



The CCTE Spring 2023 Research Monograph

Published by
the California Council on Teacher Education

Containing Four Research Articles
Based on Presentations
at the CCTE Spring 2023 SPAN Conference



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Introduction

Key to the work we do as teacher educators and in the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) as an organization is providing numerous venues to enhance, support, and promote research, dialogue, and informed praxis in our field. Through our two peer-reviewed scholarly journals, *Teacher Education Quarterly* and *Issues in Teacher Education*; brief articles written in *CCNews* (our CCTE quarterly newsletter), and papers in our research monographs, we seek to promote ongoing engagement around praxis and policy in teacher education. The papers in this *CCTE Spring 2023 Research Monograph* have been developed from research presentations made during our Spring 2023 Policy Action Network (SPAN) Conference, a conference which focuses specifically on teacher education advocacy.

The articles in this edition of the research monograph cover four key topics across many stages of teacher education, each of which has key implications for policy and practice.

Abby Schachner, Victoria Wang, Sara Plascencia, Chris Mauerman, Cordy McJunkins, Cathy Yun, and Deborah Stipek, in their piece, “Early Childhood Teaching Credentials: Lessons for California,” offer key learnings from eight early childhood educator preparation programs in four states where ECE credentials are already offered. Their findings offer key policy strategies and suggestions for candidate recruitment, program quality and accessibility, and educator success, as California institutions create P-3 credential programs.

Within existing preservice programs, Mary K. Requa and Jill Yoquim look at “Removing RICA Roadblocks: Supporting Success.” Their work examines how intentional low or no-cost test preparation can support teacher candidates in navigating high stakes assessments (e.g., the RICA) and obtaining their full credentials.

In their article, “Collaborative Case Inquiry (CCI): A Promising Model for Student Teacher and Preservice Teacher Supervisor Learning and Development,” Johnnie Wilson, Jennifer Jones-Hinz, and Soleste Hilberg define Collaborative Case

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Inquiry and discuss how its implementation through ongoing structured protocols can be used to support reflective practice and continuous improvement of preservice teachers and student teaching supervisors as a form of facilitated, collaborative, professional learning.

Finally, Melissa Meetze-Hall and Karen Escalante’s “Focus on Inservice Realities: State, District, and Site Contextual Impact on the New Teacher Experience” draws from the literature to examine how policy focused on addressing teacher shortages must consider contextual factors on multiple levels, including supportive leadership, communities of practice, and belonging.

I want to thank the CCTE Policy Committee and Spring Conference Planning Committee leaders Cynthia Grutzik, Nicol Howard, Sarah Johnson, and Pia Wong for the success of the 2023 SPAN Conference, CCTE Research Committee co-chairs Kimiya Maghzi and Marni Fisher for their support and review of proposals for the SPAN 2023 research sessions, all of our SPAN 2023 presenters and attendees, and our executive secretary Alan Jones for his support with the editing and publication of this *CCTE Spring 2023 Research Monograph*. I hope you enjoy this collection of research from our own CCTE community and hope to see your work presented at future conferences and included in future editions of the CCTE Research Monograph series.

—**Betina Hsieh**

CCTE President

California State University, Long Beach



Early Childhood Teaching Credentials

Lesson for California

**By Abby Schachner, Victoria Wang, Sara Plasencia,
Chris Mauerman, Cordy McJunkins,
Cathy Yun, & Deborah Stipek**

Abstract

High-quality and effective preschool programs require knowledgeable and skilled educators. With California's expansion of transitional kindergarten and adoption of the PK-3 Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential, the state and its institutions of higher education (IHEs) have the opportunity to create and offer new teacher preparation programs that develop a qualified early educator workforce. This monograph provides policymakers and practitioners information on how eight well-regarded early educator preparation programs across four states with early childhood teacher credentials (Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York) navigated prekindergarten expansion and early childhood credential development. Findings identify key policy strategies that can inform California

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state policymakers' and IHE's efforts to improve candidate recruitment, program quality and accessibility, and educator success.

Introduction

Decades of research confirm the importance and potential effectiveness of preschool, with a growing body of evidence demonstrating positive and long-lasting impacts of high-quality preschool on both academic achievement and life outcomes. High-quality and effective preschool programs require knowledgeable and skilled early educators who are able to create developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and engaging lessons and can consistently cultivate their knowledge and skills to better support diverse populations of students.

California has made recent, historic investments in expanding universal prekindergarten; additionally, the state has taken a step to improve early educator knowledge and skills by creating the PK-3 Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialist Instruction Credential, which authorizes teachers to teach prekindergarten through third grade students. In conjunction with universal prekindergarten expansion and the new PK-3 credential, California also funds several educator pipeline initiatives such as the Teacher Residency Grant Program, Golden State Teacher Grant Program, District Intern program, and California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program to support pathways into the state's teacher workforce.

As the state rolls out universal prekindergarten and its new early childhood credential, California policymakers and institutions of higher education (IHEs) can work in tandem to develop, support, and sustain a high-quality early educator workforce. Information on how other states and IHE have navigated PreK expansion and ECE credential development can inform future program and policy development in creating accessible credentialing pathways to meet workforce demands, designing high-quality preparation program content and clinical experiences, and sustaining the diversity of the ECE workforce.

The more detailed report on which this monograph is based describes how four states and two institutions of higher education within each state have built multiple early childhood educator credential preparation program pathways to support the development of well-qualified, diverse early childhood educators. This monograph summarizes the report's examination of the design choices of institutions of higher education, discusses regarding expedited ECE workforce pathways during the four states' preschool scale-ups, and provides policy recommendations for California.

California's Early Childhood Workforce Needs

California has made significant commitments to provide universal prekindergarten to all 4-year-olds and more income-eligible 3-year-olds by 2025–26 through a combination of transitional kindergarten (TK), the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, and expanded learning opportunities in communi-

ty-based settings. The state's largest new investments are in TK, a district-based prekindergarten program: In 2021, the state committed to gradually expand the age for eligibility until all 4-year-olds can access TK by 2025–26.

Recent projections indicate that, as TK expands to all 4-year-olds in 2025–26, California will need between 11,900 and 15,600 additional lead teachers credentialed to teach TK and equipped to teach young students with developmentally appropriate practices.

The rollout of the state's new PK-3 credential provides a ripe opportunity for California and its preparation programs to recruit and prepare early educators to staff its additional TK classrooms by providing multiple pathways into the profession. California can draw from several potential candidate pools for its TK workforce: current Multiple Subject Teaching Credential holders, current ECE educators, and new candidates entering the education field. Developing pathways that attend to candidates' broad range of education and experience and reducing barriers can expedite the state's ability to develop its TK workforce.

Notably, California's ECE workforce in family child care or center-based care is more diverse than its current TK workforce: 71% of family child care providers and 64% of center lead teachers identify as a person of color, compared to 29% of TK lead teachers. This is a strength of California's ECE workforce, and developing pathways for these ECE teachers into the preschool through 3rd grade (P–3) workforce can potentially support strong understanding of and relationships with students and families from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. At the same time, research has shown that obstacles in obtaining additional education or degrees—such as tuition costs, competing commitments, and difficulties navigating higher education systems—are more likely to impact students of color and students from low-income households than other candidates. These barriers are particularly pronounced for early educators due to persistently low wages in the field: Among California's lead teachers with a bachelor's degree, transitional kindergarten teachers make almost twice as much as family child care providers and center-based educators. These financial burdens may lead students to work more and take fewer courses, contributing to lower completion rates.

As California develops its early childhood credential and credentialing programs, policymakers and IHEs can glean insights from these other states and IHEs as they consider developing policies and structures that foster conditions necessary for candidate recruitment, success, and quality that attend to the needs of experienced early educators seeking to earn their teaching credential and the pipeline of future early educators.

Study States and Institutions of Higher Education

The four states studied in this report are Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York. All four of these states have at least one standalone early childhood

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credential and require lead teachers to obtain this credential to teach in public preschool settings (see report for full selection criteria).

Within each state we selected two institutions of higher education (IHEs) operating one or more P–3 (or similar) credentialing programs that covered a range of different pathways for further study:

Louisiana: Louisiana Tech University, Northwestern State University

Massachusetts: Boston College, University of Massachusetts Boston

New Jersey: Montclair State University, Rutgers University–New Brunswick

New York: Bank Street College of Education, City College of New York

Table 1
Summary of State Credentialing Requirements

<i>Requirements</i>	<i>Louisiana (PreK–3)</i>	<i>Massachusetts (PreK–2)</i>	<i>New Jersey (P–3)</i>	<i>New York (B–2)</i>
Settings requiring lead teacher to hold ECE credential	All public settings and some nonpublic settings	All public settings, no requirements for nonpublic	All public and nonpublic settings	All public and nonpublic settings
State role in coursework	Requires specific number of coursework hours in topic areas	Offers subject matter knowledge and professional guidelines for preparation programs	Requires that preparation programs align coursework with the state's professional standards for teachers and leaders	Outlines general content and pedagogical requirements for preparation programs
Core skills exams	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Content and pedagogy exams	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Performance assessment	No	Yes	Yes ^a	Yes (Integrated into prep program)
Clinical experience requirement	1 year, full-time	1 semester	2 semesters	1 semester ^b
Required clinical experience settings	1 setting	2 grade levels (PreK–K and 1st–2nd)	2 settings	3 settings (Pre–K, K, and 1st–2nd)
Option to add early childhood to existing credential	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
General requirements to add early childhood to existing credential	Coursework and/or exams	Clinical experience and exam	N/A	Professional certification, coursework, and exam

^a Beginning spring of 2024, candidates will not have to take the edTPA: New Jersey educator preparation programs will be responsible for determining the performance assessment for program completion and credential attainment.

