Speaking about Education Reform: Constructing Failure to Legitimate Entrepreneurial Reforms of Teacher Preparation

Jesslyn Hollar
University of Washington, Seattle, USA

Abstract

This paper investigates how this conception of failure came to prevail in the political discourse around the reform of teacher education. It explores how discursive structures and strategies in two speeches by former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan legitimate a particular construction of the failure of teacher education and encourage privatization of the public. As a consequence of legitimating one view of failure, I show how teacher educators and teachers in the public sector are deprived of individual agency and opportunities to engage in deliberate dialogue around the reform of teacher education.

Keywords: *discourse, teacher education, education reform, neoliberalism, governmentality*

Calls for accountability and transparency pervade the current climate of educational reform. One consequence of this discourse is a preoccupation with assessment and evaluation-as-shame in education by policy makers and policy advocates. After President George W. Bush signed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, "grades" no longer applied just to students, but also to public schools and public school teachers. With the 2014 release of the National Center for Teaching Quality's (NCTQ) report, which grades teacher education programs on an A through F scale, evaluation-as-shame continues to impact teacher education programs. Also underway at the federal level are efforts to introduce new rules for teacher preparation programs that will define and identify highly effective teacher preparation programs based in part on their graduates' valued-added scores in the K-12 classroom (Teacher Preparation Issues 2014).

The emphasis on evaluative assessment and grading bolsters the dominant reform narrative, which claims public education has "failed" to deliver on its promises to offer high quality and equitable free public education to all students. The brunt of the latest iteration of education reform rhetoric is directed at teacher preparation; here, the dominant narrative around teacher education claims that teacher education is broken, has

failed, or is in serious need of disruption (NCATE 2010; Knowles 2013; Liu2013; Schorr 2012; Levine 2006; NCTQ 2014, Labaree 2004). The narrative manifests an urgent call for change around teacher education by attaching federal funding to education reform. According to proposed regulations of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA), once teacher preparation programs are ranked, only those programs at the top of the ranking will be eligible to receive federal funds in the form of TEACH grants, which are given to students pursuing a career in teaching willing to work in high-need areas in schools serving low-income students (Teacher Preparation Issues 2014). If this proposal is approved, significant numbers of teacher preparation programs will lose valuable federal funding. As Michel Foucault notes in *Discipline and Punish*, "the distribution according to rank or grade has a double role: it marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards. It is the penal functioning of setting in order and the ordinal character of judging" (Foucault 1995, p. 181). In this case, highly ranked teacher education programs will be rewarded with continued access to federal funding while lesser-ranked teacher education programs will be punished through a similar loss of access to federal funding.

Currently, the call for reform in teacher education operates in three arenas. First, it engenders support for deregulated market-based interventions and creates incentives for states to enable the entry of alternative providers of teacher preparation and alternative teacher certification opportunities (Washington State RTTT Application 2010). Second, it emphasizes more accountability through a ceaseless promotion of data collection and evaluation (Teacher Preparation Issues 2014). And third, it encourages the development of "public-private partnerships" in its focus on the clinical model of teacher preparation known as the "teacher residency" (Washington State RTTT Application 2010; Teacher Preparation Issues 2014).

Despite the urgency around reform created by this narrative of failure, the definition of a "failed school" or "failed teacher education program" lacks consensus. While education reformers, policymakers, and internal critics of the U.S. education system may not know the precise reason for the purported failure – in fact, many of these critics of teacher education construct failure differently – they certainly seem to have reached consensus that our current teacher preparation programs are failing our schools, children, and democracy. This claim is not actually that hyperbolic when one reads analyses, reports, press releases, speeches and news articles, which recount with great urgency, the need for teacher preparation programs to undergo dramatic transformation (i.e. Connally, 2014;

NCATE, 2010; Knowles, 2013; Liu, 2013; Schorr, 2012; Levine, 2006; NCTQ, 2014, Duncan, 2011; Labaree, 2004).

Even though critics of teacher education have different reasons for why teacher preparation is failing, one particular construction of failure has gained prominence: teacher education and public education more broadly has been too slow to change. Consequently, it presumes that the pace of change constitutes success and failure in teacher education. This construction privileges total disruption of teacher education in favor of "market-based innovations" by "education entrepreneurs" (Schorr, 2012; Liu, 2013; Connally, 2014). This paper investigates how this conception of failure came to prevail in the political discourse around the reform of teacher education. I begin by discussing educational entrepreneurship and the conditions in which entrepreneurial ventures flourish and then provide a brief context of neoliberalism before investigating how discursive structures present in two of Secretary of Education Duncan's develop this construction of failure.

Educational Entrepreneurship

K-12 education is a $650 billion dollar industry in America. Higher education puts the education sector well over a trillion dollars. This is opportunity to do well, and to do a lot of good (Duncan 2012).

