

Empowering Educators: Wisdom from the ATE Masters

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What do the masters have to say?

Insights, inspirations, and perceptions from master educators who helped strengthen the foundation of ATE.

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ATE Distinguished Member Research Group Task Force
Empowering Educators: Wisdom from the ATE Masters
Special Session

Friday, March 29, 2024
11:50 AM to 12:50 PM.

What do the masters have to say? Insights, inspirations, and perceptions from master educators who helped strengthen the foundation of ATE.

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This document is dedicated to the memory of Ann Shelly, a distinguished ATE member and contributing member of this Task Force.

Introduction to the Distinguished Member Task Force Monograph

By John Hicks

What you have before you is an outstanding work of scholarship and a work that beautifully conveys the wisdom of Jim Alouf, Shirley DeLucia, Nancy Gallavan, Jane McCarthy, John McIntyre, Terry James, Ann Shelly, and Frances Van Tassell—all Distinguished Members of the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). The scholars responsible for this monograph are members of ATE's Distinguished Member Task Force, including Rebecca Harris (Chair), Glenda Black, Karen Dunlap, Becky Frederickson, Lori Fulton, and Jon Yoshioka.

When I began serving as ATE President in 2021, I did not have plans to initiate any new task forces. My goal was to simply keep the ATE ship afloat and help direct it back into the world we knew prior to the pandemic. But when this fine group of ATE members expressed a desire to turn their committee, which was initiated to celebrate ATE's Distinguished Members as part of our 100th Anniversary, into a task force, I was thrilled to honor their wish. Besides teaching courses in the history and philosophy of education to my graduate students and having taught my high school English class students how to mine for the wisdom in classic and contemporary works of literature, what this group was up to with this project was also right up my alley!

To collect the thoughts and lived experience of Distinguished Members of ATE is an important undertaking because any institution that lasts as long as ATE certainly possesses a surfeit of wisdom worth collecting and preserving for future members and leaders.

Within these pages, you will profit not only from the sagacity of our Distinguished Members, but you will further deepen your understanding of what they have to teach us through the thematic structures in which the task force has organized their thoughts.

When interviewing the Distinguished Members, the task force probed them for their thinking and experiences regarding: Ethical Dilemmas, Mentorship, Politics and Political Advocacy, and Social Justice and Equity. Furthermore, the task force has done us the service of synthesizing the Distinguished Members' thinking on all of these subjects, couching it within current research in teacher education in the powerful conclusions that end each section of this monograph.

I cannot thank the Distinguished Members enough for taking the time to sit down and expound upon all the challenges and successes they have experienced in teacher education. And I cannot thank the Distinguished Member Task Force enough for chronicling the thinking of these wonderful teacher educators who have done so much to help sustain the greatness that is ATE. Every time I think I have things figured out, I find out how much I still have to learn by listening to these fine ATE friends and mentors and I again thank the task force for reminding us that we truly do “stand on the shoulders of giants” as Bernard of Chartres insisted all of the human community did back in 1159.

I know you will be moved as much as I am when you read all that our group of Distinguished Members have to say on teacher education, and perhaps we will soon see a sequel to this fine work since the Distinguished Member Task Force is energized and poised to continue their chronicling of the wisdom of ATE's Distinguished Members. In any case, please enjoy and profit from the work of my favorite ATE Distinguished Member Task Force!

Methodology

Distinguished Member award recipients inspire, energize, and persevere through challenges to serve the broader teacher education community. Advocacy for teacher education is foundational in their teaching, research, and service. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of teacher educators who were awarded the ATE Distinguished Member award. Eight recipients of the award were invited to participate in semi structured individual interviews three times over three years (Rabionet, 2011; Read, 2018).

Methods of data analysis included the three streams of activity identified by Miles and Huberman (1994), Feng and Behar-Horenstein (2019), and Saldana (2013): data reduction (reducing data, coding, and developing themes); data display (organizing data); and conclusion drawing/verification (interpretation). Analysis of the data settled into four themes: social justice and equity, ethical dilemmas, politics and political advocacy, and mentoring and being mentored.

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Ethical Dilemmas

By Karen Dunlap & Becky Fredrickson

“Work for honesty and the ability to speak out...do not be silent.”