^b New York also requires 100 hours of field experience before the semester of full-time student teaching.

For more detailed information on the eight selected IHEs, see Table 2.

Table 1 provides an overview of each state's credentialing requirements, including where credentials are required for lead teachers, the state's role in determining requisite coursework, exams and assessments, clinical experience, and options to add ECE to existing credentials.

State Early Childhood Credentialing Choices

Among four states there are three unique grade spans represented in the credentials: those covering preschool through 3rd grade (P–3), preschool through 2nd grade (P–2), and birth through 2nd grade (B–2). While informants in all four states believed that ECE educators need specific skills and knowledge to work with young children, the grade and age bands included within a credential varied among the states. Although some informants believed administrators preferred to hire educators licensed for a broader grade span, state data show that early childhood credentials are still relatively popular among candidates, and that early childhood credential holders are teaching in various settings and grades. Clinical experience requirements differed across the four states in the amount of time required, whether experience in specific grade-levels and settings was required, and whether credit was granted for previous experience.

State credentialing assessments of candidates' content knowledge and readiness to enter the classroom, including exams and performance assessments, vary across the four states. To receive a teaching credential, candidates in all four states are required to pass exams that test subject-matter content across the grade levels covered by the credential. Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York, also evaluate candidates' readiness to teach using a performance assessment.

Both state and preparation program interviewees identified exams as a common barrier to candidates, particularly racially, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse candidates. In response to these barriers, some states are making efforts to improve exams. For example, in 2020 Massachusetts began a four-year pilot of alternative assessments for the required core skills and subject matter tests.

Institutions of Higher Education Design Choices

All programs were designed to meet state requirements for the early childhood education credential and with the goal of attracting and supporting a diverse teacher workforce, including candidates of color, non-native English speakers, and first-generation college students. Prior research has identified that diversifying the teaching profession requires intentional recruitment, preparation program design, providing ongoing support, and addressing affordability of preparation programs.¹⁴

Multiple Pathways to Support a High-Quality, Diverse Early Educator Workforce

Because there are numerous pathways to early childhood education, it is crucial that states support and that institutions of higher education develop multiple pathways to meet candidates' diverse needs. Support and programming is needed for candidates first entering the field of education, those seeking specialized learning related to young children, and those pursuing career advancement.

The multiple pathways represented across the eight studied institutions include:

- pathways through 4-year integrated bachelor's degree and credential programs that reduce the time and cost to enter the teaching profession;

- pathways through community colleges to 4-year institutions that reduce costs, including dual enrollment that begins in high school;

- post-baccalaureate pathways to a credential and in some cases a master's degree for candidates that already hold a bachelor's degree;

- pathways tailored to credential candidates who are practicing educators that are completed while working, credit candidates for experience, and provide more customized coursework offerings (for example in residencies and expedited programs);

- dual certification programs in early childhood and bilingual education and/or special education; and

- teacher residencies that enable candidates to serve as paid apprentices in schools with skilled expert teachers while completing coursework that is highly integrated with their clinical practice.

Table 2 provides a summary of pathways offered by the institutions at the baccalaureate-level that are intended to lead to a bachelor's degree and credential and those at the post-baccalaureate-level that include both credential-only programs and those leading to a master's degree and credential.

Key design choices of *integrated bachelor's and teacher preparation programs* included the time to complete program (i.e., 4 vs. 5 years) and the connection between undergraduate majors and the credentialing program. Some institutions chose to design a 4-year program even when the required major was not education and was housed in a different department than the teacher preparation program faculty. Others linked the major with the credentialing program.

Because community colleges are less expensive and serve disproportionately more students of color than four-year institutions, *pathways through community colleges* can be a useful source for diversifying the pool of aspiring teachers. To facilitate efficient pathways through community colleges, common strategies employed by the 4-year IHEs studied included:

- Developing articulation agreements with community colleges;

Offering virtual or hybrid coursework;
Providing specialized advising; and

Creating opportunities to enroll as a nonmatriculated candidate.

All eight IHEs offered *post-baccalaureate programs* that led to a master's degree, and

Table 2
Preparation Programs and Pathways Offered at Study Institutions

<i>Institutions of higher education</i>	<i>Baccalaureate programs</i>	<i>Postbaccalaureate programs</i>
Louisiana		
Louisiana Tech University	Early Childhood Education PreK–3 (BS) Dual Enrollment Program for HS Students ^{d f}	Early Childhood Education PreK–3 (MAT) ^{a d}
Northwestern State University	Early Childhood Education PreK–3 (BS)	Early Childhood Education PreK–3 (MAT) ^{a d} Master of Education in Early Childhood Education (MEd) for already certified teachers ^a Non-degree Practitioner Teacher Program PreK–3 ^d
Massachusetts		
University of Massachusetts Boston	Early Education and Care in Inclusive Settings (EECIS) PreK–2 (BA) ^a	Early Childhood PreK–2 (MEd) ^a
Boston College		Early Childhood Education PreK–2 (MEd) Donovan Urban Teaching Scholars Program PreK–2 (MEd) ^{a b c f}
New Jersey		
Montclair State University	Early Childhood Education P–3 (BA)	Early Childhood Education P–3 (MAT) Dual Certification: P–3 and Teacher of Students With Disabilities (MAT) ^a Non-degree Modified Alternate Route P-3 Certification Program ^{a d f} Newark-Montclair Urban Teacher Residency Teacher certification in either Early Childhood (P–3)/Special Education or Secondary Education (K–12) Mathematics or Science ^{a c c f}
Rutgers University	Combined Dual Degree and Certification Program: P–3 and Teacher of Students With Disabilities (BA/MAT) ^e Combined Dual Degree and Certification Program: Elementary Education and P–3 (BA/MA) ^e	Nondegree P–3 Endorsement Program ^a

(continued on next page)

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three also offered non-degree, credential-only programs geared towards credential candidates with bachelor's degrees. Most *credential-only programs* in this study targeted current working educators, many of whom are educators of color. Because job responsibilities challenged students to complete the requirements, IHEs created ways to increase retention among this group. A few programs provide a stipend or reduced cost for current educators and offer courses off-site at a community- or school-based locations to save candidates commute time.

Master's programs that are designed to be accessible and support experienced educators are particularly critical in those states that required a master's degree for permanent certification—New York and Massachusetts in this study. Common strategies to support experienced educators included:

Allowing supervised clinical experience in candidates' current schools;

Table 2 (continued)
Preparation Programs and Pathways Offered at Study Institutions

<i>Institutions of higher education</i>	<i>Baccalaureate programs</i>	<i>Postbaccalaureate programs</i>
New York		
Bank Street College of Education		Childhood General Education B–2 (MSEd) Early Childhood Special and General Education Dual Certification (MSEd) ^{d e} Dual Language Bilingual Early Childhood Special and General Education B–2 (MSEd) ^e Infant and Family Development and Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special and General Education B–2 (MSEd) ^e Early Childhood General Education Advanced Standing B–2 (MSEd) ^{a c f} Early Childhood Urban Education Initiative B–2 (MSEd) ^{a c e g} Early Childhood Educator Residency Model (ongoing and rotating partnerships with multiple districts) ^{a c e}
City College of New York / CUNY	Early Childhood Education B–2 (BS, Initial Certification) ^{a d}	Early Childhood Education B–2 Track C (MSEd, Professional Certification) ^{a d} Early Childhood Education B–2 Track B (MSEd, Professional Certification) ^{a d} Early Childhood Education B–2 Track A (Initial Certification) Advanced Certificate Leading to Initial Certification B–2 ^{a d}

Notes: ^aTargeted toward current working educators; ^bCentered on recruiting and training educators of color; ^c Stipend or reduced cost and/or credit requirements for current/experienced educators; ^dCourses offered online/hybrid; ^eDual certification—bilingual or special education; ^fCohort-based program; ^gCourses offered off-site (at community-based locations). Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of preparation program interviews and documents (2022).

- Creating cohort-based models;
- Reducing coursework requirements, including credit for previous experience;
- Offering coursework at a reduced cost; and
- Offering coursework on-site in community-based settings.

Amongst the institutions we studied, *dual certification programs* were offered as a way to give candidates an opportunity to specialize in students with disabilities or multi-lingual learners, or to obtain dual certification in both early and elementary education. Because of the extra course content required, the four institutions in this study that offered dual certification programs all did so at the post-baccalaureate level—either as a combined bachelor’s and master’s degree in a 5-year program or a 5th year master’s program. However, programs have found ways to limit the dual certification program to an additional ten or fewer credits, such as Bank Street’s Dual Language Bilingual Early Childhood Special and General Education Dual Certification Program.

Teacher residency programs are a promising high-retention strategy for preparing a high-quality and culturally diverse educator workforce and can be offered at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels. Bank Street College of Education and Montclair State University have established longstanding early childhood teacher residency programs which allow teacher candidates to serve as paid apprentices in schools working with a skilled expert teacher. At the same time they complete coursework that is highly integrated with clinical practice.

