

Effective Teacher Preparation Education Matters

A Call for Forward Thinking, Authentic Collaboration, and Collective Efficacy

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Abstract

Effective teacher preparation education (TPE) is critical to ensure that all teacher candidates demonstrate high-quality teaching that engenders high-quality learning for every preK-12th grade learner. Advocacy for effective TPE is shared, *in concept*, by most educators (preK-higher education), parents, community members, etc.; however, *in practice*, the goals identified by and the actions effectuated to both prepare new educators and to provide licensed educators with on-going culturally respectful and developmentally appropriate professional development tend to be unique to each institution of higher education, state agency, preK-12th grade school district, and private corporation. Additionally, educators situated primarily at IHE and responsible for general education, teacher education, and clinical experiences, may or may not agree on the program design, development, and delivery processes and priorities.

This essay delves into three principles of ecological systems relevant to current and future TPE program structures (the design), ten intersecting considerations for everyone involved and invested in TPE to deliberate as they identify goals and effectuate actions within their programs (the development), and five dialogic practices

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that contribute significantly to wise decision-making (the delivery). Drawing from the distinct strengths of transactional communication and relational communication, this essay emphasizes the application and advantages associated with forward-thinking, authentic collaboration, and collective agency.

Keywords: teacher preparation, ecological systems, forward-thinking, authentic collaboration, collective agency

Introduction

In the United States, teacher education—the initial preparation and life-long professional development of preK-12th grade educators—encompasses a vast and varied array of programs located in institutions of higher education, state agencies, preK-12th school districts, and private corporations. Although requirements differ by state, such educators must successfully complete particular courses and fulfill predetermined clinical experiences as well as pass state sanctioned assessments and background checks to obtain state issued licenses to start their careers. Further, most educators are required to complete state approved courses and/or professional activities within given time periods to renew their licenses and sustain their careers.

Advocacy for the initial preparation and life-long development of educators, particularly high-quality teachers coupled with high-quality teaching that engenders high-quality learning, is shared, in concept, by most educators (preK-higher education), parents, and community members. And, most educators (preK-higher education), parents, and community members agree that the initial preparation and lifelong professional development of high-quality teachers, together with high-quality teaching and learning rely, in concept, on effective teacher education. However, in practice, the goals and actions to prepare new educators and to provide licensed educators (with on-going culturally respectful and developmentally appropriate professional development) tend to be unique to each institution of higher education, state agency, preK-12th grade school district, and private corporation. The general and specific constructs, criteria, and characteristics delineating effective teacher education may or may not be fully understood, utilized, and uplifted. Clearly, effective teacher education would benefit greatly if teacher educators involved in the initial preparation and life-long professional development of preK-12th grade educators openly and honestly discussed, concurred, and actuated effective teacher preparation education (TPE) program design, development, and delivery possibilities, priorities, and processes.

This essay focuses on TPE and is driven by three purposes: (1) to present three principles of ecological systems relevant to current and future TPE structures (the design); (2) to proffer ten intersecting considerations for all educators and teacher educators (preK-higher education) associated with TPE to deliberate as they identify goals and effectuate actions within their programs (the development) particularly with respect to their current and future ecological systems; and (3) to promote five dialogic practices that contribute significantly to wise decision-making (the delivery), especially contingent on meaningfully consequential deliberation associated with ecological change across teacher education. Although all three purposes may be applicable to TPE programs located in state agencies, preK-12th grade school districts, and private corporations, this essay is contextualized primarily in institutions of higher education and preK-12th grade schools. Drawing from the distinct strengths of both transactional and relational communication, this essay emphasizes the development of and advantages associated with forward-thinking, authentic collaboration, and collective agency.

Author's Positionality

The opinions shared here resonate from my continuous personal and professional experiences coupled with my cumulative puzzling and perplexing explorations immersed in learning and living. My joyous journey has been consistently and optimistically strengthened by wisdom, courage, integrity, justice, gratitude, and hope. While I am wholly dedicated to respecting, practicing, and encouraging the IDEALS of inclusion, diversity, equity, access, liberation, and social justice within myself and among all people around me near and far, I recognize and value opportunities to delve into my own empirical humility. I am endlessly intrigued by the questions that I have not had answered or even thought about asking. As a reflective and reflexive practitioner, I contemplate the complexities associated with the everlasting cycle of learning, unlearning, and relearning. I sincerely acknowledge and greatly appreciate all the people who, places where, and perspectives that have “loved me into being” (Rogers, 1997). The opinions conveyed throughout this essay are mine; they may or may not align with all readers’ experiences or be applicable to all readers’ environments.