-Dr. James Alouf

Introduction

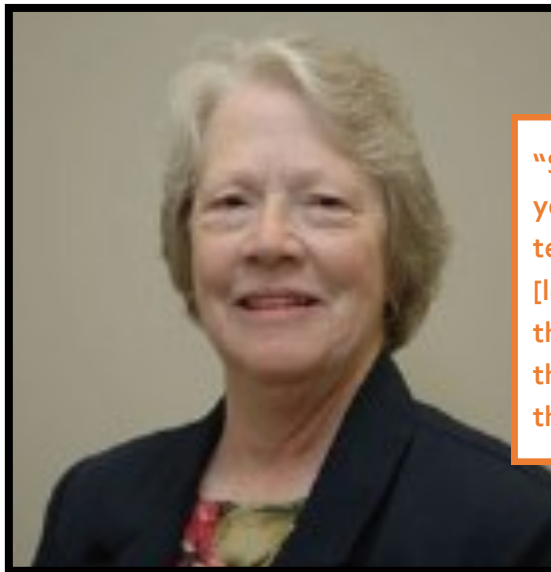
Ethical dilemmas are bound to arise in any workplace. This is especially true within higher education that often seeks to reach beyond its true guiding principles to enhance the greater good. The Greek word *telos* is a term referring to an end, fulfillment, completion, aim, or goal. For example, the *telos* of a lifeguard is to save lives, the *telos* of a lightbulb is to illuminate, and the *telos* of the academy is “truth” (Haidt, 2022). If we accept that truth is the *telos* of higher education, then it stands to reason that other moral and ethical arguments will try to take the place of this, thus creating ethical dilemmas.

This section addresses ethical dilemmas faced by selected ATE Distinguished Members (DMs) during their tenure as professors within the academy. DMs were interviewed twice over a three year period to help illuminate and preserve the contributions made by these individuals. The DMs stated that ethical dilemmas would often occur when they were faced with (a) navigating negative environments in higher education, (b) the pressure and dynamic nature of politics in the academy, and, (c) challenges, impacts, and implications of accreditation processes.

Navigating Negative Environments in Higher Education

Faculty in academia are continually asked to bear additional responsibilities which may not have been a part of their original contract or even exist within their scope of expertise. The

phrase “do more with less” has become the unofficial motto of many institutions. Faculty are not only asked to do what is traditionally expected of them through teaching and scholarship; but additionally (and often under internal pressure), they are asked to tackle multiple external demands. Therefore, faculty are often left feeling frustrated as they strive to meet unrealistic goals and expectations placed on them by external forces that lack knowledge as to the rigors/requirements of faculty productivity on a daily basis thus leading to a negative environment in the academic workspace. (Dinibutun, Kuzey, & Dinc, 2020). Several of the DMs interviewed addressed these same challenges and frustrations in academia.



“Sometimes you want to tell [legislators] that they have their thumbs in their ears.”

Dr. Ann Shelly and **Dr. Nancy Gallavan** both recognized when negative environments had been created by people with little educational knowledge or background. In these situations, outside impacts were often allowed to dictate the process of furthering/improving the quality of teacher education programs. **Ann** put part of the blame not just on the academy, but on the public when she stated, “Bureaucratization comes from the lack of trust in teachers, the lack of trust in teacher education, the lack of trust in public education.” **Nancy**, however, laid more of the concern at the feet of the institutions

and the state mandates which continued to place a premium on standardization, stating that the academy is “. . . moving into a highly regulated, standardized, politicized, and yet continually evolving system.” Within such a bureaucratic climate, systems often do not include the voices of educators who are working within them. For example, **Dr. Jane McCarthy** noted the emphasis on the quality of faculty and university programs are being undermined by for-profit organizations possessing limited academic/educational experience. “We’ve got all kinds of fly-by-night places trying to get into the state to run teacher education programs... pretty soon you’ll be able to buy it at the grocery store.”

Negativity has, unfortunately, in many academic settings, become somewhat of the “norm.” In some institutions, the culture has become so ingrained with feelings of suspicion that distrust has actually snuck in as an accepted way of practice. **Dr. James Aloof** stated that, “The challenge of a sometimes hostile environment has always been a part of my practice and identity.”