Tailored pathways for current early educators provide a unique opportunity to leverage the assets of experienced early educators by allowing them to teach in P–3 classrooms while they earn their credential. Although there are variations among tailored programs, they share many of the following features:

- Flexibility to support working students;
- Cohorts to build on one another’s experiences;
- Financial supports to reduce or eliminate costs to candidates; and
- Partnerships with schools and community-based settings to strengthen clinical experience.

To examine the variations in how IHEs structure the content of coursework, we reviewed the four study states’ standards and research on essential competencies for early childhood educators¹⁵ and categorized the focus of required coursework into 10 topic areas that most early childhood educators view as important: (1) foundational child development theory, (2) teaching methodology and developmentally appropriate pedagogy, (3) special education and inclusion, (4) literacy and language development, (5) mathematics methods, (6) learning environments for multilingual learners, (7) curriculum development, (8) observations and assessments, (9)

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social-and emotional development, and (10) working with families.

All the programs in this study placed a strong emphasis on literacy and language development coursework (requiring two to five courses on the topic) and included one or more courses that focused on teaching methodology and developmentally appropriate pedagogy, curriculum development, and learning environments for multilingual learners. Many of the programs incorporated observations and pre-practicum experiences to make connections between theoretical coursework and practice that went above and beyond the state requirements. The topics with the least amount of dedicated coursework were social and emotional development, working with families, observation and assessment, and mathematics methods.

It was clear that there are tradeoffs in whether to require and offer coursework focused on teaching methods for specific domains (e.g., mathematics, social emotional development, working with families) or teaching methods and pedagogy more broadly with specific topics integrated throughout. Although these tradeoffs exist, some programs have found ways to offer dedicated coursework across all topics while still keeping the required course credits feasible (e.g., by streamlining courses to more evenly distribute coursework across topics).

Programs vary in the design of their *clinical experiences*, on several dimensions:

- The amount of time required;

- The nature of grade-level and setting requirements;

- The nature of supervision;

- Whether and how credit for previous experience is given; and

- Whether and what coursework is required to accompany clinical practice.

Across the preparation programs at the institutions we studied, several common strategies were identified to *reduce barriers for diverse candidates* to earning their early childhood teaching credentials. These included:

- Subsidizing costs;

- Aligning courses and credits with related programs and other IHEs;

- Tailoring the location, modality, and timing of courses to candidates' needs;

- Building a sense of community;

- Intentional outreach and recruitment of racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse candidates;

- Increasing the diversity and representation of preparation program faculty; and

- Providing supports to manage credential requirements.

Implementing Expedited Pathways During Scale-Up of Preschool

New Jersey and New York City implemented expedited pathways to expand the credentialed pre-k teacher workforce rapidly during their scale-up of public PreK. to support existing, experienced early educators to earn their credential and. Their experience offers some lessons for other states and localities that are expanding early childhood educational opportunities for children or need to expand their early childhood educator workforce for other reasons.

Informants shared what they had learned from their efforts to attract and retain students to the early childhood teaching credential. They learned that to be effective, states and programs needed to:

- Build expedited routes that are pragmatic and supportive—that allow enough time for candidates to manage requirements and supports, such as mentoring, without experiencing burnout;

- Offer financial supports for expenses beyond tuition, including child care, books, and credential exam and application fees;

- Provide funding for higher education capacity development and building—both New Jersey and New York City provided funding for IHEs to develop and implement new pathways; and

- Collect comprehensive data to track progress or changes to the early educator workforce. New Jersey and New York both lacked comprehensive data on the qualifications and characteristics of the ECE workforce prior to scaling up public preschool and thus could not track progress or changes in the composition of the workforce.

Policy Recommendations

The findings from this study identify key strategies regarding candidate recruitment and accessibility; preparation program quality; and data collection. The strategies summarized below can inform California policymakers and IHEs efforts to develop a well-prepared early educator workforce, while recognizing that broader policies such as increased compensation, compensation parity across early education systems, and improved working conditions play a notable role in developing a high-quality early educator pipeline.¹⁶

1. *Clearly communicate and advise potential candidates on the multiple pathways to an ECE credential.* To ensure consistency and alignment across resources directed to potential candidates, the California Department of Education and Commission on Teacher Credentialing agencies, in partnership with IHEs and county offices of education, can develop outreach strategies and materials that clearly outline credentialing requirements and the multiple pathways available to ECE workforce candidates. Information on websites is foundational but proactive outreach is also needed that seeks potential candidates where they are and leverages existing information opportunities (e.g., through membership organizations and conferences). but not sufficient. Additionally, higher education programs can offer

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advising and mentoring to help candidates navigate credentialing requirements and the different pathways.

2. *Invest in building capacity for credentialing programs to design and implement accessible programs, provide candidate supports, and hire diverse, faculty with early childhood pedagogical expertise to ensure candidates success.* As California educator preparation programs develop PK–3 credentialing pathways, policymakers and IHEs can provide them with essential financial resources to develop rigorous ECE coursework, design robust clinical experiences and mentorship, and tailor program supports that promote accessibility for diverse ECE candidates. For example, the state can build on the Integrated Teacher Education Program, which provides capacity-building funding to IHEs to develop programs for teacher candidates to earn a credential while working toward their B.A., and incentivize partnerships with community colleges where students complete their first two years of coursework. Additionally, California universities typically have ECE faculty expertise spread across various departments in universities (e.g., child development and education departments); all these faculty with expertise relevant to the P-3 credential should participate in the P-3 program design.

3. *Provide financial assistance to early educators seeking higher credentials and degrees.* California's early educators face persistently low wages in the field. These educators, particularly candidates of color, face significant financial barriers in accessing coursework to earn early childhood permits, degrees, or credentials.¹⁷ Candidates would benefit from financial support such as tuition assistance, scholarships, paid clinical experience, and coverage of incidental costs such as books, credentialing fees, childcare, or transportation. California currently offers a variety of funding sources that can be used to support early educator workforce development, such as the Teacher Residency Grant Program, California Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program, Golden State Teacher Grant Program, and Early Education Teacher Development Grant; additionally, California Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation funds and the Educator Effectiveness Block Grant can also be used for this purpose.¹⁸ The state can continue its investments into educator workforce development by providing IHEs with additional capacity-building funds, and IHEs can partner with local education agencies to access existing funds to recruit and offer financial assistance to potential candidates, including paraeducators, expanded learning staff, and assistant teachers. Additionally, IHEs can offer individualized financial advising to help candidates access and maximize local, state, and federal funds.

4. Offer candidates multiple ways of demonstrating competence to meet credential requirements with work experience and alternative assessments. California policymakers and IHEs can reduce barriers into the profession and streamline and expedite pathways to a teaching credential by allowing candidates' previous ECE experience to count for a portion of credential requirements. California has

already taken steps towards this: proposed PK–3 regulations allow candidates’ prior experience to count for at least 200 hours of required clinical practice experience in a preschool or TK setting and an additional 200 hours of the required clinical practice experience in preschool or TK within the preparation program.¹⁹ To further support the crediting of prior experience, IHEs can build internal processes and staff capacity to ensure preparation programs have adequate resources to properly review candidate work history and demonstrated competence.

Interviewees from other states reported that standardized credentialing exams were a common barrier in candidates’ obtainment of their early childhood credential, and many states have been working to remove unnecessary obstacles into the profession. Massachusetts is currently piloting alternative approaches to remove barriers by addressing issues of test pricing, structure, and duration. California already allows credential candidates to demonstrate basic skills and subject matter competence via coursework or alternative test evidence rather than a single exam. To receive their credential, California candidates must pass a performance assessment and a reading instruction assessment that is currently under construction. It will be important for the state to carefully monitor the ways in which the test design and costs are managed to avoid unnecessary barriers. Because California uses performance assessments, IHEs must also offer well-designed supports for the clinical experience and coursework that are designed to support success on the assessment. P-3 credential programs will need additional funding to offer this kind of support, either through an increased allocation of extant university resources or earmarked state funding.

5. Develop more intensive clinical experiences with frequent and comprehensive candidate supports. Research indicates that sustained, well-supported clinical experiences allow candidates to focus on sharpening their skills and knowledge. Louisiana requires 1 full-time year and New Jersey requires 2 semesters of clinical experience. Similarly, California already requires 600 hours of supervised clinical practice for PK–3 credential candidates. To ensure clinical experiences are comprehensive and maximized, preparation programs can develop meaningful clinical experience supports such as offering frequent advising for clinical placements and creating opportunities for educators to reflect and grow from their time in the classroom. State policymakers and IHEs can make clinical experience more accessible and less burdensome to more candidates by providing additional financial supports to pay candidates for their time through financial aid, stipends, apprenticeships, or residency models.

6. Streamline requirements and strengthen coursework to address the breadth of knowledge and skills required for early educators across all domains of early childhood development. California already has the Associate Degree for Transfer that articulates coursework between public 2-year and 4-year institutions and also could consider providing funding for IHEs to hire staff and develop processes for

Early Childhood Teaching Credentials

review of transcripts and documentation to support the crediting of coursework at IHEs. Candidates will benefit from aligned programs that allow them to begin their expected prerequisites and credential coursework in community colleges and transfer these units seamlessly into 4-year settings where they can complete their credential.