Current rhetoric around failed teacher education has already enabled individuals, calling themselves social entrepreneurs or education entrepreneurs, to enter the space dominated in the latter half of the twentieth century by university teacher preparation programs. Smith and Petersen (2006) define social entrepreneurs as having unique potential to transform public education. Much like Duncan's call "to do well [financially]" and "do a lot of good," social entrepreneurs hope to positively impact education while making a lot of money and become known for having done so (Smith & Petersen 2006). Social entrepreneurs act as change agents, provide venues for new skillset and mindsets, and develop learning laboratories where experimentation and ongoing learning are encouraged (ibid). In this literature, however, there is no mention, of grounding such change, venues, and experimentation in what the educational community already knows about high-quality teacher preparation.

Thus, the rhetoric around failed teacher preparation opens a space for entrepreneurs and organizations to develop alternative venues for experimentation and learning in a largely

unregulated fashion. In so doing, those employing the rhetoric of failure call into question the notion of education as a public good. Indeed, they risk negatively impacting "other peoples' children" with such a blind drive for innovation aimed at capturing a share of the teacher education market (Delpit 2006).

Even though there are potentially negative implications of opening education to social entrepreneurs, Smith and Petersen (2006) note that some preconditions must exist for social entrepreneurs to flourish. It is my contention that the current rhetoric around failed teacher education helps create the preconditions necessary for external intervention by social entrepreneurs. The rhetoric serves to create a certain kind of change, a kind that means huge profits for some, but with, as of yet, middling results. These preconditions are: 1) a change in expectations; 2) a change in market structure; 3) a change in the availability of resources; and 4) the emergence of new knowledge (Smith & Peterson, 2006).

Precondition 1: a change in expectations

A change in expectations has come about as a result of the rhetoric around failure of education in the public sphere. Secretary Duncan, in a speech at the National Convention of the Parent Teacher's Association on June 20, 2014, expresses this change in expectations. He tells those in attendance: "In many ways, the education system we have today was designed for a time when higher education was simply a privilege reserved for the elite. Those days have to end" (Duncan 2014). In revising the expectation around the role of education (the actual historical expectation and present-day expectations around access to education can be left up for debate), Secretary Duncan establishes this first precondition for external intervention in education.

Similarly, Smith and Petersen (2006) write: "the public's expectations of the system have ballooned, such that the public schools are now expected to serve all equally and well. This change in expectations demands innovative new approaches" (p. 8). The implication here then is that teacher preparation as it stands currently is not preparing teachers to educate all students equally and well. While new approaches may also not serve all students equally and well, there are a number already in play. They include programs supported by The New Schools Venture Fund such as Aspire U, Capital Teacher Residency, the Urban Teacher Center, to name a few (Zeichner & Hollar, 2016). Many of these new programs incorporate early entry programs that certify teachers based on their ability to increase student achievement as measured by student standardized test scores. Other approaches include online teacher certification program such as those

offered through Western Governor's University. Considering that Western Governor's University was ranked at the top of the NCTQ teacher preparation rankings, there has been limited debate about whether these "innovative new approaches" are meeting this change in expectations to "serve all equally and well".

Precondition 2: a change in market structure

The change in market structure has come about through shifts in public policy, which "require the people within a system to think differently" and create "new 'turf' to which nobody has yet laid claim" (Smith & Petersen 2006, p.9). Smith and Petersen (2006) credit public policy shifts toward standards and accountability with opening up new markets for social entrepreneurs. While Smith and Petersen (2006) refer mostly to changes within the K-12 system, it is clear that the more recent public policy shifts toward standards and accountability aimed at teacher preparation programs are the next iteration of market structure changes. For example, in 2010, the Blue Ribbon Panel report produced by National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) advocates for public policy shifts to increase accountability and rigorous monitoring of teacher preparation programs, to use funding (specifically via TEACH Grants) as a key policy lever to encourage innovation, and to develop more collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders (NCATE 2010).

Changes in market structure have also enabled new providers to enter the teacher preparation arena. For instance, the $4.35 billion competitive grant initiative titled "Race to the Top" and financed with dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 called for states to encourage their reception to alternative teacher certification programs and alternative providers. In order to compete, states adjusted their policies around teacher certification to do just that. In fact, in Washington State's 2010 Race to the Top Grant proposal, the grant writers speak specifically to encouraging conversations with The New Teacher Project (WA State RTTT Proposal 2010). As a result of these changes in market-structure, The New Teacher Project, Teach for America, and the burgeoning brand of the RELAY Graduate School of Education with branches currently operating in New York, Louisiana, Texas, Illinois, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Colorado, and most recently Connecticut (Zeichner, 2016) have been enabled through the "reform-friendly" criteria of Race to the Top.

Precondition 3: a change in the availability of resources

The third precondition necessary to create opportunities for education entrepreneurs is a change in the availability of resources. Increasingly, venture philanthropy as referenced

in Zeichner and Peña-Sandoval (2015) is a vibrant purveyor of funding for education entrepreneurs. Smith and Petersen (2006) also name the Broad Foundation, The Walton Family Foundation, the Pisces Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as philanthropies receptive to investing in education entrepreneurs. Venture capitalists like The Mind Trust and The New Schools Venture Fund have also taken kindly to investing in education entrepreneurs. Furthermore, federal funds for Invest in Innovation i3 grants are increasingly awarded to organizations outside of traditional teacher preparation programs (Harr, 2015; U.S. DOE, 2016).