The Political Scene

In the minds of DMs, teacher education continues to be riddled with politicians trying to mandate instructional outcomes from the “cheap seats” without ever having set foot in a classroom themselves to better understand the impact their uninformed decision-making has on student achievement and success. **Dr. Terry James** recommended that, “we should invite local and state politicians to visit our programs so they have firsthand knowledge.” The politicians’ lack of academic knowledge creates tensions and often unrealistic expectations of teachers, teacher educators, and all other stakeholders



who are truly invested in the improvement of education. **Ann** noted, “Sometimes you want to tell them [legislators] that they are being a bunch of idiots with their thumbs in their ears.”

To provide potential solutions to the conundrum in which educators currently find themselves, the DMs put forth strategies that educators have known should be in practice, but just have not stereotypically done to the extent needed. **Jane** lamented, “Teacher education cannot [seem] to speak with a unified voice. Teachers have been very passive.” In response, **Dr. John McIntyre** stated, “We are going to have to become much more vocal and provide more evidence that what we do matters.”

Politics in the College Classroom

Politicians do not limit their interference to public school classrooms. Their influence is felt even at the collegiate level, a place that should be free of political pressures. Therefore, faculty in these classrooms must be able to assist their teacher candidates in learning not only how to be the best teachers but also how to be advocates for both their students and the profession. **Dr. Shirley DeLucia, Jane, and Nancy** agreed that teacher candidates need to know educational foundations, policies, and successful paths to communicate beyond themselves; in effect, teacher candidates must assume the role of change agents in the profession. Teaching students the importance of democracy and all of its tenants is vital to our future public school classrooms. **Dr. Frances Van Tassell, Shirley, Jane, and James** stated the practice of democracy is essential to the running of effective classrooms. Teachers impact students by their very being. **Ann** noted that “Teacher educators must be aware of their tremendous influence on their students and must not unduly or inappropriately influence their learners.”

“We are going to have to become more vocal and provide evidence that what we do matters.”

Accreditation

“If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it” (Lavinsky, 2023). This quote has been used many times in different ways, yet the meaning should be obvious; measurement is important. What happens in collegiate classrooms and programs is important. The DMs shared that although many administrators have been hesitant to bring accreditation into their programs, the impacts from this can be profound. **James, Terry, Jane, and Frances** stated that accreditation has made a significant impact... clinical and field components have gained greater priority, work with diverse populations has attracted more attention, technological access has become a priority, partnerships have become non-negotiable for serving students’ needs. **Frances** stated, “I saw programs make significant improvements simply because they knew they were being held to accreditation standards.” **John** agreed with the importance of this by stating, “If a state’s going to approve to prepare teachers they really need to be scrutinized.”

While most of the DMs agreed that accreditation and accountability are great for programs, not all saw the value in such practices. **Jane** shared that,

There’s been pushback from the state and even from the university surrounding fees assessed for NCATE [Now CAEP]. We didn’t see the value in it. It’s been difficult... to influence the legislature to keep the things that we feel are important for us to be able to do to prepare teachers to teach.

There were some ethical concerns put forth with accreditation and the accreditation process as well. **Jane** stated that, “Some requirements are time-consuming busy-work; they take away from the students.” Another problem addressed was the accreditation process itself and/or the people involved in the process. **John** noted that “When the accreditor doesn’t have its act together, it gives the whole process a bad name.” Additionally, adapting all programming to preconceived standards; a one-size fits all approach, is not the answer to the

accountability process. **James** stated, “We have allowed standardization to dictate what should be taught, ignoring the democratic principles that we supposedly live by.” While people may truly support the concept of accountability and accreditation, when it is used as a “punishment” rather than an opportunity for programmatic growth/improvement, it no longer becomes effective. **Frances** said it best when stating, “I support accountability, but I don’t like punitive outcomes.”

Conclusion

Being an ethical educator is critical to the continuation of an informed society. Years of experience have given the DMs a myriad of opportunities to explore, investigate, advocate, and reflect on instructional practices at the local, state, national, and international levels. They have seen the pendulum of practice sway from one extreme to another. This section has examined three main categories of ongoing ethical discussion; navigating negative environments, interacting politically within the classroom, and dealing with accreditation that has morphed into a bureaucratic exercise rather than remaining a reflective practice. DM advice and guidance through their own words tells a story containing wisdom that need not be forgotten. If we want to navigate the ethical dilemmas within the educational process, **John** believes that we must use our voice and take a stand.