As IHEs are developing their early childhood teaching credential programs, they will want to consider how child development and early childhood education coursework and clinical work can help candidates achieve the PK–3 ECE Specialist Teaching Performance Expectations. IHEs also need to involve or recruit faculty to ensure diversity and expertise across all topic areas – including mathematics methods and social-emotional learning for young children in addition to language and literacy teaching.

7. Collect state and local data to monitor trends and needs in California's ECE workforce and credentialing programs. There are significant gaps in knowledge about the ECE workforce and early educator candidates, making it difficult to track current workforce characteristics, needs, and, consequently, areas for improvement. As California continues to expand early childhood education and develop early educators, comprehensive and ECE-specific data at state and local levels (such as educator demographics, program enrollment, program attrition, program completion, and job placement data) is needed to monitor existing trends and impacts of local and state policy.

Conclusion

California's expansion of universal prekindergarten and creation of its PK–3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential have the potential to have positive and long-lasting impacts on both academic achievement and life outcomes of the state's young learners. The examples in this monograph offer valuable lessons and strategies that policymakers and institutions of higher education can put into place to recruit and retain racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse early educators. By supporting early educator preparation and success, California can move one step closer to fulfilling the promise of its investments into universal public preschool programs.

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Removing RICA Roadblocks

Supporting Success

By Mary K. Requa & Jill Yochim

Introduction

The California Reading Instructors Competency Assessment (RICA) is a major hurdle for many aspiring teachers across the state. About a third of all the teacher candidates who take the test fail the first time, according to state data collected between 2012 and 2017 (Commission Educator Credentialing Examination, edReports). The high failure rate on this test makes it difficult for the state to reduce its persistent teacher shortage.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is currently looking for alternatives to eliminate or replace the RICA requirement through the California Teacher Performance Assessments (CalTPA, 2018) or the Education Specialist California Teaching Performance Assessment (EdSp CalTPA, 2022). These assessments include two instructional cycles based on the subject specific pedagogical sequence of *plan, teach and assess, reflect, and apply* (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing; <https://www.ctcexams.nesinc.com>). The state's current and

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proposed performance assessments allow teachers to demonstrate competence in literacy instruction by submitting evidence of their instructional practice through video clips or written narrative in their teaching placements as opposed to the current written or video RICA format.

The proposed substantive changes in the RICA testing requirement, however, may not be implemented until July, 2025 at the earliest and the urgency to fill teaching vacancies in California continues to grow. For now, the RICA continues to be one of several assessments required to acquire the preliminary credential. Our investigation demonstrates the effectiveness of test preparation workshops supporting pre-service teachers (PSTs) to successfully pass the RICA. The results of our examination of RICA data may encourage institutions who prepare teacher candidates to consider offering a low or no-cost, online RICA test preparation to their PSTs. Since we implemented these sessions at our institution, our pass rates have improved when compared to overall success rates in the state of California.

Purposes of the Investigation

The first goal of this analysis was to examine the effects of a low or no-cost, four-hour, online RICA test preparation workshop on pre-service teachers (PSTs) examination pass rates. Second, this review identifies ways in which teacher preparation programs can aid in preparing PSTs for the RICA and to remove testing barriers that prevent PSTs from successfully entering teaching in California where teacher shortages are significant. Testing requirements can be a barrier or “roadblock” that may challenge PSTs, and PSTs of color in particular. The work presented here warrants the necessity for RICA testing supports and identifies some of the factors that inhibit or enable teacher candidates to pass required tests.

Reading Instructors Competency Assessment (RICA)

The purpose of the RICA is to ensure that California-trained candidates for Multiple Subject Teaching Credentials and Education Specialist Instruction Credentials possess the knowledge and skills to provide effective reading instruction to students. The RICA consists of 95 multiple choice items and four constructed responses to essay questions across five domains: (1) word analysis; (2) fluency; (3) vocabulary; (4) comprehension; and (5) planning, organizing, and managing reading instruction based on ongoing assessment. The exam also requires test takers to provide constructed responses based on case studies of fictionalized students. A Video Performance Examination is an alternative to the written examination. Passing rates for the Video Performance Examination are significantly lower than the written examination option, however.

In order to ameliorate the challenges PSTs encounter in attempting to successfully pass the RICA, we offer our teacher candidates a no cost, four-hour, fully online, synchronous test preparation workshop each semester. Online learning increases

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information retention and requires up to 60% less time to learn new information, according to the World Economic Forum (Li & Farah, 2020). Therefore, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) who prepare new teachers are well situated to provide programs, materials, methods, and content in cost effective, efficient ways.

RICA Test Preparation

Test preparation, broadly defined, encompasses not only study of content from the domain of knowledge sampled by the assessment, but also practicing the skills that will allow students to demonstrate their knowledge on various types of assessments. Test preparation consists of the amount of time dedicated to studying for a future exam; one's participation in test preparation programs increases one's chance of passing a test. This preparation can come in a variety of forms, such as time studying for a test, amount of participation in a testing preparation course or program, or knowledge of test-taking strategies.

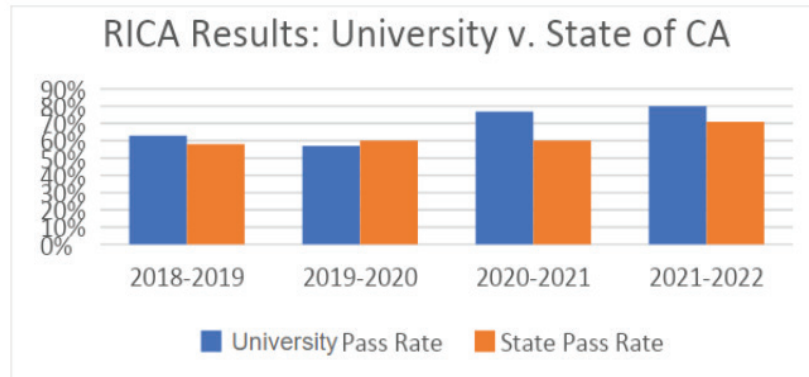
Aware of the importance of preparing students to pass this exam, the four-hour RICA test preparation sessions we designed enabled students to prepare for and pass the RICA exam. It is assumed that participants in this preparation experience have already taken a comprehensive reading course in their teacher preparation program, and perhaps have already attempted the RICA. This RICA test preparation is a review of literacy acquisition concepts and instructional strategies and does not replace the preparation, or rich funds of knowledge, acquired through teacher preparation reading coursework.

Reviewing literacy content, taking practice exams, and studying in groups can increase the probability of students passing the RICA. The preparation course reviews each competency assessed by the RICA through direct instruction in a synchronous online modality and supplementary study materials provided by the developers. The RICA test preparation includes: (1) intensive review of the fundamental underpinnings of literacy acquisition including: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Assessment; (2) test taking strategies; (3) test practice items and; (4) practice in writing constructed responses to case study literacy scenarios.

Results

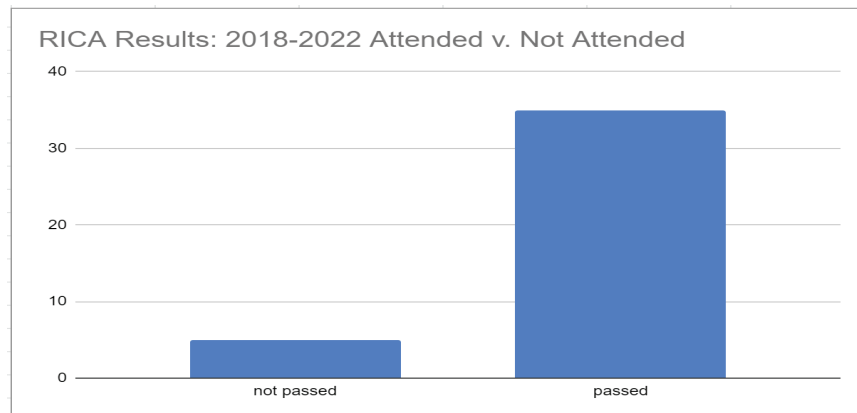
We examined RICA pass rate data for examinees enrolled in the Graduate College of Education at San Francisco State University from 2018 through 2022 collected from the Commission Educator Credentialing Examination edReports (<https://edreports.nesinc.com/CA>). Initially, we compared our PSTs' RICA pass rates to all test takers in the state of California from 2018-2022. While fewer students attempted the RICA during the height of the pandemic (2020-2021), the data suggest that, when comparing our teacher candidates to PSTs across the state, our students had higher pass rates overall (See Table 1).

Table 1
Results of RICA CA Examinees from 2018-2022



We then examined testing outcomes for students in the Graduate College of Education at SFSU who participated in the test preparation session. Results suggest that PSTs who participated in the test preparation session experienced greater pass rates when compared to those who did not participate (See Table 2). This project informs teacher preparation programs about one way they can support teacher candidates in passing required tests.