Precondition 4: the emergence of new knowledge

The emergence of new knowledge creates additional opportunities for educational entrepreneurs. In recent years, advances in educational technology have emerged and created new markets and opportunities for innovation around assessment, planning, instruction, and interpretation of assessment (Smith & Petersen 2006). Secretary Duncan praises many of these new educational technology entrepreneurs and pleads with them to join the education reform movement during a speech in 2012. He says, "Entrepreneurs like you are way ahead of the curve. […] Products like the ones you all are showcasing here hold the potential to transform classrooms" (Duncan 2012).

Some of these new companies include Edmodo, Schoology, Desire2Learn, and Clever. In fact, edtech startups raised over half a billion dollars in the first quarter of 2014 (Schieber 2014). Through the current rhetoric around failed teacher education, the preconditions necessary for external intervention by social entrepreneurs are now entrenched in public education and underway in teacher preparation.

Neoliberal Political Theory

The role of neoliberalism in the current sociopolitical climate is worthy of note here, as neoliberalism values actively serve to establish these preconditions for social entrepreneurship in the market of teacher preparation. Rooted in classic liberal theory, neoliberalism combines the power and freedom of the individual with a privileging of market forces. The neoliberal conception of the individual is of one who is entrepreneurial, enterprising, and self-policing (consequently requiring little state intervention) (Olssen, et. al. 2004). However, in contrast to classic liberal theory, neoliberalism views the state as an actor who can actively intervene to create "the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for [the market's] operation" (ibid, p. 136). With the combined power of the self-regulating human and the market, under neoliberalism, "market forces should be allowed to operate

as widely as possible within a social order that is understood to be capable of almost total self-regulation" (ibid, p. 137).

The neoliberal image of governance privatizes the public, encourages competition, markets, and private enterprise, and supports the reduction of the functions of the public as a means to purportedly ensuring efficiency, productivity, and cost reduction. Under this construct, **"**governance tends to be judged good when political strategies seek to minimize the role of the state" (Rose 1999, p. 16). In many ways then, neoliberal political theory justifies the role of the government in working to establish the preconditions for social entrepreneurs in education.

As education and teacher education have operated historically from within a strong public sector, the neoliberal theory of institutional restructuring known as Public Choice Theory (PCT) is applicable to the context of public institutions. PCT advocates for the application of market theories to public sectors, privileging a normative view of market competition over the strength of the public sector in promoting the public good (Olssen, et. al. 2004). Public schools and universities are often considered to be institutions of the state, reifying dominant power structures through implicit and explicit displays of institutional power. However, through the application of public choice theory to education and teacher education, I view university teacher education programs and public schools as institutions within the power structure beholden to power elites in both government and business. Applying neoliberal logics to public institutions inevitably perpetuates class antagonisms – between public managers and teachers, between teachers and parents/students.

Theoretical Framework

Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality is a useful theoretical lens to employ when considering the role of the state in creating individuals who are self-regulating and self-policing while encouraging market forces – even within the context of public institutions such as public schools and universities. Governmentality is concerned with managing and coercing the conduct of its citizens to achieve particular objectives. It involves acting upon the conduct of populations at both the individual and collective levels (Rose 1999; Olssen, et. al. 2004). According to Nikolas Rose (1999), "Once political power takes as its object the conduct of its subjects in relation to particular moral or secular standards, and takes the well-being of those subjects as its guiding principle, it is required to rationalize itself in particular ways" (Rose p. 7). One way to rationalize governance then is to collect, sort, track, assemble, and measure the population at the individual and

collective levels. This understanding of governmentality is salient for the rationalization of data collection and accountability in teacher education and education today. To rationalize privatization, entrepreneurship, and competition in public education, power elites within government and business increasingly advocate the need for accountability, transparency, and data to make informed decisions.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this work is derived from the ways in which tenets of neoliberalism and the concept of governmentality converge and work upon and within teacher education and public education more broadly. Much of this conceptual framework rests upon concepts of the collective and individual and the use of technology to monitor both. At a societal level (the level of the collective), one of the state's "secular standards" and goals for education is to help America remain competitive with respect to educational attainment and economic prosperity. At the individual level, one of the state's "moral standards" and goals for education is to advance each person's well-being.