As I think about teacher educators, we tend not to be very vocal and we tend to allow things to happen to us ~ we complain about it, but we don't do anything...we need to begin to take a stand on some of these things.

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Mentorship

By Glenda Black

In middle school I became aware and could recognize the brilliant people who had been influencing me such as my parents, several specific teachers, my church minister, and my girl scouting experiences. Later as a girl scout leader I realized that everything that I had been doing was contributing to my awareness and dedication to helping others particularly related to social justice.



"The reciprocity between teaching and learning fit my purposes in life."

Introduction

ATE, as an organization promotes and facilitates professional development opportunities for academics at all stages of their career. As former classroom teachers and experienced academics, ATE Distinguished Members (DMs) acknowledge the increasingly competitive environment of higher education. In addition, DMs serve as mentors, coaches, and advisors to novice and mid-career academics in their transition from the classroom to the academy. Below is a brief overview of how they evolved from being lifted by lifting others.

Distinguished Members as Protégés

Mentorship, like many professional development initiatives, can take many forms. Generally, a mentorship relationship occurs when a more senior faculty (mentor) encourages a less experienced junior faculty (protégé) by providing advice and support regarding their personal and professional development (Eby et al., 2008; West, 2016). Distinguished Members were mentored by their family members, senior colleagues, and ATE members. **Dr. Ann Shelly** shared that her, "Mom was a teacher and principal who fought in court for her position in education because of ageism and sexism. So, I owe a lot to her in helping me make decisions about what I wanted to do." **Dr. Terry James** appreciated the

support he received from senior faculty, "During my undergraduate program, one of my instructors was also the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Missouri. I started a master's program immediately upon graduation, and he was my advisor."

Generations of ATE members have provided hope and inspiration for junior academics. For example, **Dr. John McIntyre** remembered how,

My Associate Dean was Jim Collins, and he was really active in ATE in the 80's. When he became president, he appointed me to the Nominations and Elections Committee. It was sort of like I got nurtured in and I became very passionate about teacher education.

Similarly, **Dr. Frances Van Tassell** noted how she was empowered, "The mentors that I have had...ATE people...not places where I have worked. [They have] been my driving force." **Terry** explains his experience, "I think I have grown from a wide-eyed newcomer that was uncertain that I belonged - to a competent member of the profession and one that became comfortable with more visible roles." He went on to explain, "Participation and personal growth were keys as I gained confidence and others expressed confidence in me."

Motives to Mentor

A generation of research on mentoring behaviors in academia and beyond, falls into two functioning categories, career and psychosocial (Allen et al., 2004; Kram, 1983, 1985; Koontz et al., 2019). The career function assists with career advancement; and psychosocial function develops from the trusting mentor/protégé relationship and “enhance[s] a sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness” (Kram, 1983, p. 614). The functions, as described by Kram (1983) “enable the [mentee] to meet the challenges of initiation into the world of work, and the [mentor] to meet the challenges of reappraisal at midlife” (p. 621).

Distinguished Members are energizing and consistently seek opportunities to assist others individually and collectively. Distinguished members reported that mentoring was rewarding. **Nancy** shared she feels it is her responsibility to mentor, “I feel like I've always been a student and I've always been a teacher. The reciprocity between teaching and learning fit my passion and my purpose in life.”

Benefits of the Mentorship

The reported benefits of a mentoring relationship are wide and varied. For example, mentorship in higher education is linked to enhanced confidence and personal growth (Darwin & Palmer 2009), empowerment (Koontz et al., 2019), a form of professional development (Lindgren, 2006), quality of scholarship and educational sustainability (Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Davis et al., 2011; Muschallik & Pull, 2016), which led to career advancement (Etzkorn & Braddock, 2020).

Professional Development & Empowerment

The reciprocity between mentor and protégé fuels DMs passion for education. As **Dr. Ann Shelly** added, “If we do



“I encourage people at other institutions to branch out and meet more friends.”

anything with beginning teachers –initial certification at whatever level, it was my obligation to ask why you want to be a teacher.” Similarly, **Frances** stated,

As my own efficacy grew, and as my understanding of politics and perspectives developed over time, I became more active in modeling and encouraging teacher candidates to develop their own voices and become involved at their local level to impact change and the sense of democracy.