Summarizing a Brief Overview of Teacher Preparation Education in Higher Education

In general, TPE programs located in institutions of higher education (IHE) are regulated by state agencies and accredited by national associations with the intention that every teacher candidate is professionally prepared and pedagogically productive on the first day of their careers, commonly referred to as being first day ready. During their TPE, teacher candidates are required to successfully complete (1) a particular selection of general education courses that frequently allow candidates some choices, (2) a prescribed list of TPE courses that usually expect candidates to complete in a recommended combination and/or sequence, and (3) a predetermined progression of clinical experiences that typically guide candidates through a series of activities and assignments situated within the institution of higher education, in preK-12th grade school classrooms, and/or at community education services. Clinical experiences may be embedded into a TPE course, attached to a TPE course in a way that may or may relate to the course objectives and outcomes, and/or offered as an independent course, perhaps as a practicum, internship, or residency.

However, in all iterations, TPE courses and clinical experiences may or may not be constructed, aligned, and/or facilitated as a genuinely collaborative experience involving five essential and equal partners representative of and vital to every aspect of program design, development, and delivery. This partnership must include (1) higher education general education faculty, (2) TPE faculty (full time, part time, and adjunct faculty especially clinical experience coordinators and supervisors), (3) preK-12th grade school administrators and classroom teachers, (4) currently enrolled teacher candidates, and (5) recently licensed teachers. Although general education faculty and especially TPE faculty tend to dominate and control program creation and conversations of TPE programs across the U.S., the inclusive presence and intentional participation of preK-12th grade school administrators and classroom teachers, currently enrolled teacher candidates, and recently licensed teachers is critical and should be both visible and viable throughout every facet of effective TPE design, development, and delivery.

PreK-12th grade administrators and teacher educators, currently enrolled teacher candidates, and recently licensed educators must be invited as essential and equal partners in order for the collaborative partners to sit with, listen to, and exchange valuable insights, inspiration, and innovations that general education and teacher educators may not know, have questioned, and/or have ever considered.

Currently enrolled teacher candidates and recently licensed teachers embody the present and the future; they move through the world with various backgrounds, unique experiences, and self-determined priorities indicative of their knowledge, experiences, time, and place; they embrace their own interdependent ways of navigating their confidence, growth, resilience, and comfort. A genuinely collaborative partnership where all partners contribute throughout the co-construction of effective TPE cannot be emphasized enough.

Yet, too often, TPE programs at IHE are designed and developed by a few administrators and/or only select higher education faculty (included voluntarily or involuntarily), primarily teacher educators, who are forced to function within a multitude of factions and factors imposed primarily by personnel associated with state agencies, accrediting agencies, IHE policies, and established patterns. When TPE programs are designed and developed by a selected group of administrators and faculty, the group members tend to promote and protect their own egos, empires, and expectations. Gallavan (2007) named this condition, the “generational perpetuation of practice,” a phrase that can also be read as the generational perpetuation of power and the generation perpetuation of privilege. Educators tend to teach the way they were taught and that enabled them to learn, achieve anticipated outcomes, and become educators. Without their discerning awareness or acknowledgement, educators have been primed to reproduce and reward their preconceived and prominent feelings, thoughts, words, actions, and interactions in ways that may or may not strengthen and support effective TPE.

Additionally, far too many educators (preK-higher education) may believe that most learners are like them and learn the same way; educators may teach all learners the same way with no accounting for diversity and differentiation, even when diversity and differentiation are necessary for all learners to both achieve outcomes and build capacity. The “generational perpetuation of practice” (Gallavan, 2007) is clearly evident across preK-higher education. When a selected group of like-minded and singularly focused teacher educators plan together, the design and development of effective TPE can easily become compromised and wanting, lacking the valuable voices of all five essential and equal partnerships in the partnership. Consequently, teacher candidates enrolled in these types of TPE programs may or may not be sufficiently prepared and adequately ready to begin their teaching careers with crucial levels of competence, confidence, and comfort.

Ideally, copious and continuing opportunities for the partners to meet must be arranged to accommodate schedules and meeting

places that convenience the entire partnership. The partners' diverse voices and divergent choices are necessary for each of them to safely express individual strengths, comfortably hear multiple perspectives, and objectively deliberate the integration of all facets of both required and requested elements, i.e., the concepts, practices, values, and characteristics that inform, guide, and support the TPE program comprehensively and cohesively. IHE full time general education and TPE faculty can speak to the desired and required elements. IHE teacher educator supervisors, preK-12th grade school administrators and classroom teachers, currently enrolled teacher candidates, and recently licensed teacher candidates can speak to the pragmatic and requested elements. When all voices are accepted and all choices are respected, TPE programs are more likely to undergo an ecology of change positively influencing structural integrity, contextual significance, and professional commitment.

Investigating Three Ecological Systems and Principles of Change Relevant to TPE Programs

The term 'ecological systems' refers to the theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) that examines various ways that individuals are interconnected and form interrelated and interdependent sociological structures existing among specific individuals, groups of individuals, and their surrounding environments. In social contexts, systems of ecology allow individuals and groups of individuals to comprehend the complex dynamics affecting them and to both cope with and control the ever-changing details that may become demands with due dates.