The basis for this linkage between neoliberalism and governmentality is grounded in Marx's theories of capital accumulation. Marx does not sufficiently theorize the role of the political state in capital accumulation and modes of production. Of this, Laslett (2015) writes, "The abstraction of the political state, disaggregated, or indeed standing above civil society, is one such conceptual approximation which has steered Marxist scholarship away from theorizing those dimensions of capitalism's productive structure that function through the modern state's political and juridical forms" (p. 642). However, recently scholars (i.e Laslett, 2015; Lemke, 2002) have argued that Foucault's concept of governmentality re-introduces the role of state practices, aims, techniques, and objects in ensuring capital accumulation. Lemke writes: "as we have known since Marx, there is no market independent of the state, and economy is always political economy. […]The perspective of governmentality makes possible the development of a dynamic form of analysis that does not limit itself to stating the "retreat of politics" or the "domination of the market," but deciphers the so-called end of politics itself as a political program. In other words, governmentality allows us to consider the role of politics and governance as a mode and tool for capital production. As a "new modality of power", governmentality "mediates the unstable social processes through which capital accumulates" (Laslett, 2015, p. 647). Consequently, while the conceptual framework is grounded in Foucauldian perspectives of governmentality, when combined with neoliberalism and the

role of state power in supporting market mechanisms, there is a direct line to Marxian analyses of capital accumulation and modes of production.

Technology affords a way to rationalize these collective and individual educational goals of governance. By monitoring the population at the national, institutional (university and school), and individual levels, data collection assembles information about the collective and individual so that certain items can be taken to be "true". For example, by collecting assessment data about teacher education programs and then ranking them, under this positivist epistemology, "truth" that certain teacher education programs are failures is established and becomes normative. Having posited these "truths" about teacher education and public education – whether we agree with them or not – the government can now go about the business of governance; that is, shaping the conduct of teacher education programs, public education, and ultimately, the teachers, teacher educators, students, and parents within them. Consequently, sorting, tracking, ranking, accrediting and such in proclaiming success (or failure) of public institutions helps rationalize privatization of the public.

Methodological Framework

In the critical discourse analysis that follows, I explore how discursive structures and strategies in two speeches by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan are used to legitimate a particular construction of the failure of teacher education and encourage privatization of the public. As a consequence of legitimating one view of failure, I show how teacher educators and teachers in the public sector are simultaneously deprived of individual agency and opportunities to engage in deliberate dialogue around the reform of teacher education. To do so, I borrow Foucault's concept of governmentality. As such, I adopt the stance posited by Nikolas Rose: "To analyze political power through the analysis of governmentality is not to start from the apparently obvious historical or sociological questions: what happened and why? It is to start by asking what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what objectives, through what strategies and techniques" (Rose 1999, p. 20).

I select these two speeches from Duncan because as Van Dijk (1993) indicates "although an analysis of strategies of resistance and challenge is crucial for our understanding of actual power and dominance relations in society […] our critical approach prefers to focus on the elites and their discursive strategies for the maintenance of inequality" (p. 250). Former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan is a power elite who employs discursive strategies in particular ways and for particular audiences to build a case for

privatization, I opted to select two speeches as contrastive cases. In one case, Duncan speaks directly to companies and individuals in the private sector; in the other, Duncan addresses an audience of teachers, professors, and teacher educators in the public sector. My goal in selecting speeches with two clearly different audiences is to show how discursive strategies are employed in both cases for similar ends.

While there are numerous approaches to conducting a critical discourse analysis (CDA), a goal of CDA is to analyze the ways in which power operates through discursive formations, structures, and strategies, which necessitate macro-level and micro-level analyses (Fairclough 2015; Mills 1997; Wetherell, et. al. 2001; and Van Dijk 1993). This combined approach – at once understanding the sociopolitical contexts around which the discourse is created and the microanalyses of how such stances actually come to be embodied at the thematic, semantic, and linguistic levels – differentiates critical discourse analysis from discourse analysis. The goal here, then, is not simply to analyze the linguistic turns, discourse markers, and functional grammatical systems in play, but to understand how they inter-relate with the larger sociopolitical contexts around neoliberalism in the U.S. education system today.

For the purposes of analyzing these two speeches, I focus on "contextual, interactional, organizational, and global forms of discourse control," including the "power-relevant" discourse structure of access; that is, who and what is present and who or what is excluded (Van Dijk 1993, p. 259). Then, I interweave, a detailed, micro-level analysis borrowing from Halliday and Mattheissen (1994) aspects of systemic functional grammar, including transitivity and cohesion. Transitivity analysis is concerned with variations in language use and how this orientates a listener's view in particular directions, suggesting that the semantic construction is indicative of who holds the power to do something to someone (Halliday & Mattheissen 1994). I also employ discourse markers in borrowing from Deborah Shiffrin's (2001) chapter on discourse markers. Discourse markers are those linguistic elements within a text that signal and provide lexical cohesion within the text, but for this analysis, I focus only on the use of contrastive discourse markers.

Aligning with Educational Entrepreneurs

Duncan delivered a speech entitled "The New Platform for Learning" in March 2012 to attendees of the South by Southwest Education Expo (SXSWedu) conference. According to the SXSWedu website, the goal of the conference is to "celebrate innovations in learning". Google, Microsoft, YouTube, and Apple hold positions on the organization's

advisory board as does the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other organizations with names like Lumen Learning, Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative, and the Global Learning Network. Substantial philanthropic foundations such as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning and the National Endowment for the Arts are also on the advisory board. Pearson, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Samsung, Microsoft, Google, MacMillan New Ventures, Amplify, Dell, and Canvas are some of the listed sponsors for this year's 2015 SXSWedu conference. As with every speech, Duncan's speech in 2012 was directed toward a particular audience; in this case, the audience was self-proclaimed educational entrepreneurs, technology companies, and organizations promoting technology for learning.

