the university. Faculties of education reside here and seek to share much of its culture. Notice that liberal arts colleges are designed as self-contained institutions, expected to have a full complement of faculty in all of the major disciplines. Over the last half century, universities have rewarded research over teaching, including by hiring faculty particularly skilled in research and, especially for their ability to attract research dollars, by creating a trend now commonly known as the era of the celebrity researcher, with a greater proportion of teaching duties left to graduate students. This situation also tends to favor scientific research—often viewed as the only source of “cutting-edge” research—and to be the most lucrative for faculties, for it benefits from team research pooling and has research material expenses, all of which philosophy research requires little or none. Due to this hyper-research and scientific university culture, the faculty environment of faculties of education is altered over time, consolidating less lucrative disciplines (history, philosophy, and others) into “foundations,” and placing those disciplines at a disadvantage, tending to have less faculty, less courses, and less students. It is quite possible that, without tenure, the decline would have completed its course in a single generation; perhaps it needs

only two. In some ways balancing the overwhelming benefit to the university of scientific research, ministries of education provide funding for policy, curriculum, and other studies, and many faculty are hired and drawn to those lifelines; even if this rebalancing is corrective, it is another outside influence on faculty composition and research direction.

The influences described throughout this article have, over time, tunneled into the technical core of faculties of education and caused faculty composition to evolve as an institutional survival response. *Coercive* and *mimetic* institutional-level demands have gradually defeated any previous *normative* influences to hold on to certain educational disciplines to maintain a balanced faculty,<sup>34</sup> even if doing so would put the faculty at a financial disadvantage or, over time, risk the label of providing an “alternative” teacher education. The picture painted is necessarily a dire one, at least in the secular English-speaking world, for at this present moment there does not appear to be anything that might halt this process. It is unlikely, for example, due to the disregard of philosophy of education by philosophers and education faculty alike, that either one of them, in the absence of philosophy of education faculty, would advocate for them to be re-instated in faculties of education. At present, there are no outside advocates—philosophy of education lacks a champion akin to John Dewey and Richard Peters in the past. It would be unsurprising to hear asked if faculties of education today can afford philosophers of education. On the contrary, I would ask, can faculties of education maintain academic integrity without them?

### What Can Be Done?

Over the last 150 years, teacher preparation programs have been pushed by seemingly all outside forces to be more practical, often at the expense of being liberal. My previous work (Colgan, 2017) tackled the question of the “proper place” of philosophy in teacher preparation programs. It requires a multi-leveled answer as these programs themselves are designed with a philosophy in mind. The philosophy of a teacher education program determines whether the professional teacher is equipped to be an independent educational entrepreneur, the “schoolkeeper,” or whether the professional teacher is one who is equipped to function as a policy navigator in public school systems. As I have described, the source of the latter becoming dominant has been a process of tightening the coupling between the classroom and administration, outsourcing decision-making in the classroom for the purposes of increasing certainty and stability of policy to assist with the needs of administering larger and more challenging schools. Consistent with my diagnosis of an institutional cause to the decline, I have endeavored to provide de-institutionalizing solutions, which may not be possible until the university system is also reformed. To halt this trend of institutional-level predation on philosophy of education, I conclude by offering two long-term suggestions.

(1) Teaching culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a rich and growing area of diverse pedagogical approaches. A revival of this culture would certainly provide a new lifeline for philosophers of education, whether in literature directly for teachers, or in dialogue with speaker series

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<sup>34</sup> A re-balancing of teacher education might follow the example of Goodlad: “a setting that brings together and blends harmoniously and coherently the three essential ingredients of a teacher’s education: general, liberal education; the study of educational practices; and the guided exercise of the art, science, and skill of teaching” (1994, p. 2f). The point I hope to have made in this article is that the design of teacher education is inalienable from philosophy, and so should it not be hidden or censored but explicit in teacher education.

and consultation with students. The diversity of societies born of this era, based on various Great Educators—and more modern emergent thinkers<sup>35</sup>—reveals the capacity for teachers to self-organize over intellectual matters. Regrowth in this era would provide a counter-movement to the institutional or clinical settings schools are becoming and would reconceptualise what it means to be a professional, including renewed support for an assertion of teacher autonomy, likely supported by various teacher associations and unions. Teacher preparation should not assume that student teachers are destined or even desire to teach in public schools; they may be interested in practicing in a myriad of other settings. With greater moral and intellectual support for professional autonomy, teachers could once again have the freedom in the classroom to practice with full conscience and personal investment the kind of philosophy of education they support, which would mean a renewed demand for philosophy of education as a field consumed by those seeking inspiration and dedication within teacher culture. With this change, philosophy could emerge from its current implicit state, hidden inside policy, to emerge as a dynamic source of teachers' diversity of thought and practice.

(2) I agree with Robin Barrow (2014) that a return to teachers' colleges would renew focus on their original mandate: initial teacher preparation.<sup>36</sup> Modern faculties of education, competing for academic standing in publishing, grants, and promotions, and engaging in a faulty Icarian task of university research, expand and favour graduate programs over and at the expense of their founding program, teacher preparation. The result has been a different kind of institution seeking the Icarian fate as it grasps for academic university culture, losing sight of teaching culture. An independent teachers' college structure would allow an original liberal arts model to return as the standard for teacher preparation. This means a balanced faculty,<sup>37</sup> including internal departments that will shield their contents from attrition, and perhaps a different mindset when it comes to research and publishing. The needs of a profession of teachers or "educational leaders" demand they be the most generally educated in our society, and should also demand, as complemented by (1), an induction into teaching culture by way of an ample background in history, philosophy, and science of education (psychology and sociology). Every human being must start from the beginning, and thus these foundations must be revisited every time for every new teacher. In some ways, I am suggesting these foundations return to the core of teacher preparation, and away from clinical approaches to teachers' work. And as a final, perhaps radical suggestion: "cutting-edge" or advanced methods are more appropriate for later professional development or specialization, since teacher preparation is an induction into one of the oldest and most essential traditions, and is thereby the place and task of foundations above all else rather than experimental scientific methods. It is not the latest teaching technique that should drive teacher preparation, but insight into the tradition of thought of what makes for an education and a teacher, both framed in the long rather than short term.

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<sup>35</sup> Maria Montessori and Paulo Freire made extensive use of the word "pedagogy" in promoting their philosophies.

<sup>36</sup> A possible application of this is what have been called "centers of pedagogy," a redesign of the institutional structure (and thus its underlying philosophy) of teacher education (Patterson, Michelli, & Pacheco, 1999).

<sup>37</sup> Wilson (1993) argues the university should step in to create "departments of education" that study education via traditional disciplines (psychology, philosophy, etc.), making the study of education intellectually respectable, and leaving "practice" to an apprenticeship model in the schools. I have discussed (Colgan, 2017) the problem of the neglect of host universities overseeing curriculum and program standards in faculties of education.

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