Table 2
RICA Results of Test Prep Participants



Need for RICA Support

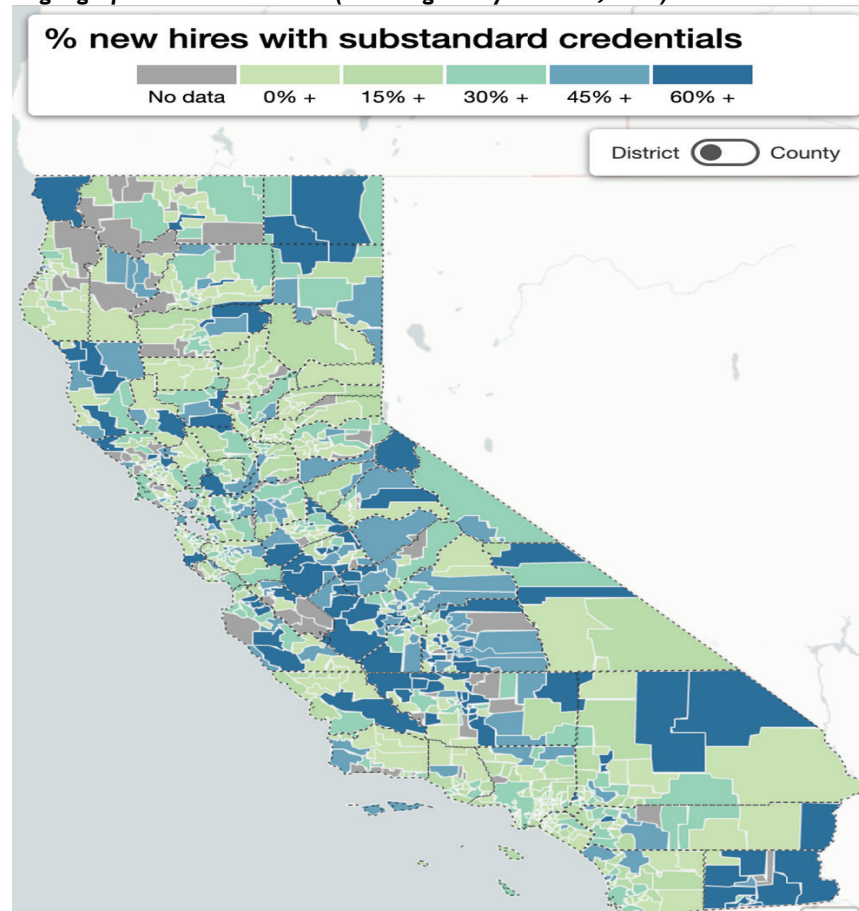
Schools are facing a shortage of 300,000 teachers and staff across the U.S., according to the National Education Association, the country's largest teachers' union (Jotkoff, 2022). Of course, shortages vary substantially across states and

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districts, largely due to differentials in pay and working conditions. The U.S. has experienced recurring teacher shortages for decades and there are real barriers to entry particularly in terms of standardized, requisite testing for licensure.

Teacher shortages have led to emergency credentialing, in which California districts with unfilled vacancies hire teachers who are not yet fully qualified. As of 2019, 34% of 30,000 newly hired teachers held substandard credentials, though that proportion is not evenly distributed: the range varies from 0% to 100% of new hires across the state (See Figure 1; Learning Policy Institute, 2019). These discrepancies lead to inequitable outcomes for students, who are significantly impacted by the preparation that their teachers have received. Burns et al. (2019)

Figure 1
Percent of newly hired teachers with substandard credentials
in geographic areas across CA (Learning Policy Institute, 2019)



found teacher qualification to be the most important factor leading to success in their study of low SES, high-achieving schools.

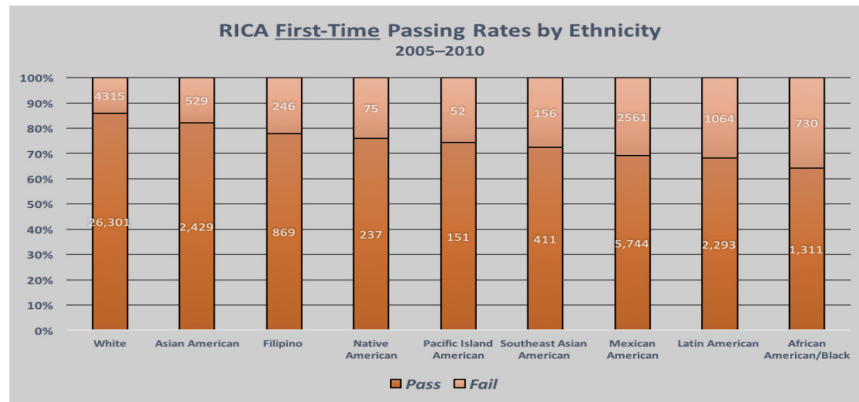
The current teacher shortage is a crisis in many ways and for many people, but children in high-poverty communities of color are those who suffer most (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Redding & Smith, 2016). In 2013–14, on average, high-minority schools had four times as many uncertified teachers as low-minority schools. These inequities also exist between high-poverty and low-poverty schools (Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D., 2016). The teacher shortage negatively impacts the neediest communities. Highly qualified teachers may choose to teach in more highly resourced districts leaving high poverty communities with the highest number of underprepared teachers (Carver-Thomas, D., Kini, T., & Burns, D., 2020). This is a very real threat to educational equity.

In recent years, legislative changes in education policy may have exacerbated the challenges that PSTs of color experience (Yankson, 2014). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB 2001) requires that schools receiving federal funds under the Act ensure that teachers of “core academic subjects”—such as English, mathematics, and history—be “highly qualified”. Teacher education has been struggling with the challenge of preparing and retaining sufficient numbers of diverse, high-quality teachers who can work effectively with students from all cultural and racial backgrounds, raising the achievement for all students (Wang, Spalding, Odell, Klecka, & Lin, 2010).

Teachers of color make up only 18 percent of the public school teaching force (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013). As a result, almost every state has a large teacher-student diversity gap. For instance, students of color represent 73 percent of California’s student enrollment but only 29 percent of the state’s teachers (Boser, 2014). Ethnic disparities in passing the RICA are well documented (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2010; Barlin, A., 2017) (See Table 3). The testing barrier significantly affects PSTs of color and may delay or even prevent them from entering the profession. All students benefit from teachers with cultural backgrounds similar to their own because such teachers provide real-life models of academic engagement (Ingersoll & May, 2011) which stimulates effort, interest, and confidence which enhances student performance (Dilworth, 1990).

Table 3

CCTC Data reified by Student California Teachers Association, 2017



Licensing Requirements

All teacher candidates in California are required to pass several standardized tests. Aspiring teachers must pass challenging, rigorous tests to achieve certification (e.g., CBEST, CSET, RICA). The tests are costly to take and PSTs are forced to engage in multiple attempts to successfully pass the RICA in particular. This barrier is not just keeping people from entering the profession, it's keeping the profession from becoming as diverse as it should be to match the clientele that are served. Additionally, these testing requirements may be one factor deterring college students and graduates from entering the profession. In part because of these tests, stress and anxiety are common among teacher education candidates (Cassady, 2010).

Alleviating Test Anxiety through Preparation

A major contribution to high failure rates on licensing assessments is test anxiety. Standardized testing measures for PSTs are seen as barriers or “roadblocks” for future employment in becoming a teacher. Due to the possibility that their goal of becoming a teacher might be delayed by poor performance on tests, anxiety levels are problematic. In a survey recently conducted by Hardacre and colleagues (2021), respondents reported that their teacher education programs did not prepare them well for the exams and suggested more test prep workshops.

As with any high-stakes test, the actual performance of a test taker can be affected by many different factors aside from lack of content mastery including test anxiety, poor test taking skills, or lack of access to test practice materials. Preparation programs such as ours, at no cost to students, can aid in preparing teacher candidates for tests and relieve some of their test anxiety through content review and practice

as well as an overview of testing strategies. High rates of anxiety can contribute to poor academic performance in students, and this kind of anxiety may lead to low confidence or to poor performance on exams (Putwain & Symons, 2018).

Anecdotally, our PSTs recognize the impact of the RICA workshops. Several went out of their way to contact the provider, sharing words of appreciation after passing:

I think [your workshop] made the difference.

The test preparation workshop was very helpful and informative.

Thank you so much for the workshop and for all these incredible materials.

Thanks for all of your help and support. It [was] truly invaluable.

Conclusion

Our data suggest that PSTs will benefit from relatively low-cost test preparation workshops. The substance of our test preparation focuses on literacy learning content and pedagogy, test-taking skills which can both increase knowledge of literacy instruction through review and practice, and supports to alleviate student test anxiety. With just one online session, our PSTs have demonstrated positive results in passing the RICA. In anticipation of significant changes to assessment requirements for the preliminary credential for multiple subjects and education specialist teacher candidates and until these changes are fully implemented, there is a need to provide testing support for PSTs. IHEs need to recognize the needs of their students and implement low or no-cost test preparation programs so that individuals who aspire to the teaching profession do not encounter testing barriers that will prevent them from fulfilling their aspirations of teaching in our state.

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Collaborative Case Inquiry (CCI)

A Promising Model for Student Teacher and Preservice Teacher Supervisor Learning and Development

By Johnnie Wilson, Jennifer Jones-Hinz, & Soleste Hilberg

Introduction

Preservice teacher supervision is an important component of preservice teacher education. Burns, Jacobs and Yendol-Hoppey (2016) define teacher supervision as performing a range of tasks that support preservice teachers in clinical contexts, also referred to as student teaching field placements. Student teaching is arguably the most important aspect of teacher preparation (Cuenca, 2012), with teacher supervisors playing a central and oftentimes exclusive role in supporting preservice teachers to make important connections between theory and research on the one hand, and practice on the other (Montecinos, Walker & Cortez, 2015, as cited in Barahona, 2019). Consequently, Sandholtz and Finan (1998, as cited in Cuenca, 2010) refer to supervisors as *boundary spanners*, supporting preservice teachers to connect their university learning with the knowledge from student teaching in their field placements.