As a representative of the Department of Education, Arne Duncan constructs a clear alignment between government (a public institution) and advocates of educational reform with entrepreneurship (a private enterprise) against public education by advocating for individualized instruction and deprivatization of public education through technology. The speech does this in three ways. First, at the linguistic level, technology is nominalized. Through discursive strategies and the material processes of transitivity, technology exercises power over and constitutes subjects of this power, thereby removing individuals as agents from the equation. Second, at the textual level, terms commonly employed by critics of educational reform, "privatization" and "progressive," are co-opted and serve to exclude critics from the discourse. Third, an insidious shifting of pronouns is used to construct a binary between us/them, between the individual and the collective while offering the illusion of solidarity. Additionally, as a joint venture of public government and private enterprise, technology serves to guide and shape the conduct of educational institutions, of teachers, students, and parents enabling governance through the constraint of individual behavior, as in Foucault's concept of governmentality.

Duncan begins his speech by positioning himself as an outsider in this space who has had to change and adapt to technology at the risk of extinction: "[I am] not what you would call an early-adopter. We all know what happens to dinosaurs." In so doing, he becomes a convert to technology and insider in the conference space. With this conversion, Duncan simultaneously presents himself as a model for what the education system and all those individuals embodied within it (i.e. teachers, superintendents, districts, universities, students, etc…) must also do; namely, adopt technology or risk extinction. This initiating action is followed by a brief series of belief statements from Duncan about what technology is: a "game changer" for improving educational achievement and equity.

What happens in the next sequence of sentences is noteworthy. Duncan positions technology as an actor who does something to something or someone else. This effective use of nominalization removes the responsibility for those making and creating the technology to consider possible implications and unintended consequences of their innovations. It further removes individual agency and choice from those upon whom technology "does" something. Instead, technology – a thing, process, phenomenon, but not a person – becomes an active agent. Through this discursive formation, technology exercises power and by proxy, so too do those who subscribe and align themselves with it.

Table 1: Transitivity

Participant	**Process**	**Participant**
Technology	Is making [material]	us
It [technology]	Allows [behavioral]	teachers
Technology	Offers [material]	children
[Technology]	Provides [material]	access
Technology	Enables [material]	Working adults
It [technology]	Eliminates [material]	Geographical barriers
Technology	Is replacing [material]	The paper and pencil, the textbook, the chalk board, and the globe
It [technology]	Will soon replace [material]	The bubble test
Technology	Is [relational]	The new platform
Technology	Is not [relational]	An option
Technological competency	Is [relational]	A requirement

After this initial barrage of indicating what technology is and does and how technology behaves, Duncan moves to an account of "exemplars": that is, the so-called "early-adopters" of technology within the context of public education. Here, Duncan co-opts terms traditionally associated with proponents of public education. He refers to these "early-adopters" as "progressive educators." In its traditional usage, the adjective "progressive" holds connotations of educators who are categorically opposed to some of the things that technology companies, educational entrepreneurs, and venture philanthropists seek to implement: accountability, high-stakes testing, value-added measures of teacher performance, to name a few. By describing early adopters of

technology – decidedly less progressive actors – as "progressive," Duncan effectively excludes progressive educators from the discourse.

By excluding critics of educational reform from the discourse, Duncan then makes a move to show how technology is a "tonic" for "ills" of public education; namely, that technology is a new tour de force in data collection, accountability, and tracking. When technology is employed in this way, it offers another means of constraining behavior, what Foucault refers to as governmentality. The early adopters of educational technology use technology for different reasons and in different ways, but Duncan specifically acknowledges the use of laptops to raise student achievement – as measured by math and reading gains and graduation rates – and student attendance.

Duncan also proclaims how parents have used the technology to track their student's progress. There is a disconnect here: if laptops are provided by the school district to individual students, what is to say that parents now have access to technology to track their children's progress? Still, the use of technology to track and monitor cannot go without mention. With this example, Duncan has touted the benefits of technology, but a critical listener and reader can discern that up to now, Duncan's examples simply provide instances of how technology can be used to monitor, track, rank, and surveil.
At the same time, Duncan puts great effort into emphasizing the ability of technology to better individualize instruction, allowing students to work at their own pace and on those topics that most interest them. Thus, technology becomes a primary vehicle by which educational institutions can offer the illusion of choice (i.e. individualized instruction) for students and teachers alike, while simultaneously monitoring and controlling those choices and actions in the name of transparency and accountability.

