

# ATE 2023 Research Conference Proceedings

## Introduction to the 2023 Conference Proceedings

Tracy Spies, UNLV; Maika Yeigh, L&C College

The ultimate goal of teacher preparation programs and professional development is to improve student outcomes and educational experiences. Yet, in the design of courses and programs and plans for ongoing professional development, we often don't situate the said learning experience within the larger learning context for teachers and teacher candidates (TCs). In this 2023 issue of ATE's Conference Proceedings, the authors emphasize the importance of listening to all stakeholders in the design of learning experiences and highlight other sources of teacher and teacher candidates' professional learning.

In *Voices of the Residents: A University-based Teacher Residency Program as a Retention Strategy for High-Need School Districts*, Hill-Jackson and colleagues point out that TCs in a residency model express the impact of the sense of belonging on their development and that the year-long placement helped them settle into the community and gain instructional self-efficacy. Mayne and colleagues in *Ask the Parents*, underscored the power of parent voice and expertise about their children to shift special education TCs' confidence in learning how to support inclusive practices. Lastly, in *Knowing Better, Doing Better: Using Lessons from COVID-19 to Build a More Resilient Education System* Luther and Morrissey sought the voices of teachers on how to build a more resilient educational system that can respond and pivot quickly with faced with crises (i.e., COVID, extreme weather events). Given these findings we challenge teacher educators to consider the voices of all stakeholders in designing courses, programs, and professional development.

Teachers and teacher candidates learn and grow from a variety of sources beyond their courses. In both Willey's *An Analysis of Alternative Certification Candidates' Perceptions on the Texas Teacher Evaluation System (T-TESS)* and Hill-Jackson and colleagues *Voices of the Residents*, mentor teachers and other colleagues at their school sites played critical roles in their acquisition of knowledge and development. More specifically, Olokunde and colleagues found the peer-collaboration during learning was vital to teachers' learning in *Building virtual reality Skills in STEM Teachers Through Professional Development*. This research encourages us to reflect on how we might capitalize on these other sources of development to improve teacher and TCs' overall development.

Although these conference proceedings highlight the importance of stakeholders in our design and the consideration of the range of sources of teacher development, we must also pause to consider the importance of time in teacher development. In *What Beginning Teacher Candidates Think They Need to Learn to Engage in Culturally Responsive Teaching: Implications for Teacher Educators* Cheek and colleagues point out that TCs need time to unpack the essential elements of culturally responsive teaching and develop a deep understanding of the relevance of the essential elements to becoming culturally competent teachers. As teacher

educators are we recognizing the importance of time in candidate development? Are we taking the time to listen to the voices of all stakeholders? Are we taking the time to integrate all sources of teacher development in our overall program?

### **2023 Proceedings:**

#### **Voices of the Residents: A University-based Teacher Residency Program as a Retention Strategy for High-Need School Districts**

Valerie Hill-Jackson, Texas A&M University; Andrew Kwok, Texas A&M University; Shaun Hutchins, Texas A&M University; Megan Svajda-Hardy, Texas A&M University

**Abstract:** Positioned in the Comprehensive Community Induction Framework (CCIF<sup>®</sup>) for teacher residency programs, this qualitative pilot study examines the implementation of a year-long teacher residency program between a state university and four high-need school districts. Eight residents are provided various support from school personnel to aid in their development as beginning professionals. The findings bring forward the voices of residents and have implications for effective retention structures for university-based teacher preparation programs that “provide[s] leadership in developing, implementing, and evaluating teacher education programs that are rigorous, relevant, and grounded in theory, research, and best practice” (Association of Teacher Educators [ATE], n.d., p. 6).

**Keywords:** University-based Teacher Residency; Retention; High-Need School Districts

[Read more](#)

#### **Ask the Parents! Preservice Teacher Preparation for Including Students with Complex Communication Profiles**

Lesley Mayne, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire; Karsten K Powell, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire; Anna Lash, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire

**Abstract:** This mixed methods study utilized a convergent parallel design to investigate preservice teacher’s perceptions of their ability to include and communicate with a child who has a complex communication profile (CCP). This study fills a gap in the literature by investigating how parents’ expertise of their child with CCP informed teachers’ perceptions of the child’s communication and use of multimodal augmentative and assistive communication (AAC). The participants included 86 undergraduate preservice teachers representing general and special education majors from a Midwestern university. Quantitative results using a paired samples t-test indicated a statistically significant increase in self-efficacy from the pre- to post-questions for including the child with CCP. The integrated analysis resulted in a convergence of qualitative and quantitative data which highlighted the benefit of capitalizing on the intricate knowledge parents have on their child’s communication and training students at the undergraduate level in AAC.