Goudzwaard & Cogswell (2024) distinguish three ways of looking at ecological systems called principles of change: nestedness, bifurcation, and emergent properties (Goudzwaard & Cogswell in Kim et al., 2025). Nestedness and bifurcation are associated with most TPE programs. However, the ecological system or principle of change that Goudzwaard & Cogswell (in Kim et al., 2025) call emergent properties presents an approach that all professionals invested in and involved with TPE should investigate, envision, and attempt in order to accurately reassess and reprioritize their programs critically, comprehensively, and constructively.

Nestedness

The first principle, nestedness, (Goudzwaard & Cogswell, 2024; Goudzwaard & Cogswell in Kim et al., 2025) applies to the contemporary and complex systems frequently found across IHE. Nestedness describes

the presence of small systems that operate within mid-size systems that operate within large systems. Frequently, the boundaries between the systems tend to be blurred and may complicate understanding and utilization. For example, many teacher candidates are required to complete most of their IHE general education courses before submitting their applications to the TPE program. Faculty responsible for the IHE general education courses may or may not communicate and/or coordinate with IHE faculty responsible for the TPE program courses. Concomitantly, IHE faculty responsible for TPE courses may or not communicate and/or coordinate with the IHE faculty responsible for the clinical experiences and supervision. Further, the IHE faculty responsible for organizing and supervising clinical experiences may or may not communicate and coordinate with the preK-12th grade educators responsible for placing teacher candidates and providing teacher candidates with suitable role models and classrooms. Teacher educators in all capacities “set conflicting expectations and impose contrasting visions” (Riley, 2018, p. 24). Ultimately, teacher candidates may encounter challenges that needlessly discourage, delay, or detour their journey in a TPE or any IHE.

Awareness, acknowledgement, and appropriate application of the principles of nestedness should inform, guide, and support IHE faculty to focus on and fulfill their responsibilities combined with communicating, connecting, and, ideally, collaborating with IHE and preK-12th grade faculty responsible for each subsystem. Collaboration significantly benefits the teacher candidate. When essential and equal partners representing all systems (large, mid-size, and small) germane to TPE collectively engage, identify, and effectuate the program, the partners are more likely to transform into a cohesive unified group centered on the teacher candidate’s journey.

Collaboration is based on a shared and complete understanding and utilization of six integral components of the INTACT Model (Gallavan, 2025): intentionality, neutrality, transparency, accountability, communication, and trustworthiness. Trustworthiness upholds the values shared among professionals and uplifts individuals and groups of individuals visible throughout their professional stance, i.e., their perceptions, purposes, and productivity. When nestedness based on INTACT collaboration is not clearly understood or consciously utilized, partners risk generating vulnerability, suspicion, and distress. The overarching goals associated with innovatively and invigoratively improving the TPE program may become compromised, negatively impacting the established professionalism and achieved progress critical to TPE that matters.

Bifurcation

The second principle, bifurcation, occurs when a large system is noticeably divided into two separate systems with professionals who may or may not communicate, connect, or cooperate with each other positively or productively. Goudzwaard & Cogswell (2024; Goudzwaard & Cogswell in Kim et al., 2025) explain that when bifurcation exists, the likelihood that the two separate systems will remain as two separate systems until a major event causes a significant shift. Most often, in TPE, a major event resulting in a significant shift tends to be imposed by overseeing outside forces such as state agencies and national accrediting associations.

In TPE, bifurcation tends to dominate the established relationships between IHE and preK-12th grade schools. Teacher educators in both contexts may hold the inherent belief and even express their innate propensity that the more important learning occurs in their classrooms. The bifurcation battle between TPE courses and clinical experiences has beleaguered teacher preparation education for decades. Unfortunately, teacher candidates are caught between the two separate systems; teacher candidates may or may not be or believe they are first day ready to become high-quality educators. Like nestedness, essential and equal representation of all partners is needed to discuss, discern, determine, and deepen a balanced approach bridging and benefitting the interconnectedness, interrelatedness, and interdependence among IHE courses and clinical expectations and experiences.

Emergent Properties

The third principle, emergent properties, is evident when professionals functioning within the systems and operating via the ecological organization properties of nestedness or bifurcation, call for change. The call for change tends to emanate from individual professionals when they communicate and connect with individuals and groups of people who share congruent concerns and defensible desires. Unlike bifurcation that may be impacted by a major event or significant shift (often initiated by overseeing external forces), emergent properties tend to arise when individual professionals interact with one another and form alliances initiated as emerging internal forces striving to pursue and push their shared concerns and specific desires. In TPE, members of such alliances reach across the separate systems and contact partners perceived to possess influence and power to join their cause. Although usually not predicted, emergent properties offer individual professionals functioning within nested or bifurcated systems

valuable, perhaps transformative, opportunities to review and revise the TPE program critically, constructively, and comprehensively.