Education Sustainability

The Distinguished Members recognize the importance of sharing their knowledge to help shape the field of education. **John**, for example explained,

I am not pushing a particular political point of view, but I have become more direct in the sense of talking, coaching, cheerleading, advocating the role of the teacher in the classroom, as it relates to the kinds of students we want them to develop into in the classroom – democratic thinking, productive adults.

Members highlighted the importance of strategically advocating for teacher education. **Dr. Jane McCarthy** explained, “I always ask people, “what is your goal, what are you trying to accomplish by doing this?” Yelling and screaming at the provost, is that going to get you what you want? **Jane**

continued by suggesting teacher educators explore alternate approaches to achieving their objectives by asking the question, “Is there a better way to do it? Not to say that change isn’t needed, but let’s figure out the best possible way to bring about the change.”

Career Advancement

In a mentorship relationship, over time, the quality of information shared through formal mentoring decreases (Johnson & Anderson, 2009) and it may evolve to an informal relationship that develops voluntarily and naturally (Eby, et al., 2008). **Dr. Shirley DeLucia** emphasized the important role that the friendship, the professional development, the new ideas, and dinner with a group of people has had on sustaining her career as a teacher educator, “I encourage people at other institutions to branch out and meet other people, branch out and meet more friends.”

Conclusion

Mentorship, albeit informal, is woven into the fabric of ATE. Teacher educators new to the academy are welcomed into the ATE community with events and opportunities to engage with teacher educators at all stages of their career. Distinguished Members, who were once protégés are now paying it forward by mentoring the next generation of teacher educators. The DMs mentoring has included building confidence in teaching through professional development and facilitating opportunities for research, scholarly activities, and service through collaborations and partnerships on committees, special interest groups, and commissions. They are inspiring others to make the commitment to education through mentorship.

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Social Justice and Equity

By Jon Yoshioka & Lori Fulton

“I am a crusader.”
- **Dr. Ann Shelly**

Introduction

These four simple words encompass the charge of a Social Justice and Equity warrior. Change does not come quickly or easily. Educators know this and that we need to be able to see not only what is, but what could be. ATE’s Distinguished Members (DMs) have been on the frontlines of these important battles and here, in their own words, is how they found their voice and strength.

Below is a summary of the evolution of ATE’s Distinguished Crusaders.

Collective Wisdom of the Distinguished Members

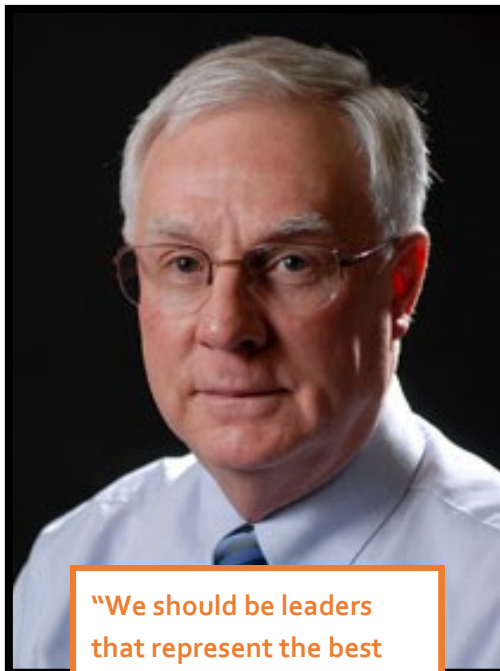
Dr. Shirley DeLucia noted that “Every year there is professional development and growth, though one never knows exactly where it will be, and [that] it is not always formal.”

Many DMs described personal experiences that sparked their interest and understanding of social justice and equity. **Dr. Nancy Gallavan** described a summer college experience mentoring Vietnamese immigrants who were becoming American citizens. She recalled “That individual experience opened my thinking, and I believe I learned more than they learned. It was incredibly practical and humbling for me. That’s when I knew that’s what I wanted to do as a classroom teacher.”

How far will a crusading educator go to ensure their students feel respected and

understood? This varies for every teacher, but for **Dr. Jane McCarthy**, it meant learning a new language when she taught students who “spoke Cajun, so I took French lessons so I could pronounce their names and relate better to them.”