Duncan then shifts the tenor of his speech again to refer to what his collective 'we' – presumably the U.S. Department of Education - is doing to encourage the adoption of technology in the educational system. As evidence that the Department of Education is aligned with the goals of the educational technology sector, Duncan makes a quick rhetorical move from "we" as the Department of Education to "you" as the educational technology sector, innovators, and entrepreneurs. He applauds the work being done and then, having established an allegiance between the Department of Education and the education technology sector, creates a binary opposition of us/them with "them" being the education sector comprised of teachers and schools. To explicate how this binary is constructed, and in particular how the pronoun use of "we" morphs within the context of this speech, consider the following excerpt:

> Clearly, there is a lot of creative thinking happening here, and I just want to say that we in the education community are hungry for your ideas. While the education sector has moved more slowly than many of us would have liked it, this area, this world is changing.

Here, with the style adverbial "clearly," Duncan states what is perceived by this community to be common sense. He then aligns himself back with the education community by saying "we in the education community are hungry for your ideas". The "we" here ostensibly refers to the entirety of the education community, effectively excluding anyone within the education community who disagrees with the premise that the education community is starving for ideas. Through this metaphor of starvation, Duncan posits that creativity and idea generation must come from outside. Indeed, according to these statements, creativity cannot come from inside the education community for if those ideas had been generated from within the education community, then the education community would not be hungry for them. Consequently, this collective "we" as a stand in for the education community is an entirely different collective "we" used earlier to create the alignment between the Department of Education and the educational technology sector.

In the next few lines, Duncan establishes this binary opposition between them and us more directly. He unites the Department of Education and educational entrepreneurs as the "us" in contrast to the educator sector. The "us" wants one thing: faster adoption of technology in education and the "them" (the education sector) has been too slow to adopt it. The next line establishes individuals within the education sector as a barrier to entry: "Every educator wants what's best for her students – we just have to persevere and push through some of the real barriers to entry." Thus, a clear opposition between innovators and teachers is constructed, and in fact, the implication is that educators are the real "barrier to entry" for educational entrepreneurs. By suggesting that the educator (a micro-actor within the education community) is slow to adopt this technology even though the educator "wants what's best for her students" (to the "we" here, what's best is technology), Duncan constructs this opposition between us and them and places himself securely on the side of the "us": "the innovators".

Once this opposition between schools and teachers versus Department of Education and educational technology is constructed, the speech returns to the initial nominalization of technology and use of "we" as educational reformers, government, and supporters of technology.

Table2: Transitivity

Participant	**Process**	**Participant**
Kahn Academy (a technology company)	Is forcing [material]	Schools
Governor Bob Wise and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush (educational reformers and government leaders)	Are pushing [material]	States
President Obama (government leader)	Is [existential]	Deeply committed
We (government)	Have created [material]	A learning registry
We (government)	Have made [material]	Technology
We (government)	Have invested [material]	
The E-Rate program (technology)	Generated [material]	Billions
We (government)	Have expanded [material]	Broadband services
Technology	Can level [material]	The playing field
It [technology]	Gives [material]	A boost
It [technology]	Opens [material]	Doors
It [technology]	Helps [material]	Our teachers and leaders
Technology	Gives [material]	teachers
It [technology]	Gives [material]	teachers
Education	**Needs to stop [material] being [existential]**	**the laggard**
Technology	Should make [material]	A teacher's job easier, more marketable, and more fun
Technology	Actively engages [material]	students
It [technology]	Has [existential]	A dramatic and positive impact
Technology-driven learning	Empowers [material]	students
[Technology]	Gives [material]	them
It [technology]	Challenges [material]	them
Learning technology	Can be [relational]	A major export industry

With the exception of using an existential process when referring to President Obama's commitment to adopting technology, all of these statements feature either technology or those aligned with technology (government, a technology company, educational reformer advocates, etc…) engaged in a material process (doing something to) a participant. Of the fifteen statements where technology is the subject, the majority (nine statements) feature technology doing something to schools, teachers, or students. It is also crucial to

point out that one statement does indeed feature education as the participant. In this statement, "education needs to stop," thus implying that education, when doing something, is doing something wrong and consequently should no longer act.

There are two more concepts developed in this speech worthy of mention within the context of educational reform and the privatization movement. One is Duncan's mention of the need to "de-privatize" public education. Amidst the sentences about all that technology does for teachers, students, and education, Duncan again co-opts a term employed by critics of educational reform. He takes the concept of privatization and places blame for privatization on the public education system.

One of the hallmark critiques of educational reforms and charter schools has been a critique of increasing privatization of public schools. That is, in the current educational reform climate, public schools have been shut down and re-opened under private management (Bryant, 2013); testing companies are profiting from the high-stakes testing and accountability movement by privatizing test development and scoring (Cavanagh, 2014); with the ramped up adoption of the Common Core State Standards, curriculum development companies and textbook publishers have increasingly attained a monopoly over the curriculum produced, distributed, and purchased by schools, to name a few of these private takeovers of previously public roles in education. Even Duncan, in this speech and for his educational entrepreneurs admits that public education is a big business: "K-12 education is a $650 billion dollar industry in America. Higher education puts the education sector well over a trillion dollars. There is opportunity to do well, and to do a lot of good."