This approach of emergent properties stipulates that all parts and purposes of the TPE program are assessed holistically and collectively, i.e., by multiple partners, from multiple perspectives, and for multiple purposes. Meticulously identifying and methodologically investigating all the underlying factions and contributing factors enables teacher educators to make visible the actual and the assumed forces that drive (and possibly deter from or damage) effective TPE.

Engaging in Deliberation and Exploring Ten Intersecting Considerations Relevant to TPE Programs

Partnerships of teacher educators seeking to transition from TPE programs based on nestedness and/or bifurcation ecological systems and transform into effective TPE programs built on openness to and adaptation of emergent properties are encouraged to engage in deliberative processes that are meaningful, relevant, challenging, and holistic. Well-developed deliberation, described by inclusively diverse participation, transparent identification, clarified objectives, attentive listening, mindful articulation, shared advancement, extensive curation, and conscientious analysis of all data and details is vital. Deliberation must be situated ensuring honest and transparent delving into discussions integrated with digressions and disagreement that yield shared decisions.

Ten Intersecting Considerations

This essay proffers ten interesting considerations (see Table 1) that partnerships of teacher educators are strongly encouraged to

Table 1

Ten Intersecting Considerations Contributing to Effective TPE

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Issues</i>
1. Scope of Influence:	Learning and Living
2. Logic of Learning:	Courses and Clinical Experiences
3. Influences of Engagement:	Past and Present
4. Continuum of Maturity:	Pedagogy and Andragogy
5. Alignment of Assignments:	Organization and Optimization
6. Multiplicity of Perspectives:	Values and Interpretations
7. Development of Identity:	Reflectivity and Reflexivity
8. Significance of Self-Assessment:	Insights and Inspirations
9. Responsibility to Society:	Ethics and Accountability
10. Openness to Adaptability:	Efficacy and Capacity Building

reasonably and realistically deliberate in regard to their presumptions, practices, and possibilities associated with their TPE programs. These ten interesting considerations should be evident in the design, development, and delivery of the program especially in the content, context, and culture of IHE courses and clinical experiences. Ongoing collection of feedback, analysis of data, modifications across the program, courses, and clinical experiences by partnerships of teacher educators is central to effectuate TPE that matters.

1. Scope of Influence: Learning and Living

In the microcosm, teacher educators involved in TPE focus on preparing teachers to teach learners in preK-12th grade classrooms emphasizing professionalism and pedagogy. In the macrocosm, teacher educators involved in TPE tend to wittingly and unwittingly, formally and informally, directly and indirectly, etc., share a broad range of knowledge, practices, values, and characteristics through their messages, methods, modeling, and mentoring. As teacher educators interact with teacher candidates in courses, clinical experiences, advisement, hall talks, extra-curricular activities, etc., they model and reinforce the joy of the journey associated with the expansive scope of learning and living.

Not only are teacher candidates attentive to teacher educators' words and actions, teacher candidates are attentive to the words not spoken and the actions not taken. Carefully and critically, teacher candidates listen, watch, copy, and choose the traits modeled by their preK-higher education general education and their teacher educators that they want to incorporate generally into their lives and specifically into their teaching.

Teacher candidates may or may not earn more than an undergraduate degree, read outside of assignments, travel beyond their communities, and/or experience life as interdependent global citizen. As teacher candidates mature into and through young adulthood, they benefit from the presence and power of both intended and unintended consequences that open ever evolving and unpredictable breadths, depths, and contexts of knowledge.

2. Logic of Learning: Courses and Clinical Experiences

Teacher educators involved in TPE programs (i.e., general education, TPE, and clinical experiences) would profit greatly from attention to the logic applied to learning and becoming a teacher. Logic draws upon objective, valid, and reliable knowledge for producing

reasoned descriptions, explanations, justifications, and further inquiry and investigation. Many teacher candidates enroll in and attend a specific IHE resolute on becoming a pre-K12th grade teacher, most likely located in the same geographic area where they were raised and their families live. They are eager to be placed in classrooms and to start visualizing themselves as the teacher rather than the student and validating their career choice. Teacher candidates accept that they need to become acquainted with research-based theories and assimilate well-established practices; however, they want to learn through actual engagement with preK-12th grade teachers and learners and as soon as possible. Earlier experiences in preK-12th grade school classrooms with teachers who are willing and able to mentor them in dependably logical, culturally respectful, and developmentally appropriate ways to grow and develop tend to contribute significantly to the teacher candidates' comprehensive learning and career longevity.

Teacher candidates may be unsure of their career paths, even teacher candidates who say they are steadfast in their career choice. Pairing teacher candidates with preK-12th grade teachers and placing teacher candidates in preK-12th grade classrooms early in the TPE program reaps multiple benefits. Teacher candidates begin to (a) transfer their past experiences as learners into their new explorations as teachers; (b) realize that current preK-12th grade teachers and learners live and learn in much different worlds than they knew and experienced; (c) generate individualized inquiries that will stimulate their IHE course understanding and strengthen their connections; and (4) establish and reinforce their commitment to both teaching as a profession and learning throughout their lives.