These crusaders each understood that as professional educators social justice and equity is about “looking critically at why and how our schools are unjust for some students” (Nieto, 2000, p. 183) and the need to diminish inequities and redistribute opportunities (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009). If all educators are to become social justice and equity crusaders, then teacher education programs must play a role in “pushing the agenda for social justice and equity in our nation’s schools” (Nieto, 2000, p. 186).



“We should be leaders that represent the best interest of the children we serve.”

For **Dr. James Alouf** the crusade started when I went from being an observer, to an actor, to an advocate. My desire to be involved politically as an advocate for the profession was nurtured by being involved in union negotiations (as an untenured teacher). ATE has also provided the opportunity and support needed to move along that continuum. (personal interview)

For **Dr. Francis Van Tassell** a revelation occurred when going to the legislature to speak against a bill. She “learned about policy and policy making” and that, often, “policy gets done despite the will of the people.” Therefore, educators need to know about things like “Politics vs. Policy” and the ways to best advocate for our students, ourselves, and our profession. **Dr. Ann Shelly** helped shape policy by serving as “the legislative liaison of the Ohio Colleges and Teacher Education” channeling “frustrations” she might have with the system in a positive direction.

When developing policy, Cochran-Smith, et. al., (2016) posited that putting equity at the center of initial teacher education would require:



“The community cannot be separated from the university.”

1. **Conceptualizing** the role of teachers in challenging educational inequity;
2. **Defining** “practice for equity” and enhancing learning and life opportunities for under-served learners;
3. **Designing and Implementing** equity-centered, complex, and finely-tuned, locally focused initial teacher education curricula and program structures; and,
4. **Developing and Executing** research focused on studying equity-centered initial teacher education.

Sometimes, though, the current reality defines the path you take. **Dr. Terry James** stated that “if the traditional preparation models aren’t providing adequate numbers of qualified professionals, then we should be leaders for other models that represent the best interests of those children to be served.”

Dr. John McIntyre emphasized collaborative versus cooperative relationships and focused on the current trend toward alternative programs. He stated

There are some definitely decent ones out there, but there are a lot of bad ones. We’re not going to prepare a teacher in six weeks—I don’t care

what university they went to.... If a state’s going to approve them to be able to prepare teachers, they really need to be scrutinized. It shouldn’t be that the university programs have a higher standard.

What Does Social Justice and Equity Look Like in the Future?

Finally, the DMs shared ideas for teacher education programs to address social justice and equity with respect to four different foci.

Relationship & Responsibility

• *Teachers must model respect for all people, be positive in their treatment of all types and styles of learners, and demonstrate democracy in the classroom while maintaining the responsibility of the role of teacher. (Francis)*

• *The university cannot be isolated from the community, and you have to understand the community and help. (Jane)*

Self & Others

• *Cultural knowledge. Need to know themselves – first and foremost. This requires a lot of time. Introspection. It is a multicultural world. (Nancy)*

• *The global view is a real necessity in today’s world. Again it is being out of isolation and becoming connected with others of like minds. (James)*

Policy & Practice

• *More than a course on multicultural education. I know we overuse the idea of infusion, but if some of these ideas are not infused into the total curriculum ... we do our kids a disservice when they go into a classroom. (Ann)*

• *I coach the new teachers who have never worked in an environment like that ... and they don’t have a clue what their [students] lives are like. So I’ll do demonstration teaching for them, I’ll work with small groups of kids, I’ll suggest lesson plans for them to use, and then I also give lots of coaching in classroom management. (Jane)*

Advocacy & Action

• *To teach involvement, we must be involved ourselves. Students learn from us by seeing what we do, not just by what we say. (Ann)*

• *I think the number one thing is that we have to live it. We have to live it in our classrooms and in our lives. And our students need to see it. (John)*

This is just a small snippet of the collective wisdom of ATE's Distinguished Members ideas related to social justice and equity. We hope that you have enjoyed reading and encourage you to seek out and talk with ATE members about this and other topics, because we believe that knowledge is best when shared.

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Politics and Political Advocacy

By Rebecca Harris & Ann Shelly

How much in teacher education are we followers or leaders? ~ **Dr. Shirley De Lucia**

Introduction

Of paramount importance for the teacher educator is preparing candidates for the profession of teaching. The core content of teacher preparation is often lesson planning, teaching methods, management strategies, and models of assessment. Our Distinguished Members vigorously describe the necessity to add advocacy to the teacher preparation program.