In this speech, however, it is not educational reforms that have caused privatization. Instead, public education is blamed for privatization. Consider the following excerpt:

> And [technology] helps our teachers and leaders, especially those working in our toughest schools with our most disadvantaged students, by providing them with effective lesson plans and teaching strategies that help them educate and motivate each child. We have to deprivatize public education, breakdown our hardworking teachers' sense of isolation in their individual classrooms and open up a much better world of tools, supports, and resources for them.

Here, technology is the tonic that will fix all of public education's ills. Even though technology must be purchased – after all, it is a *private* good, and the tools and resources

created by technology companies are *for sale*, in this context, it is public schools and teacher's autonomy that needs to be made public, or for Duncan, "de-privatized".

The second concept that bears mention comes toward the end of the speech, as Duncan stresses that entrepreneurs must work with teachers to adopt this technology. As this conference comes as part of the noted music festival, South by Southwest, Duncan nods to the musicians and young people who will be attending the festival. He tries to connect the musician's creativity to teacher's creativity. In so doing, it is the first time that the sequencing of material processes employed multiple times throughout the speech to give technology agency, is employed to actual individuals – musicians. Note that teachers and educators are still not seen as acting, creative agents. While Duncan tries to return some creativity and agency to individuals by concluding that technology still cannot create a song, he fails, for technology can and does create songs all the time.

Perhaps at some unconscious level, Duncan knows that he fails to drive this point home for he then tries to establish that technology is just a tool, which is then used by teachers and children. As a tool, technology "helps" children; as a tool, technology "helps" teachers; as a tool, technology "holds" us accountable. Now, technology is posited as a helper and a nurturer. Again, having spent the majority of his speech proffering all of the ways that technology acts upon educators, it is hard to understand how educators can use technology as a tool, actively choosing when, how, and why to use it. In fact, it is not the intention that we, as educators, schools, students, and parents choose when, how, and why to use technology; according to this speech, technology and the entrepreneurs who create it choose when, how and why to use us.

The Fox in the Henhouse

While by the time of his 2012 speech to his allies at the South by Southwest Education Expo conference, Arne Duncan's position as an advocate for educational entrepreneurship and education reform is clear, Duncan's stance may have been less evident during the first year of his tenure as Secretary of Education when in October 2009, he delivered a speech entitled "Teacher Preparation: Reforming the Uncertain Profession" to teacher educators, professors, and education students in the audience at Teacher's College, Columbia University.

As a consequence of speaking at an institution of higher education, which in and of itself exists toward the top in a hierarchy of power around teacher preparation, much of the speech works to legitimate his stance on the reform of teacher education. One of the

discursive strategies Duncan employs to legitimate the reform of teacher education is to situate the current call for teacher education reform within the historical precedents and alongside the power elites in respective historical contexts, who also called for the reform of teacher education.

In so doing, Duncan sets out to legitimate the current claims for teacher education reform by documenting that they are, "in fact, normative claims" that, in fact, these claims are not new. Throughout this speech, Duncan refers to power elites within higher education and the government advocating for teacher education reform. He cites William James, Arthur Powell, James Bryant Conant, Jacques Barzun, President Kennedy, the Holmes Group, Richard Riley, Arthur Levine, and E.D. Hirsch. By citing these historical educational figures and leaders, Duncan begins to legitimate his present claims about teacher education reform. Hence, even as an outsider on the Columbia University Teacher's College campus, by employing intertextuality, Duncan normalizes the idea that teacher education is failing and does so through a crafty deconstruction of insider-outsider positionality. While Duncan is not a teacher educator, he is able to perform as a teacher educator in this context by calling upon teacher educators and teacher leaders within history. In so doing, he normalizes the current iteration of teacher education reform (data collection, competition, and public-private partnerships) because teacher education has "always been in need of reform."

Another discursive strategy used to legitimate Duncan's call for teacher education reform is the use of deference as a disclaimer paired with a contrastive discourse marker and a statement that results in a claim around failure. This syntactical structure serves to first unite the speaker and the audience in a sort of "we're all on the same page" move or a "false flattery" and then push forward with a more divisive claim. The table below illustrates this discursive strategy:

Table 3: Syntactical Structure

Like the Teachers College, many schools of education have provided high-quality preparation programs for aspiring teachers for years […].	Yet,	[…] many if not most of the nation's 1,450 schools, colleges, and departments of education are doing a mediocre job of preparing teachers […]
[…] we acknowledge America's need […] to teach all students to their full potential	And yet,	[…] we are still far from achieving that dream of equal educational opportunity.
We ask so much more today of teachers than we did even a decade ago	But	The bar must be raised for successful teacher preparation programs
Levine's 2006 study found numerous examples of exemplary programs.	But,	He also documented the persistence of problems that had afflicted ed schools for decades.
The large enrollment in education schools and their relatively low overhead have made them profit-centers	But	Many universities have diverted those profits to more prestigious but under-enrolled graduate programs like physics – while doing little to invest back in rigorous educational research and well-run clinical training.
Thanks to the national reading panel and other national expert assessments, educators know much more about the science of teaching reading and math today than we did a decade ago	Yet,	As your president, Susan Fuhrman recently pointed out, countries like Singapore and South Korea, and the Czech republic that outperform us in science and math provide their teachers with much clearer guidance on key ideas and content to be mastered in each grade.