3. Influences of Engagement: Past and Present

Learning to teach is comparable to learning to become a professional in any field or successful with any area of interest, e.g., nursing, engineering, gardening, painting, etc. Most learners want to become actively engaged and totally immersed in the context of their learning. They benefit by recalling and revisiting their own experiences as learners as they start to reconcile their past with their present discoveries and plan for the future. Teacher candidates glean keen insights and profound inspiration by being placed in preK-12th grade classrooms early after acceptance into their TPE programs. Early clinical experiences enable teacher candidates to initiate their knowledge of concepts, practices, values, and characteristics of teaching, learning, and schooling; integrate their prior knowledge,

experiences, and beliefs associated with their own preK-12th grade experiences with their newfound contemporary contexts; and ignite their curiosity, connections, and compassion advantageous to their progression through their TPE program.

4. Continuum of Maturity: Pedagogy and Andragogy

Teacher candidates need to learn about and demonstrate their proficiencies related to the principles and practices of pedagogy, i.e., the art, science, and professionalism associated with children's and young people's learning. However, teacher candidates are adult learners who thrive on culturally respectful and developmentally appropriate task-centeredness and real world problem-solving. As adults, teacher candidates learn via the principles and practices of andragogy. While pedagogy features dependent learning, andragogy features independent learning. Andragogy emphasizes that adults tend to be motivated by internalizing their status as a future teacher; their impression of certainty, stability, and predictability associated with their performance as a professional; their autonomy or independence in decision-making; the relatedness and connections of the new knowledge with the new experiences; and their sense of fairness as a teacher and a learner (Rock, 2008).

Relative to both pedagogy and andragogy, integrated elements of heutagogy or interdependent learning allow teacher candidates at all ages and stages to engage in and experience self-directed learning in the courses and clinical experiences. Opportunities to comprehend and connect pedagogy, andragogy, and heutagogy during their TPE prepares teacher candidates with the ways they will conduct themselves when they co-construct new knowledge and collaborate with colleagues throughout their careers.

5. Alignment of Activities: Organization and Optimization

In addition to deliberating logic in ways that are reasonable and realistic, teacher educators need to deliberate the holistic organizational sequence and optimal alignment of their activities and assignments judiciously mapped across all their courses and clinical experiences. With mindful attention to details, teacher candidates need to intensify their efficacy and capacity to comprehend the curriculum, innovate the instruction, relate to their assessments, and connect with their communities. Emphasis on maximizing purposeful scaffolded learning, minimizing any possible repetition of activities and assignments, and optimizing teacher candidates' precious time, energy, and resources

allows teacher educators and teacher candidates to amplify the effectiveness of their TPE programs.

6. Multiplicity of Perspectives: Values and Interpretations

The overarching goal of effective TPE is to instill the profound understanding, pragmatic utilization, and purposeful uplift of critical consciousness (Gallavan, 2002) in every teacher candidate through teacher educators' messages, methods, models, and mentoring. Teacher candidates are more likely to become high-quality teachers when they realize that their learners, their learners' families, and their colleagues experience many different ways of living that may or may not match the teacher candidate's experiences. Likewise, learners, their learners' families, and their colleagues will express their thoughts and feelings in ways that may or may not match the way that teacher candidates express their thoughts and feelings.

Teacher educators must guide and support teacher candidates to investigate and identify their values and interpretations of their own beliefs and lived experiences. Critical consciousness entails acquiring information, gaining access, and experiencing opportunities in order for teacher candidates to increase their awareness of people like and unlike themselves and the range of benefits and barriers that different people encounter as they move through their lives. Too often, teacher candidates have been raised in families and communities that tend to shelter them from experiencing the many different outlooks and nuanced interactions occurring in today's schools and classrooms.

Critical consciousness is fortified with inquiry, exploration, discovery, application, reflectivity, and reflexivity that opens, sparks, and diversifies critical thinking and the co-construction of new knowledge. These processes incorporate learning strategies that feature conventional and nonconventional approaches and elements, inductive and deductive reasoning, convergent and divergent thinking, forward and backward sequencing, social emotional aspects of understanding integrated equitably with cognitive functioning, etc.

7. Development of Identity: Reflectivity and Reflexivity

Teacher candidates are embarking their transitions from their well-honed roles and responsibilities as a student to their newly forming roles and responsibilities as a teacher. Teacher candidates expand and enrich their capacities to become teachers as reflective (Zavadskiene & Bubnys, 2017) practitioners and teachers as reflexive Schnellert, et al., (2014) practitioners. Thinking deeply about their thoughts and actions

particularly conscientious of the effects emanating from their beliefs and values enables teacher candidates to start knowing themselves.