Classrooms and schools are situated within the context of a community. For a quarter of a century or longer the community has been “a negative, antagonistic national context decrying that teachers aren’t professionals and that students aren’t receiving the education they deserve in the 21st century” (Witte & Goering, 2017, p. 43).



“We must seek ways to inform legislators about the value of teacher prep programs.”

Fenech and Lotz (2018) provide an ethically grounded argument for professional teachers “to move beyond the classroom and into the political sphere” (p. 19). This is not only moving into the political sphere, but

to being political. Huebner (1975) brought to our attention half a century ago that “As educators, we must be political activists who seek a more just public world” (p. 280). Teacher advocacy has proliferated within the last decade (Griffith, 2018; Prichard, 2013; Underwood, 2013) as teachers engage in self-advocacy, student advocacy, and professional advocacy (Witte & Goering, 2017). Thus, heightened is the necessity to teach candidates about advocacy and how to be an advocate. This is advocacy inside the classroom.

For teacher educators, advocacy is more than engaging “in active advocacy for quality education” (Association of Teacher Educators, n.d., p. 6). Teacher educators are called to be advocates outside the classroom. That is “influencing decision makers and promoting changes to laws and other government policies to advance the mission of a high-quality education for all is paramount to the profession” (Association of Teacher Educators, n.d., p. 6). Cochran-Smith’s (2004) analysis two decades ago continues to remain true, “these are dangerous times for teacher educators” (p. 3). There is much need for teacher educators to be engaged in political advocacy. This is advocacy outside the classroom.

The DMs interviewed told of careers that exemplified advocacy inside and outside of the classroom. Their stories are full of examples of each, and their growth as advocates. With their reflection on years of service to the profession of teacher education there are critiques on our collective areas of weaknesses as advocates. Beyond sharing stories and wisdom the DMs provide suggestions and challenges for our future advocacy work.

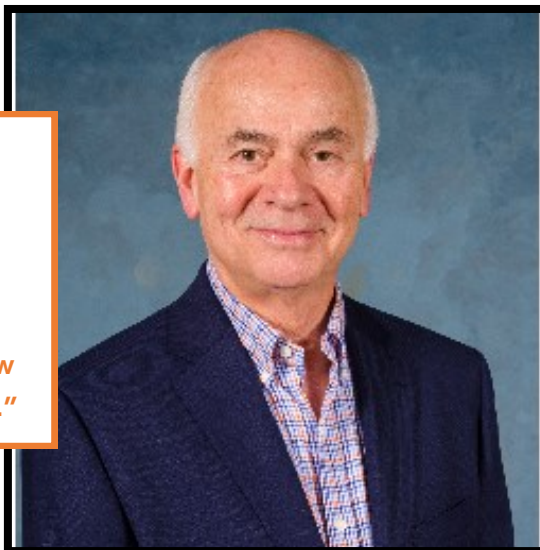
Inside the Classroom

Distinguished members told stories of teaching their curriculum to candidates who are in their classroom. A prevailing concern is adequacy preparing candidates to transition from the university to the classroom. Distinguished members emphasized that an important element for this ‘transition’ is advocacy. The curriculum needs to include educating candidates about advocacy. **Dr. Shirley De Lucia** addressed teaching about advocacy directly, “When we teach teacher ed candidates we have to talk a

lot about advocacy – how we advocate for children, for what is needed in schools, what is the curriculum.” **Dr. Jane McCarthy** told us about her curriculum and how it prepared students for this transition,

We have a number of courses that our candidates take which deal with the issue of being agents of change; how to be advocates for children, how to be advocates for equity and equal opportunities for education. So, they get exposed to it, and when I read their final papers, I see how their thinking has changed from the time they enter into our program until the time they are leaving.

“Teacher education programs must show future teachers how to advocate.”



the real world, which includes the political world.

Outside the Classroom

Teacher educators are professionals in the 'public' context, which is outside the classroom. In interviews, DMs made more than twice as many references to outside than inside the classroom. The DMs interviewed are significantly engaged in the world of policy and politics. This may be expected, given that many of the DMs had been president of ATE and thus in a position of policy engagement in the public arena. These individuals are models for how to “do” political advocacy outside of the

classroom. This is very helpful because many teacher educators do not have the opportunity for high level policy engagement – though we all have classrooms of teacher candidates – so we can learn from these distinguished member mentors!