While some preservice teacher supervision is conducted by full-time university

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faculty, according to Sullivan et al. (2020), it is more common that supervision positions are held by part-time, adjunct faculty, many of whom are retired teachers or administrators, and some graduate students. Additionally, onboarding and ongoing learning and support for preservice teacher supervisors is typically inadequate (Anderson, 2009; Zeichner, 2010) at best, or non-existent. And, while there is tremendous expertise among supervisors, given the instability of many of these positions, varying each year depending on the number and make up of a teacher education program's current student population, this often results in a revolving door of supervisors who have limited opportunities to deepen their supervision praxis over time. This is problematic if, as many programs espouse, we are committed to supporting preservice teachers to become leaders of equity, social justice, and anti-racism in education.

Teacher supervisors engage in a range of practices that extend beyond: (a) the one-on-one support that they provide to preservice teachers and (b) ensuring that state requirements for formal evaluations are met (see for example Barahona, 2019 or Burns, Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2016). For example, supervisors play a role in developing and maintaining ongoing relationships with schools and cooperating teachers; they maintain communications between student teachers and cooperating teachers. Burns and Bidiali (2016) assert that,

the role of the university supervisor is critical to developing reflective habits and promoting preservice teacher growth and development... Yet university supervisors may be the most undervalued actors in the entire teacher preparation equation when one considers the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they must have to teach about teaching in the field.

Barahona (2019) maintains that, though we hold high expectations for the work of preservice teacher supervision, supervisors are often seen as, and often feel as though they are, peripheral members in both their university and TK-12 contexts.

Burns, Jacobs, and Yendol-Hoppey (2016) assert that "teacher preparation programs need to consider how they are preparing supervisors to engage in these expanded tasks [such as] examining one's practices through self-study and innovating to enhance preservice teacher supervision." McCormack, Baecher, and Cuenca (2019) advocate for practices "in which university-based supervisors meet intensively in communities of practice to reflect on their work with other supervisors" and suggest that teacher education should provide opportunities for supervisors to "examine and discuss the dilemmas of practice they encounter, much as we ask our teacher candidates to actively reflection their own teaching practice." These authors also maintain that the supervisors in their study "relished the opportunity to be asked about their experiences and come together for a group discussion about the dilemmas of supervision they were facing."

In this paper, we describe a promising model, *Collaborative Case Inquiry*, for promoting and developing the work of preservice teacher supervision. *Collaborative*

Case Inquiry draws loosely from the literature on lesson study in that it is rooted in the beliefs that (a) teacher collaborative inquiry is an effective model for professional learning and (b) teachers can and should be agents of their own learning and development (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). It centers these same beliefs for the professional learning and development of both preservice teachers and university teacher supervisors, who bring specific “cases” or problems of practice for shared inquiry and problem solving with peers and colleagues.

Collaborative Case Inquiry, developed by preservice teacher supervisor Johnnie Wilson, is used in the University of California Santa Cruz Teacher Education Program in two contexts: (a) teacher supervision of preservice teachers and (b) supervisor-inspired and facilitated collaborative professional learning.

Collaborative Case Inquiry **in Teacher Supervision of Preservice Teachers**

Collaborative Case Inquiry, initially inspired by the need to support student teachers remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, provides the means to hold mentorship conversations with student teachers about their growth, experiences and challenges.

In *Collaborative Case Inquiry*, student teachers meet in collegial groups of five to seven weekly. In each session:

One student teacher prepares a written narrative and presents a case of their teaching, typically supported with one or more artifacts such as samples of student work or a video.

The student teacher describes what they believe were strengths of their teaching and then sets out challenges they found in the case they have presented.

The presenter then sets out questions for the peer group about the case in order to elicit input and to collaboratively reflect and improve their teaching.

This is followed by discussion and problem solving by the peer group, with the facilitator (instructor or teacher supervisor) recording salient points.

The facilitator concludes the session by distilling the key points with participants and synthesizing the considered approaches to teaching set out in the discussion.

The student teacher who presented the case then reflects on what was offered by peers and shares their plan for improving their praxis.

Peers offer their appreciation for the case presented.

Collaborative Case Inquiry has become integral to the student teaching seminar experience. The cases presented represent real contextualized teaching experience. The strengths identified by the presenter represent their initial understandings. The questions and challenges they share represent their particular needs and interests for their teaching.

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Two developmental outcomes have become evident in *Collaborative Case Inquiry*. The first is that student teachers share similar considerations as they develop in their teaching. These common considerations might be called milestone moments and might be expected in a normal course of beginning teacher development. Common considerations about teacher identity, engaging students, classroom management and others become opportunities for shared inquiry and shared direction in development. In collegial conversations, student teachers develop a high level of intersubjectivity about teaching and learning, and come to understand that their own development shares a pathway similar to that of their peers. Their peers become allies supporting their learning and development.

The second important outcome is that student teachers develop a shared language about teaching practice and the ability to speak about their teaching. Over the course of these sessions, student teachers improve their ability to speak directly and reflexively about their teaching. Equally important, student teachers learn how to support and talk about teaching with their peers, a skill that will serve them well in future collaborations with colleagues.

Example of Collaborative Case Inquiry with Preservice Teachers

Sarah teaches in a fifth grade classroom. She taught a mathematics lesson on how to solve multi-term problems.

Sarah began the case inquiry by sharing her journal and setting out the week's activities in which she was involved before the lesson. She followed by giving context for the case lesson she would be presenting and an overview of the teaching. She then set out questions for her peers to consider as they viewed the video.

Her focus was on student engagement, focus and energy. Sarah was concerned that students lost care and attention over the course of the lesson.

The video showed her modeling multiple approaches to the mathematical ideas and involving students in the problem solving. She paused her teaching at one moment for a movement break for her students to address the energy in the room.

After the video sharing, Sarah took responses from peers. A number of her peers shared similar considerations for student energy and offered strategies from their own classrooms to address students' energy and focus. Sarah asked peers about pacing and the length of mathematics lessons and how these affected students' focus and energy. Peers shared the shape of mathematics lessons in their classrooms, how long they are and their organization. One peer shared that the mathematics lessons in her classroom are longer than an hour and that good attention is maintained throughout. In this classroom there is great focus on students sharing and thinking about math together and representing ideas for each other. The peer described the math learning as highly interactive and collaborative.

From what was offered by peers, Sarah reflected on the social aspect of the learning in her lesson. Sarah shared her realization that she was at the front of the

classroom throughout the lesson. Sarah believed that the complexity of the math she was teaching required her to be at the front doing a good deal of explaining. The facilitator shared how the tools we use, big screens and document cameras, set up a single focus for students' attention. Discussion followed about how to "de-front" the classroom to move more of the mathematics learning to table groups and to peer interaction. Talk followed about the opportunities made possible for the teacher and the students when the activity is moved to student spaces and emphasizes social interaction. The facilitator suggested deconstructing the "I do, you do, we do" paradigm for setting out lessons and starting with students doing; referring to a current shift in considerations for math teaching. Discussion followed.

The facilitator began the debrief of the case inquiry by sharing written notes, beginning by acknowledging Sarah's strengths shown in the video and described in her teaching. Peer contributions were then shared, synthesized and offered back to Sarah.

Sarah reflected on the session, noting what thoughts and offerings stood out for her and what moves she intended to make in her teaching. Peers ended the session by offering appreciations to Sarah for the case she presented.

In this case, peers connected their teaching to Sarah's teaching. Using their experiences, all involved in the case inquiry were challenged to think about mathematics teaching and how to center student ideas and social interaction in their mathematics lessons. The raw material for building better understanding of mathematics teaching for Sarah and her peers was collaboratively constructed. In *Collaborative Case Inquiry*, student teachers come to understand the value of their own experiences for reflection and improvement in practice, and the benefit that collaboration with peers offers. The lesson that was presented pushed us to consider how social interaction promotes worthwhile mathematics learning. *Collaborative Case Inquiry* does the same, leveraging peer social interaction to strengthen teaching practice.

Collaborative Case Inquiry in Supervisor-Inspired and Supervisor-Facilitated Professional Learning

Collaborative Case Inquiry has become a catalyst for promoting beginning teacher development. The supervisors in our teacher education program wondered how we might harness this process to promote our own development in supervision practice through similar collegial inquiry. Applying the *Collaborative Case Inquiry* format used with student teachers, teacher supervisors come together to share cases of supervision. We consider these in collegial conversation to promote our own development in supervision practice.

At monthly gatherings of teacher supervisors:

The presenting supervisor presents the case, providing background about the student teacher including the student teacher's strengths, support that is needed,

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what the supervisor has done, and a question for the group that will allow the supervisor to help the student teacher move forward.

Peers listen and take notes about the case of supervision.

Peers then ask clarifying questions that will allow them to clearly understand the case in supervision.

The presenting supervisor facilitates the ensuing conversation, calling on peers who offer experiences and insights.

The peers begin by recognizing what the presenting supervisor has done well. They then move forward with providing different ideas for supporting the student.