Whereas, teacher reflectivity tends to focus on pedagogical patterns, teacher reflexivity tends to delve into professional perspectives of practice that strongly affect pedagogical patterns of practice. Simply worded and profoundly transformative, teacher reflectivity prompts practitioners to ask themselves: What do I do? What do I want my learners to do? and What do I want to do? Teacher reflexivity prompts practitioners to ask themselves: Who am I? Who do I want to learners to be? Who do I want to become? and Who do I want my learners to become?

The science of learning, unlearning, and relearning offers astute assistance for grappling with the discovered tensions and moving into the space between the presumed and the promising self-image and teacher identity. Internal wisdom easily engenders modifications expressed through external communication most likely producing high-quality teaching, learning, and schooling.

8. Significance of Self-Assessment: Insights and Inspirations

Most TPE programs emphasize learning about assessments as techniques and tools to monitor and measure progress, products, and proficiency. Teacher candidates tend to be taught multiple ways to incorporate assessments into their practices so they can assess their learners. Likewise, teacher candidates tend to be guided in self-assessments as reflective practitioners to notice their own patterns that need to be modified to increase learner outcomes. Teacher candidates receive feedback from faculty in their general education and teacher education courses as well as their mentors and supervisors in their clinical experiences.

Across their courses and clinical experiences, teacher candidates want and benefit from insightful and inspirational feedback both as learners and as teacher candidates who will provide feedback to their own learners. Insightful feedback is timely, clear, practical, actionable, and kind; it offers understanding and utilization of the goals and objectives. Inspirational feedback is motivating, encouraging, and uplifting; it tends to recognize greater strengths, invested efforts, sincere commitment, and intrinsic reward, especially applicable to healthy living and continued learning.

9. Responsibility to Society: Ethics and Accountability

Every TPE program must accept their responsibilities to prepare and provide professional learning that informs, guides, and supports

high-quality teachers. Ethical teacher candidates ensure that they know all of their learners holistically, i.e., cognitively, culturally, emotionally, physically, socially, etc. Ethical teacher candidates demonstrate evidence that all of their thoughts, feelings, words, actions, and interactions communicate accountability, fairness, honesty, integrity, professionalism, respectfulness, and wise decision-making.

Not only must all TPE commit preparing ethical teachers, all TPE programs are ethically responsible for coordinating meaningful and relevant clinical experiences in every preK-12th grade school across the United States. Not all preK-12th grade schools are geographically situated near IHE with TPE programs; teacher candidates may or may not visit schools and/or complete their clinical experiences in schools located further from IHEs. Concomitantly, teacher educators at IHE may or may not visit schools located further from their IHE, limiting both the faculty's acquisition of educational current trends and issues and the teacher educators' awareness of place-based experiences and needs.

Teacher educators are responsible to their state constituents to establish positive alliances with educators at all schools via mutually respectful and rewarding collaborations. Initiating honestly transparent reciprocity advantages the trust and appreciation of all partners contributing to the transformation and accountability of practices that, ultimately, benefit preK-12th grade learners, their families, and their communities.

10. Openness to Adaptability: Self-Efficacy and Capacity Building

Most TPE programs emphasize teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) practices. Teacher self-efficacy is based on the teacher's realization of their sense of agency, i.e., responsibility, to enhance the learning for each of their learners. The teacher's sense of agency relates to their confidence in their abilities to plan, prepare, facilitate, reflect, and modify their practices to improve the teaching and learning. Confidence is boosted by integrating the concepts and practices illuminated in this list of ten intersecting considerations into TPE programs.

Delving into teacher self-efficacy enables each teacher to more fully understand and strengthen their individualized capacity building and learning. In addition to enhancing their knowledge and practices, capacity building increases optimism, perseverance, resilience, and hope. These processes empower teachers to advance their openness to change, their willingness to take risks and try innovative approaches, and their adaptability to provide culturally respectful and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning for every

learner. Change across all aspects of education is inevitable; effective TPE must ensure that all teacher candidates demonstrate readiness, receptiveness, and responsiveness (Gallavan, 2020) fostering and fortifying their resilience.

Applying Five Dialogic Practices Contributing to Ecological Change across Teacher Education

Purposeful deliberation focused on the ten intersecting considerations affecting ecological systems and possible change centers on well-established dialogic practices and recently emerging inquiry approaches. Alexander's research distinguishes five dialogic practices (Alexander, 2008, as cited in Vrikki et al., 2018) vital to profound and profitable dialogue intended for logical discussion and wise decision-making. Alexander (2008, as cited in Vrikki et al., 2018) recommends that dialogue should (a) be founded and co-constructed on a shared understanding of the topic or issue, (b) welcome and support the reciprocity of many different ideas expressed by all partners, (c) enable and encourage all partners to contribute to and value all comments and inquires contributing to the dialogue, (d) acknowledge and advance the cumulative dialogue by enriching and expanding upon the contributions, and (e) invite and include accepting differing and disagreeing comments. Dedicating time and energy for all partners to comprehend and connect with these five dialogic practices will advance the intentions and interactions of the partnership.