Duncan attempts to unite the audience around these claims for teacher education reform in additional ways as well. At various points throughout the speech, Duncan states, "as you know" to suggest in some ways that he is preaching to the choir and an insider positioned among other "knowers". By claiming that the audience "already knows," the

implication is that the audience has some power, but has failed to use that power and is thereby a failure. This phrase is used to talk about teacher residency models, program accreditation, the Levine study about teacher education, and the duration of the reading and math wars. In each instance, however, the act of preaching to the choir serves two functions: a) it positions Duncan as "knower" and b) it suggests that since the listeners already know the claims stated, that presumably some action by those "in the know" should have already been taken. These claims imply that an action following knowledge should be common sense. Even Duncan himself states that knowledge is common sense: "It's a simple but obvious idea – colleges of education and district officials ought to know which teacher preparation programs are effective and which need fixing." For example, by claiming that teacher educators all know about the teacher residency model, but have been slow to adopt it as a model for teacher preparation, Duncan implies that teacher educators are failing to act. As a consequence, teacher education needs to be coerced into reform by way of data collection, competition, and accountability. It also implies that teacher residency models are the salvo for all that ills teacher education.

Likewise, since all teacher educators know about the Arthur Levine study, because teacher education programs have not reformed fast enough, teacher education and teacher educators are failing. Because there is some apparent gap between knowledge and action, teacher education and those complicit in it are implicated in the failure to act. To change behavior, Foucault's notion of governmentality is aptly applied here. The reforms advanced in this speech all encourage behavior change through accountability via data collection, or as it is posited here, knowledge accumulation – all that matter of sorting, ranking, tracking, accrediting – and competition. As the tenor of this speech suggests because teacher educators have some knowledge but have not used it, knowledge must become more refined, more developed, more direct, and must be made public for all to see.

Upon investigation here, it is clear that this message of accountability, data and competition comes across in the speech. However, there is a discrepancy between the written speech on the Department of Education website and the recorded speech as provided via a video from Teachers College at Columbia University. The line on the written transcript reads: "Transparency, longitudinal data, and *competition* can be powerful tonics for programs stuck in the past" (Duncan 2012). Contrast this with recorded speech: "Transparency, longitudinal data, and *thoughtful self-examination we think* can be powerful tonics for programs stuck in the past" (Teachers College Columbia University 2014). This is no small adjustment to the speech, and it suggests that perhaps

Duncan went off script in facing what may have been a less than receptive audience to the tenor of his speech. It also suggests that the transcript as accessible via the Department of Education website has a broader audience – one possibly more receptive to educational reform with funders and powerful political organizations such as the educational and policy entrepreneurs advocating for more competition in the education market. Either way, in the rest of the speech, the power of competition is valued much more heavily than "thoughtful self-examination". That Duncan may have deliberately adjusted his speech away from the focus on competition with this sentence offers some hope that educators, teacher educators, schools, students, parents and communities can resist the dominant construction of failure.

Conclusion

Within a sociopolitical climate that emphasizes a market-based approach to deliver public goods, such as education, it is important to understand the role that language and discourse plays in legitimizing and justifying this approach to reforming teacher preparation. As this paper demonstrates, a critical discourse analysis of Duncan's two speeches sheds light on some of the ways in which speakers in positions of power (i.e. power elites) legitimate market-based education reforms.

Duncan conceptualizes teacher education as a failure because teacher education programs have been slow to change; they lack efficient data systems, they are not held accountable for outcomes, and they lack competition. By constructing failure in this way, and through discursive strategies within his speeches, Duncan justifies and legitimates reforms that encourage the entry of new providers to fill this gap: namely, technology companies and data management companies, public-private partnerships, and alternative teacher preparation providers.

However, what if failure, and by proxy, success – as each constitutes the other – could be constructed in a different way? What if, instead of being slow, programs that change too fast, basing their changes on viable funding sources without reflection on their practice need extra support? What if, instead of lacking efficient "quantifiable" data systems, programs that fail to acknowledge the unique community contexts in which they prepare their teacher candidates need extra support? And what if, instead of lacking competition, programs that compete too much (for funding, resources, faculty, etc…) need extra support?

A different construction of failure would reframe the conversation around the reform of teacher preparation and enable teachers, schools, parents, students, communities, and

teacher educators to become agents for change who deliberately employ language and discourse as tools of resistance. It is for such an alternative construction that understanding how the dominant construction of failure is manufactured is critical; for though "the master's tools may never dismantle the master's house," as educators, we must acknowledge, we are always both (Lorde 1984).

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Author Details

Jesslyn Hollar is a doctoral candidate in educational policy and teacher education at the University of Washington. Her research focuses on knowledge utilization, discourse, and social capital in the education policy process.