A supervisor will take on the role of facilitator and take notes for the group.

When the presenting supervisor is done, the facilitator summarizes what the presenting supervisor shared and restates the question presented to the group. The facilitator then checks in with the presenting supervisor to see if anything else should be added.

Afterward, the presenting supervisor has the opportunity to reflect on what other supervisors discussed and what they will try as a result of the discussion.

Supervisors offer their appreciation for the case presented.

Each month, teacher supervisors come together to provide support for each other based on a case in supervision. Supervisors come away with more ideas to support their student teachers in their practice. *Collaborative Case Inquiry* reinforces teacher supervisors that they are all working together to help their student teachers grow, they all come about their supervision in different ways, and when they get together, they are able to generate more ideas than they would have alone. The range of experiences, perspectives and insights shared in *Collaborative Case Inquiry* conversations deepens and expands understandings and options for supervision for all involved.

Example of Collaborative Case Inquiry with Teacher Supervisors

A *Case of Supervision* (see Appendix A) had to do with Jennifer working with a student teacher who relied heavily on direct instruction. Jennifer had observed this several times and after providing feedback and suggestions about how to help students be more engaged in the learning, no changes were taking place. Jennifer wanted feedback to share this case in order to obtain feedback and ideas from her peers.

Prior to meeting and presenting her case, Jennifer completed the first three sections of the *Collaborative Case Inquiry* protocol - description of the case, what's working, and questions for peers - which provided her with the opportunity to be clear about what Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs) were relevant to the case

and what she perceived to be the student teacher's strengths. She provided a clear focus, wanting peer feedback on, "What moves might I might make to help this student teacher move forward to engage students in critical thinking and promote a range of communication?"

Jennifer presented her case in supervision to her peers. A facilitating supervisor took notes as peers shared ideas. Every supervisor who responded was supportive. Many had been in a similar place. What emerged was a repertoire of ideas ranging from recommending different books and techniques to different questions to ask the student teacher to how to bring the cooperating teacher into the conversation as well.

The facilitating supervisor then asked peers to reflect on what came up. For this particular case of supervision, themes came up about student teachers' beliefs, views about teaching and their roles:

Are student teachers replicating what they have seen?

Start with where the candidate is.

Record and watch the number of questions the student teacher asked.

Ask the student teacher what the goals of the lessons were and if they met them.

The facilitating supervisor then reflected back the contributions from peers, acknowledging and extending on each contribution.

Jennifer came away feeling relieved that so many peers conveyed, "this isn't just you; I have been there, too." Jennifer came away thinking more deeply about where the student teacher was coming from and how to connect student engagement back to theory. Jennifer more clearly understood the student teacher's Zone of Proximal Development and helped the student teacher plan a lesson using a student-centered engagement strategy to help the student teacher experience success.

The facilitating supervisor encouraged peers to thank Jennifer for being vulnerable and sharing her case in supervision.

Peers who participated were able to share their own insights and experiences and benefit from the insights and experiences of others.

Conclusion

Collaborative Case Inquiry (see Appendix B for the *Collaborative Case Inquiry* protocol) emerged at UCSC as a response to the need to support student teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, profoundly impacting the quality and depth of learning for student teachers. It has since had a similar impact on a team of teacher supervisors who are deepening their intersubjectivity and creating a shared language around teacher supervision as they collaborate and problem solve presented cases of supervision in support of their own and each other's learning and development.

More research is needed to better understand best practices for supporting pre-service teacher supervision as well as the moves that supervisors make to support

preservice teacher learning and development. We encourage teacher preparation programs to advocate for full-time career positions for preservice teacher supervisors to ensure that individuals can invest themselves deeply in the practice of supervision over time and refine what is known about how to support preservice teachers. It is only over time that we can focus our attention to and deepen our understanding of the essential work of supporting new teachers to become advocates for and leaders of equity, social justice and anti-racism in education.

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Appendix A

Sample Collaborative Case Inquiry Protocol

Framework:

- Presentation of Case
- What is working
- Setting out Questions, Considerations
- Peer contributions
- Reflection on contributions and suggestions for direction

Roles:

- Presenter of case should tell the story of the event and provide artifacts if available
- Peers are to listen well, connect the case of teaching to own experience, ask questions to clarify or deepen consideration of the case, and to offer suggestion or direction during reflection.
- Moderator keeps notes, gives direction to the reflection

Case of Mentorship/Teaching/Supervision:

Description

- TPE 1.5 Promote Critical Thinking, inquiry, problem solving, reflection
- TPE 4.7 Promote a range of communication and activity modes
- Student Teacher is in a secondary class and relies on direct instruction
 - The format is lecture with slides
 - Slides do include visualsI was
 - Students copy bolded notes in a graphic organizer that the Student Teacher provides that is divided into sections based on the notes
- The observations have consistently been the same without variation even with feedback that critical thinking and engagement need to be in the lessons

What is working:

- Student Teacher knows content and standards
- Student Teacher creates connections for the students
- Students are engaged in filling out a graphic organizer where they copy bold information on slides as the Student Teacher is lecturing
- Student Teacher is asking questions and students are responding

Questions, Considerations, Concerns:

What do we want to learn, understand, make better?

- While the students are engaged and the Student Teacher is providing connections and asking questions, it is teacher-driven

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The Student Teacher continues to justify all of the decisions

There is too much content to cover

There is not enough time

The students say they like this format

What moves might I make to help this Student Teacher move forward to engage students in critical thinking and promote a range of communication?

Peer Contributions (supervisors can share similar challenges and ideas/solutions/supervisor moves to move the ST forward):

Had same thing happen numerous times. Refer to TPEs that focus on Critical Thinking- Centering students - what activity are they doing- what's their responsibility. Build student expertise. Work from open-ended questions and have students do the teaching. Shift students to be teachers- rather than passive - Michael

Book - Total Participation- involving all students- Wave- teacher lectures- background knowledge- students then put into pairs- then students join into group of four- more open discussion follows- join back into larger class discussion Move away from IRE - Walt

Thank you for sharing the problem of practice. Question- what is the student teacher's agency- does the student teacher just have to subscribe to the CTs program- Our role to encourage agency for the student teacher- conversation with the CT. How much is this student teacher merely replicating own learning experiences- They don't know what they don't know- how to present other models for teaching- scaffolding- How to build upon student teacher's strengths- move from lecture to more collaborative model- Evelyn

Wonder about the initial conversation about the goals we set for practicum- what student teacher should expect from themselves. Cognitive dissonance- when not working- sets up conversation - Lisa

Speak to candidate's repertoire of teaching practices- Address how scheduling shapes expectations for teaching- confront banking models. TPA expects how teaching challenges students' thinking - Pete

What kinds of questions are students asking- pragmatic to complete form - or something more? Work with peers to come to more sophisticated understanding- Barbara

Connection to Barbara's thought about questioning- model using questioning strategies. Connection to Evelyn- have conversation about student teacher's own experience as a learner. Question student teacher about how they met learning objective- did they meet the learning objective? Christina

Reflective questioning- ask student teacher to bring them to conference- having worthwhile questions set out before the teaching- giving attention to the kinds of questions teachers should have in mind, make available to students. - Edwina

Reflection, Suggestions for Direction

I want to move forward with my Student Teacher by starting where he is at. I want to use the TPEs to guide his growth. I plan to work with him to co-construct a lesson that promotes critical thinking and a range of communication and activity modes.

Appendix B

Collaborative Case Inquiry Protocol

Framework:

- Presentation of Case
- What is working
- Setting out Questions, Considerations
- Peer contributions
- Reflection on contributions and suggestions for direction

Roles:

Presenter of case should tell the story of the event and provide artifacts if available

Peers are to listen well, connect the case of teaching to own experience, ask questions to clarify or deepen consideration of the case, and to offer suggestion or direction during reflection.

Moderator keeps notes, gives direction to the reflection

Case of Mentorship/Teaching/Supervision:

Description

What is Working:

Questions, Considerations, Concerns:

What do we want to learn, understand, make better?

Peer Contributions

Reflection, Suggestions for Direction



Focus on Inservice Realities

State, District, and Site Contextual Impact on the New Teacher Experience

By Melissa Meetze-Hall & Karen Escalante

Background

The complex COVID-impacted dynamics of the public education system call upon the educator preparation community to hold itself accountable for supporting the newest educators. The United States is continuing to experience a national teacher shortage where roughly half of all public schools are experiencing vacancies. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to these challenges (NCES, 2022). Ongoing vacancies are also attributed to stress and burnout (NEA, 2022), salary and working conditions (EdWeek, 2022), emphasis on test-based accountability, lack of autonomy, and limited opportunities for collaboration with colleagues (Podolsky et al., 2016). It may very well be that there is not a lack of qualified teachers, but rather a lack of qualified teachers willing to endure ongoing stress levels and a salary decline (EPI, 2022).

Studies found that teachers show the greatest gains from experience during their initial years in the classroom, but continue to make meaningful improvement in their effectiveness past these initial gains (Koedel & Betts, 2007). Given that

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teaching experience is positively and significantly associated with teacher effectiveness (Podolsky et al., 2019) the preparation community must continue to identify and enact actions and systems to keep newly prepared teachers in the field.