Wells (1999, as cited in Black, 2024) emphasizes understanding and utilizing inquiry as a predisposition of questioning objectively and constructively in order to voice and make visible the many different perspectives and distinctive possibilities that may contribute to the collaborative process. Through inquiry, Black (2024) states that teacher reflectivity and teacher reflexivity galvanize all partners in the investigation of their own knowledge and the knowledge of their colleagues in order for them. The application of the five dialogic practices enables teacher educators to establish a culture that yields enlightened, dynamic, and cohesive TPE programs.

Heeding the Call for Forward Thinking, Authentic Collaboration, and Collective Efficacy

This essay opened with descriptions of three principles of ecological systems relevant to current and future TPE structures (the design). It advanced by recommending ten intersecting considerations for all educators and teacher educators (preK-higher education) associated

with TPE to deliberate as they identify goals and effectuate actions within their programs, (the development). Deliberations were expanded with an introduction to five meaningful and mindful dialogic practices contributing to wise decision-making (the delivery).

Attention to the context, content, and culture influencing the design, development, and delivery equips partnerships of teacher educators to deliberate in an ideal, shared, overlapping third space customized for their own purposes. This third space overlaps with existing transactional environments and relational environments. Transactional environments tend to be task-oriented and short term, characterized by clearly stated expectations, brief exchanges, and limited social interactions. While transactional environments may seem unapproachable, inflexible, and unfriendly, usually they offer efficiency, predictability, and results serving their established purpose.

Conversely, relational environments tend to be people-oriented and long term, characterized by co-constructed expectations, mutually supported conversations, and malleable outcomes. Relational environments may be more complex to establish, challenging to maintain, and time-consuming, yet they yield increased engagement and sense of well-being.

While this shared third space nurtures differentiating expectations, interactions, and facilitation, this shared third space also necessitates continuous attention and community adaptation requiring forward thinking, authentic collaboration, and collective efficacy.

Cultivation of Forward Thinking

Forward thinking, the ever-evolving processes for proactively planning, preparing, and placing goals into actions focused on the future, encapsulates a trait that many teacher educators possess, rely upon, and appreciate. The culture of academics is oriented toward forward thinking, and everyone associated with IHE operates in that model and with that mode. The ethos of forward thinking incorporates (a) fully recognizing and honestly embracing the past; realistically acknowledging and honorably respecting the present; and limitlessly envisioning and innovatively fashioning the future; (b) diligently seeking resources (predominant and peripheral) and responsibly collecting data from multiple partners, perspectives, and positions; (c) meticulously analyzing data and comfortably adopting change; and (d) continuously reexamining, reimaging, and revitalizing the processes and products.

Forward thinking teacher educators express greater strengths for embracing a world that does not yet exist. They tend to promote opportunities to explore possibilities and balance the conundrum

comprised of the known knowns, the unknown knowns, the known unknowns, and the unknown unknowns eliciting wise decision-making (Thomas, 2017). Engaging in empirical humility evidencing awareness of an individual's own limitations, fallibility, and vulnerability in their knowledge, practices, experiences, values, and beliefs can lead to personal and professional learning and effective co-constructive collaborations. Fostering empirical humility enables the individual to realize the distinctions between intellect and ego; the consequences of respecting and accepting diverse viewpoints; and the advantages for openness, modifications, and adaptability.

Predictably, teacher educators promoting forward thinking may be thwarted by leaders and colleagues who stridently or silently withhold support stemming from their fear of the unknown, resistance to change, limited vision, negative cynicism, and, most commonly, their perceived threats to their egos and empires. Some leaders and colleagues may subversively employ self-centered strategies and exaggerate articulate outside forces as imposing (or immovable) obstacles.

However, effective TPE relies on forward thinking teacher educators who have internalized a realistic perception of time; possess a futuristic stance; ask what if of themselves and the people around them; embrace the cycle of learning, unlearning, and relearning; enjoy life and living; and initiate action, especially to promote authentic collaboration and collective efficacy.

Engagement in Authentic Collaboration

If asked, most teacher educators would claim they are well acquainted with authentic collaboration. However, authentic collaboration relates less to the organization and outcomes, and more to the attitudes of the partners and the quality of the interactions (Lefton, 2024). Participating in authentic collaboration relies on everyone's capacity and commitment to listen. And, in order to listen attentively, everyone must clear their minds of preconceived ideas, presumed expectations, and privileged positions. Partners more easily clear their minds of preconceived ideas and presumed expectations by keeping written or oral records. The records allow partners to privately recognize their preconceived ideas and presumed expectations yet remove the blatant presence of them from the energy needed for authentic collaboration.