**Keywords: Augmentative and Assistive Communication; Complex Communication Profile**

[Read more](#)

### **Knowing Better, Doing Better: Using Lessons from COVID-19 to Build a More Resilient Education System**

Vicky Luther, Mercer University; Susie Morrissey, Mercer University

**Abstract:** Public education is seen as a steadfast and reliable constituent of society, yet each year, a myriad of events occur that disrupt the normal functioning of public schools and negatively impact student learning. Extreme weather events (e.g. hurricanes, snow storms, extreme heat, wildfires, and tornados) cause schools to close for varying amounts of time. Schools have also been forced to close due to disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, and increased globalization increase the risk for worsening frequency and severity of pandemics. Although disruptions to schooling are not new, the scale of the disruption that COVID-19 has caused to public schooling is unprecedented. School leaders, teachers, parents, and students collectively responded with remarkable resolve. However, the United States was woefully unprepared to manage a crisis of this scale in regard; since these types of disruptions are predicted to increase in frequency, our study aims to explore this research question: What lessons can be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic that can inform ways to build a more resilient education system?

**Keywords: COVID-19; Resilience; Educational Systems**

[Read more](#)

### **An Analysis of Alternative Certification Candidates' Perceptions on the Texas Teacher Evaluation System (T-TESS)**

George Willey, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

**Abstract:** Teacher retention among alternative certification candidates is lower than that of candidates who earn certification through traditional teacher certification programs. As a means to curb teacher attrition, Texas implemented a merit pay program in 2019 based upon a combination of teacher performance on their annual evaluation and the academic performance of their students. The purpose of this research is to inform those involved in the preparation of alternative certification candidates how to orient them about the teacher evaluation process. This descriptive case study analyzed how two alternative certification candidates gained knowledge and understanding of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) during their internship year which coincides with their first formal year of teaching. The candidates were interviewed using a structured protocol. Findings revealed that the candidates received limited information from the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) or from the district

of employment. Most information gained about the evaluation process occurred through interactions with other educators. The study reinforces previous research which indicates that new teachers' assimilation into their professional role is unstructured, as well as the significant impact principals can have on teachers during their induction period. Findings from this study will allow EPPs to more closely align course content with the T-TESS instrument.

**Keywords: Teacher Retention; Teacher Evaluation; Alternative Certification; Merit Pay**

[Read more](#)

### **Building Virtual Reality Skills in STEM Teachers Through Professional Development**

Temitope Olokunde, Southern University and A&M College; Nastassia N. Jones, Southern University and A&M College; Rochelle Darville, Southern University and A&M College

**Abstract:** Virtual reality technology is a groundbreaking tool that has gained familiarity in the 21st century. It cuts across most aspects of life like education, field trips, fashion, and medicine. Virtual reality technology gives a simulated immersive experience of a real-life scenario, making the user have a strong feel of the experience digitally. A teacher's knowledge of virtual reality is vital because it ignites their creativity for technology integration in the classroom in a way that fosters student engagement. Hence, teachers' skills in using virtual reality are a great source to aid their teaching. Investing in teachers is essential to enhance their professional growth and provide a quality education. This study emphasizes that a professional development program can build teachers' skills in integrating virtual reality in their classrooms.

**Keywords: Virtual Reality; Teacher Self-Efficacy; TPACK; Professional Development**

[Read more](#)

### **What Beginning Teacher Candidates Think They Need to Learn to Engage in Culturally Responsive Teaching: Implications for Teacher Educators**

Kim A. Cheek, University of North Florida; Jearia Jones, University of North Florida; Lindsay Gallon, KIPP Impact Academy

**Abstract:** Teacher candidates (TCs) need to develop cultural competence and design instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners (Standards 1 and 2, ATE Teacher Educator Standards). One challenge is that teachers—overwhelmingly white and female—are often culturally unlike the students they teach. Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), as described by Gay (2018), can provide a framework to help teacher candidates develop cultural competence. In this mixed methods study, beginning TCs completed a survey indicating their CRT interest before and after learning about Gay's essential elements and completing a peer coaching cycle focused on CRT. TCs reflected on a lesson they taught and completed a peer coaching form for the lesson they observed. While TCs wanted to learn about many elements of CRT prior to instruction and peer

coaching, after peer coaching they were most interested in learning about aspects of CRT for which they saw immediate relevance. Teacher educators may need to provide more explicit early instruction on the elements of CRT and why they are essential for quality instruction.

**Keywords: Culturally Responsive Teaching; Teacher Candidates; Peer Coaching**

[Read more](#)