California serves as one example of current contextual realities. Following three years of disrupted education (2019-2020; 2020-2021; 2021-2022), 2022-2023 now represents the least disrupted academic year in terms of instructional delivery models. Concurrently, there are renewed pressures in districts and school sites to demonstrate growth in student achievement data. As education and economic impacts are improving it is also true that pre-service and in-service teachers (California's newest teachers) are now learning about, and being impacted by the state's System of Support and Accountability system.

One such structure is that of California's System of Support. The California Department of Education identifies the following as goals of the program:

The overarching goal of California's System of Support is to help LEAs and their schools meet the needs of each student they serve, with a focus on building local capacity to sustain improvement and to effectively address disparities in opportunities and outcomes. At its heart, California's System of Support is focused on improving the outcomes of California's students. The purpose of California's System of Support... is to build the capacity of LEAs... (CDE, 2023)

Based on state-wide measures from the 2021-2022 school year, PK-12 schools are now navigating the most recent state implementation of Differentiated Assistance (DA). With the change from previous funding structures for public schools and the establishment of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), the state of California identified ten priority areas. These priority areas guide the data-analysis and data driven decisions. They are meant to provide focus for each district and are reported using a range of measures. The priority areas are: Basic (Conditions of Learning); State Standards (Conditions of Learning); Parental Involvement (Engagement); Pupil Achievement (Pupil Outcomes); Pupil Engagement (Engagement); School Climate (Engagement); Course Access (Conditions of Learning); Other Pupil Outcomes (Pupil Outcomes); Expelled Pupils (COE Only); Foster Youth (COEs Only). California uses the data reported on the California School Dashboard to help determine those districts and schools that need assistance. Based on the criteria above, districts may be eligible for three different levels of support. Level 1: Support for ALL; Level 2 - Differentiated Assistance (DA); or Level 3 - Intensive Intervention.

The most recent data from the spring of 2022 was released in December 2022. Based on this, a significant majority of California districts currently qualify for Differentiated Assistance. Given that the DA work will include tangible metrics of progress, many of our newest teachers may be experiencing increased pressure and messaging regarding the need to demonstrate improvement in the identified priority areas. It is not a stretch of the imagination to expect that these new site

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and district contextual pressures may further contribute to the increased stress and levels of job satisfaction of the newest educators.

To ameliorate or reduce the negative impact of these contextual realities, there are three key facets that are known to most positively impact the sense of support and provide for increased educator satisfaction. The three areas that can make a difference to the experience of the newest educators, contributing to retention of are: leadership, communities of practice, and a sense of belonging. The main tenets of each of the three are outlined below.

Literature Review

Leadership

Educational leadership is a complex and multifaceted position. One is expected to support teachers, students, staff, and the surrounding community; engage in decision-making and conflict resolution; and establish communities of practice (Shields, 2004). Educational leaders also hold power; it can be argued that a leader sets the culture, tone, and collective goals of the district or site (Northouse, 2013). Even with the current teaching shortage crisis and increased PK-12 academic needs, educational leaders can play a significant role in the satisfaction of new teachers. Keeping qualified teachers in the profession requires leaders who are inclusive, democratic, relational, and caring (Furman, 2012). While there are many leadership styles, the transformative leader is grounded in social justice; relationships, dialogue, equity, and moral use of power are at the core (Bogotch, 2000; Shields, 2004). The transformative educational leader “builds a just school community under changing demographic and political conditions” (Bogotch, 2000). New teachers’ sense of belonging is the most significant factor determining whether they stay or leave the profession (Hobson & Maxwell, 2017); the transformative leader establishes the culture of belonging.

Communities of Practice

A community of practice is a group of people who share common concerns or interests. Educators, including new teachers, may be members of multiple communities of practice; this allows for the co-construction of learning and generative knowledge to occur (Hoadley, 2012). Community allows members to establish relationships, while practices encourage shared experiences, stories, anecdotes, and solutions among members (Lave & Wenger, 2004). Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that new members within a community of practice learn to gradually take up space as they engage in knowledge generation, application, and reproduction. Identifying as or feeling a sense of belonging as a member of the community is a salient dimension to interacting as they learn “how to do something better as they interact regularly.” Using a community of practice theory as the conceptual frame-

work for collaborative work and research, it is argued that members develop their identities and belonging through active participation and engagement within their situated and contextual “spaces” such as the district and school site (Lave & Wenger, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 2001). “Teachers are more likely to feel a sense of efficacy and to implement reform-oriented practices when they have more opportunities for collaboration with other teachers” (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014). It will be important for the educator-preparation community to continue to focus on ways in which these skills and this sense of efficacy are developed in the myriad of settings for new educators. This will apply to educational leaders in the role as campus administrators as well as those who are leaders, but may not be in an official leadership capacity.

Belonging

Teachers feel a sense of belonging when they share the same values with colleagues and administrators (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The extent to which teachers experience and feel there are behaviors where they are validated, accepted, and treated with dignity impact their sense of belonging (Cobb & Krownapple, 2019). Across numerous studies on *belonging*, Donna Hicks identified patterns and themes, regardless of where people were from. Hicks (2018) identified ten elements of dignity, with the first four being: acceptance of identity; recognition, acknowledgement; and inclusion. Campus climate indicators of belonging might include attitudes toward members of diverse groups and intergroup relations and behaviors on campus (Cobb & Krownapple, 2019). Belonging also positively correlates with retention, given that when individuals feel a sense of belonging to a place (school site or environment), they are more apt to stay (Ahn & Davis, 2020). Frequent communication also supports belonging (Ahn & Davis, 2020).

Policy Recommendations

Informed by the initial stage of data collection of first- and second-year in-service induction teachers (a study currently in progress), in addition to the reviewed literature, we offer the following recommendations for leaders of the educator preparation community.

1. Purposefully create space for and foster communities of practice.
2. Examine the components of Teacher Induction Programs which ensure new teachers feel a sense of belonging to the profession and the site.
3. Establish a culture of belonging, inclusivity, equity, and care.
4. Invest in educational leadership programs rooted in Transformative Leadership where leaders learn to support collaboration focused on social justice and humanity.

Conclusion

The effects of teaching experience on student achievement are significant. Research suggests "...that teachers' effectiveness rises sharply in the first few years of their careers, and this upward trajectory continues well into the second and often third decade of teaching, with a steeper slope when teachers work in collegial settings" (Wiswall, 2013). Additional research indicates that the effects are strongest in settings where teams of teachers have the opportunity to work together (Kraft & Papay, 2014; Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

A solution to the teaching shortage requires purposeful and intentional efforts from policymakers and leaders at the state, district, and site levels. How states, districts, and sites respond to this moment will dictate teachers' desire to remain in the profession. The role of leadership at this time must be underscored. A transformative leader will address these challenges through a social justice lens by creating cultures of care, equity, inclusivity, community, and belonging.

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Additional Research Presentations from the CCTE Spring 2023 SPAN Conference

“Addressing Implicit Bias in Teacher Education.”

Jacquelyn Urbani (Mills College at Northeastern University), **Cindy Collado** (California State University Sacramento), **Anabelle Manalo** (San Juan Unified School District), & **Naomi Gonzalez** (Solano County Office of Education).

Description: As research indicates that unconscious biases impact diverse students and interfere with equitable and inclusive learning, teacher education programs must examine implicit biases through the development of critical consciousness. Following the four goals of anti-bias education, we offer impactful instructional practices as a crucial component of high-quality teacher preparation.

“Beyond Just Policy Transition: Practitioner Experiences in the Conceptual and Practical Transition to the New California BILA and BTPEs.”

Eduardo Munoz-Munoz (San Jose State University), **Sharon Merritt** (Fresno Pacific University), **Fernando Rodriguez- Valls** (California State University Fullerton), **Clara Amador-Lankster** (National University), & **Marisol Ruiz** (California Polytechnic State University Humboldt).

Description: Leaders of the California Association for Bilingual Teacher Education (CABTE) share updates and perspectives on the practical implications of efforts to reform bilingual teacher education policies.

Video presentations of research presentations at all recent CCTE Conferences are available for viewing on the CCTE YouTube channel.

Information on the California Council on Teacher Education

Founded in 1945, the California Council on the Education of Teachers (now the California Council on Teacher Education since July 2001) is a non-profit organization devoted to stimulating the improvement of the preservice and inservice education of teachers and related school personnel. The Council attends to this general goal with the support of a community of teacher educators, drawn from diverse constituencies, who seek to be informed, reflective, and active regarding significant research, sound practice, and current public educational issues.

Membership in the California Council on Teacher Education can be either institutional or individual. Colleges and universities with credential programs, professional organizations with interests in the preparation of teachers, school districts and public agencies in the field of education, and individuals involved in or concerned about the field are encouraged to join. Membership includes announcements of semi-annual spring and fall conferences, receipt via email in PDF format of the journals *Teacher Education Quarterly* and *Issues in Teacher Education*, emailed newsletters on timely issues, an informal network for sharing sound practices in teacher education, and involvement in annual awards and recognitions in the field.

The semi-annual conferences of the California Council on Teacher Education, rotate each year between sites in northern and southern California, feature significant themes in the field of education, highlight prominent speakers, afford opportunities for presentation of research and discussion of promising practices, and consider current and future policy issues in the field.

For information about membership in the California Council on Teacher Education, please contact: Alan H. Jones, Executive Secretary, California Council on Teacher Education, 3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118; telephone 415/666-3012; email alan.jones@ccte.org; website www.ccte.org

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