Political trends impact not just K-12 classrooms but university teacher education classrooms too. Recognizing this reality is necessary. **Dr. James Alouf** commented, “The current trend to denigrate teacher preparation even though strong evidence exists to validate its value is highly discouraging.” **Nancy** voiced similarly, “More recently in my career, government officials and US citizens are less likely to trust and support public education.”

The political trends and public’s perception of teacher preparation programs and public education has prompted advocacy action on the local, state, and national stages. Distinguished members gave personal stories of activism at state level. **Dr. Francis Van Tassell** suggested, “we must actively seek ways to inform legislators about the value of higher education teacher preparation, such as inviting senators or representatives to visit our

Preparing candidates to be advocates for change, **Shirley** tells us, includes highlighting the need for community engagement,

Our students need to know how important it is to get involved in the school system not just in the classroom, but with the community, parents, and services in the community. Future educators should be involved in the activities of their school – sporting, music, cultural. You can be a better advocate for education when you can do things like that.

An additional component of education for advocacy, as **Dr. Nancy Gallavan** explained, is citizenship. This is teaching teacher candidates about their citizenship, “Teacher candidates would benefit from understanding their rights, roles, responsibilities, and respect associated with choice and voice as citizens and teachers and further influence their students in the U.S. and globally.” This is a clear example that education about advocacy in the teacher preparation programs is content specific and of the ‘real world.’ The K-12 classrooms and teachers are located within

programs and talk with our students.” In addition to individual advocacy, organizational advocacy needs to be pursued. **James** spoke to this by stating,

The attacks on public education, especially by the federal government, will continue for the foreseeable future. Teacher education organizations and teacher unions must work together to thwart attempts to undermine these laws by strong advocacy for public education itself.”

Distinguished Members offered a concise summation of how to respond to current political and public disparagement of education, to advocate for the profession. **Dr. Terry James** said, “Find ways to be present at the tables where decisions are being made – may be outside the halls of state departments of education, the legislative hearing rooms in the state houses, and congressional offices.” **Jane** offered some specifics, “Teacher educators, need to become more politically savvy and as we are doing, and talk to the legislature, collaborate with the legislature and help them, share the research on teacher education.”

In the midst of multiple interviews with DMs over the years, personal stories accounted for sixteen percent of quotes considered. **Dr. Ann Shelly** summarized her personal story of advocacy, “I have been at this a long time and it took me about half of my career to realize that I needed to and had to speak out.”

Future

Our DMs are not only exemplars of Standard 7, but provide us with a critical analysis of advocacy in the past, and a challenge for future enhanced political advocacy and activism. A number of DMs lamented the neglect of advocacy in the past.

Dr. John McIntyre - *As I think about teacher educators, over my career, we tend not to be very vocal and we tend to allow things to happen to us. We complain about it, but we don't do anything. I think we need to begin to take a stand on some of these things.*

Ann - *I think teachers and teacher educators for most of my career have been very silent.*

Jane - *We have to have our voices heard.*

James - *Unfortunately, we have not done a very good job of advocating for ourselves and for our own value.*

Across the arc of their careers, a number of DMs indicated their own advocacy growth. **John** shared,

I think that I have become more direct. I am not pushing a particular political point of view, but I have become more direct in the sense of talking, coaching, cheerleading, advocating the role of the teacher in the classroom, as it relates to the kinds of students we want them to develop into in the classroom – democratic thinking, productive adults.

Shirley posed the question for all teacher educators to consider, “How much in teacher education are we followers or leaders?” Moving forward, without exception, all DMs indicated the need for strengthening advocacy. **James** asserted, “Teacher education programs have the responsibility to show future teachers how to advocate. Teacher education organizations have the responsibility for advocating and for showing teacher educators how to advocate for themselves and for their programs.”

These DMs stressed the necessity for teacher educators individually and collectively to enhance the advocacy for public education and teacher preparation programs. That is, the teacher education professoriate needs to strengthen the teaching about advocating inside our classrooms and engage in advocacy outside of our classrooms. That is, to be political advocacy leaders.

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