Clearing minds of privileged positions presents a greater challenge. Partners need to begin by privately acknowledging and accepting their own privileged positions associated with their personal, interpersonal,

and institutional advantages. Concomitantly, partners need to privately confront their own beliefs associated with their partners' privileged positions. For example, teacher educators in IHE, including supervisors, may view themselves as more privileged than preK-12th grade teachers who serve as mentors during clinical experiences. Identifying and removing the stance associated with privileged positions allows all partners to be accepted as essential and equal partners.

Co-constructing an honestly collaborative TPE program requires each of the five essential and equal partners to separate themselves from their sense of greater knowledge, experience, authority, importance, and entitlement. While not always readily or comfortably received process, upholding the ideals ensuring equality, ethics, and fairness among the partners must resonate tacitly throughout the collaboration.

Most likely, a co-constructive collaboration related to effective TPE programs will be launched by IHE teacher education administrators and faculty who establish a core team. Prior to initiating communication with essential and equal partners, the core team will benefit by collectively brainstorming the purposes, priorities, and processes for starting and sustaining the co-constructive collaboration. The core team should generate ways for the partnership to proceed, including, but not limited to, communicating the tentative (a) purposes for establishing a collaborative partnership, (b) partners, (c) first meeting and location, and (d) agenda. During the first meeting, the temporary coordinator should create an environment for all partners to add to the agenda and contribute to the conversation. During the first meeting, after an appropriate welcome, introductions, and agenda preview, an overview of a co-constructive collaboration should be described and discussed. All of the partners must be encouraged to contribute to the conversation emphasizing the foundations, frames, and functions of authentic collaboration. Additionally, the first meeting should include the selection of a mutually acceptable coordinator, benefits for partners to clear their minds of preconceived ideas, presumed expectations, and privileged positions, and the establishment of the next meeting time, place, and agenda. All partners should be able to leave the first meeting with a sense of authenticity, accountability, and accomplishment.

Advocacy for Collective Efficacy

Whereas every teacher (candidate and educator) must be dedicated to the development of their self-efficacy, partners actively engaged in an authentic collaboration must be committed to the development of the group's collective agency (Bandura, 1993). Bandura describes

collective efficacy as “a group’s shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of achievement” (Bandura, 1997, p. 377). Establishing the presence and power of collective efficacy tends to motivate and increase worthy participation, contributions, possibilities, satisfaction, persistence, resilience, transformation, and accomplishment. Simultaneously, collective efficacy allows partners to focus on the clarity and intentions of the goals of the group, the supportive and social collaboration within the group, and the well-being for both the group and individual partners. Collective efficacy has the propensity to enhance transparency, heighten accountability, improve communication, and strengthen trustworthiness.

Advancing collective efficacy in both preK-12th schools and higher education improves student learning (Donohoo et al., 2020) and particularly teacher candidates learning about teaching and will be teaching their own young learners soon. Establishing partnerships of teacher educators centered on collective efficacy may seem onerous; however, co-constructional collaboration lends itself to introducing and initiating conscientious attitudes and cohesive actions aligned with five enabling conditions (Donohoo et al., 2020). The five enabling conditions of supportive leadership, empowered teachers, embedded reflective practices, cohesive teacher knowledge, and goal consensus “exist in a reciprocal causality and each condition is not mutually exclusive” (Anderson et al, 2023). Supportive leadership must instill hope, trust, compassion, and stability for all participants to thrive, especially in their wellbeing (Gallup, 2025). Although more research delving into collective teacher efficacy is being conducted, articulating the five enabling conditions among partners of teacher educators makes visible the presence and power of self-perceptions beneficial for effective TPE design, development, and delivery.

Conclusion

For decades, teacher preparation education has been enduring escalating tensions and shifting priorities amid enigmatic urgency and exhausting struggles. Teacher educators in all capacities are suffering feelings of disingenuousness, overreach, and uncertainty. Teacher educators in all capacities can be heard expressing their frustration, disappointment, and helplessness contributing to the increasing turnover rates of teachers and decreasing achievement of learners. Without experienced teachers (preK-higher education), teachers and candidates are limited in their critical consciousness, i.e., information from, access to, and opportunities with models and mentors to welcome and reassure, guide and redirect, challenge and reinforce.

Today's preK-12th grade learners are tomorrow's teachers and the next day's teacher educators. Likewise, current preK-12th grade learners are future leaders of our communities, corporations, institutions, and all levels of government. Teacher educators are articulating their earnest desire and eager willingness to enact significant, substantial, and structural transformation. I submit that partnerships comprised of equal and essential teacher educators founded on transparency, accountability, communication, and trustworthiness; framed by inclusive and intentional deliberation; and featuring forward-thinking, authentic collaboration, and collective efficacy can promote effective teacher preparation education matters.

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