

Task Force on Addressing the Needs of Cooperating/Mentor/Associate Teachers in their Practices and Roles as Mentors and Supervisors of the Novice Teacher

Appointed by Patricia Tate ATE President – 2018-2019

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ATE has a longstanding history in attracting and developing programs and initiatives focused on supporting the teacher educator's work and scholarship. In fact, ATE was originally founded in 1920 as the National Association of Directors of Supervised Student Teaching (Flessner & Lecklider, 2017). As ATE's scope and reach has expanded to encompass both school- and university-based professionals who prepare and develop teachers, limited attention has been paid to the needs of the cooperating/mentor/Associate teacher to effectively enact their essential roles in supervision and mentoring in particular. The current policy reports on teacher preparation (AACTE, 2018; AACTE, 2010); AASCU, 2017; CCSSO, 2012; Flessner & Lecklider, 2018; NCATE, 2010) call for renewed emphasis on the clinical practice components of teacher preparation programs that need stronger connections between theory and practice as well as mediated *approximations of practice* (Grossman, 2010) opportunities for the novice teacher in real school contexts.

It is further observed that throughout the last decade there has been little attention to supporting and developing the school-based teacher educator who assumes the most essential role in a novice teacher's development. Policy makers, in particular, assume that once someone has been a teacher he/she can automatically instruct, mentor, and supervise a novice teacher. Given the renewed focus on clinical practice in the current reform discourse and the implications for providing the knowledge base and skill sets that mentor/cooperating teachers need to do their job effectively, the Taskforce is charged with creating and constructing new ways for outreach to this forgotten group. Clinical practice is part of ATE's DNA and as such should be seen as the organization that provides for school-based teacher educator needs in enacting their teacher preparation roles successfully.

There is much scholarship on this topic within our own ATE membership and the Taskforce is encouraged to invite individuals who have the background to contribute to this effort.

The essential questions that frame the purpose and goals of this task force are:

- What knowledge exists within our teacher education community with regard to what teacher candidates need in their development as teachers?
- What knowledge exists within our teacher education community with regard to what cooperating/mentor teachers need in their roles in mentoring and supervision of novice teachers?

- What implications does research about novice teacher needs have on practices of the cooperating/mentor teacher in preparation of teachers?
- How do we capture and articulate in a collaborative way the knowledge that school-based teacher educators hold with regard to their practices in mentoring and supervising developing teachers?
- How do we capture and articulate in a collaborate way the key skill-sets that school-based teacher educators enact with regard to their practices in mentoring and supervising developing teachers?
- Can ATE provide models for sharing knowledge, developing skill-sets, and essential practices in novice teacher development with optional designs that can be delivered in many ways such as: a) pre-conference settings or virtually, b) website site resources – such as best-practice briefs, and c) other creative social networking applications?
- Are there new partnership opportunities that ATE can seek in gaining approval of the models and protocol developed by the Taskforce from state and/or national groups (i.e. NEA, KDP) for some type of micro-credential that can be given to participants that acknowledges their professional development experience and acquisition of expertise with regard to mentoring and supervision of the novice teacher?

The purpose of this Taskforce is to develop models and protocol aimed to support school-based cooperating/mentors/associate teachers in their roles as educators of teacher candidates/novice teachers. Models and protocols developed by the Taskforce should encompass a foundational knowledge base associated with developmental needs of beginning teachers as well as a set of theoretical constructs that support enacted clinical practices. Models and protocols developed by the Taskforce should provide opportunities for the school-based mentor/supervisor to develop their own reflective practices and appropriate skills (i.e. opportunities to unpack their role through their own beliefs about teaching and learning, opportunities to practice and acquire new skills sets related to observation, conferencing and feedback strategies; opportunities to engage with teacher candidate assessment data as both formative and summative processes).

Transformational learning processes that are part of the model designs should take into account the research on teacher development and cognitive change. Transformational learning processes should be articulated in the constructed models to verify how specially designed experiences (i.e. cases in ethical reasoning, practical inquiry, reflective forms of practice, mediated experiences/situated cognition, legitimate peripheral participation) allow for the cooperating/mentor/associate teacher to acquire orientations toward ethical professional practices in developing the novice teacher.

As part of the initial work of the Taskforce, I encourage knowledge sharing among the group and consensus building for what effective mentoring and supervision looks like in practice for the cooperating/mentor/associate teacher. In particular, the work of Sharon Feiman-Nemser (2012) in articulating her model of “educative mentoring” should be consulted as it provides a research-based model of exemplary mentoring practices and makes the case for recognizing that how a

teacher candidate learns will impact how they eventually teach. Feiman-Nemser's work also lays out foundational frameworks for envisioning how a mentor teacher engages and develops the beginning teacher. Pam Grossman (2010), too, has provided research-based knowledge on types of clinical practices deemed appropriate for learning teaching; from her work some ideas can be generated that apply to the design of school-based experiences. And there are within our ATE membership practitioner scholars, educational organization leaders, university Deans and Directors that can be tapped to share their knowledge and expertise to guide this initiative.

Important to the work of the Taskforce will be in making the case for the varied models of mentoring that exists in the different contexts in which teachers are now prepared. The Taskforce will provide new resources and knowledge specifically focused on the diverse ways teacher preparation programs actively engage in preparing mentor teachers and university-based educators to effectively support teacher candidate learning. An overarching goal of the Taskforce will be to provide professional development models based on best practices and research that will serve to guide programs that desire to engage in continuous development and improvement in practices of the mentor teacher/school-based teacher educator.

References:

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