Reconceptualizing Barriers as Opportunities: Responding to Challenges in Equity-Based Teacher Preparation

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Abstract: In this article, four teacher educators outline the barriers they face regarding equity, diversity, and teacher preparation across two large, public educator preparation programs in Virginia. Some specific barriers discussed include the higher attrition rate of teachers of color, ill-prepared teacher candidates and their respective mentor teachers, and a lack of psychological safety, due in large part to micro-aggressions experienced during clinical experiences. Following this description are specific examples of challenges that we reconceptualize as opportunities to develop a diverse pipeline of equity-focused teacher leaders through school-university partnerships. Opportunities discussed include redefining *teacher educators*, the importance of mentorship fit and matching, partnerships and sustaining relationships, and building equity-focused teacher leaders. The discussion and implications indicate the impact that reconceptualizing these barriers can have on the school community.

KEYWORDS: *Clinical Practice, Equity, Inclusion, School-University Partnerships*

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:
1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

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Teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare candidates to effectively serve diverse communities and families through coursework or through clinical work (Graue, 2005; Zeichner et al., 2016). This is, in part, because coursework and clinical work often exist as fragmented pieces of a curricular puzzle, rather than integrated components. Many programs require co-requisite, parallel "field experiences" and coursework, but even these do not always position faculty alongside teacher candidates within diverse school settings. Faculty often lack the deep and nuanced knowledge of the context in which candidates are asked to practice what they learn in coursework. Yet, teacher candidates must have deep understandings of their students' challenges and strengths, as well as their students' communities and cultures if those teachers are to be effective in their work (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012). As four teacher educators in two large, public institutions that prepare teachers to serve in the largest and most diverse regions in Virginia (and the nation), we recognize these structural and systemic challenges. Our informal and formal collaboration across institutions is a response to what we see as a moral imperative; we must support and prepare a diverse pool of teacher candidates who, in turn, will effectively serve diverse school communities. Effectively prepared teachers serve as the direct resources who can help narrow the opportunity gap that results in the so-called "achievement gap" (Darling-Hammond, 2015).

Over the past few years, multiple calls for the refinement of clinical practice provided guidance for this work. Recent accreditation requirements emphasize this work in CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2019) Standard 2: *Clinical Partnerships and Practice.* Within this standard, the first component, *Partnerships for Clinical Preparation,* defines shared responsibility as continuous improvement that encompasses mutually agreed upon expectations for candidate entry, preparation, and exit, connections across theory and practice, coherence across clinical and academic components of preparation, and shared accountability for candidate outcomes. The AACTE (2018) Clinical Practice Commission's report is particularly useful as a guiding document for approaching this partnership work. Providing clear definitions of clinical practice, roles, and structures, the AACTE report clarified distinctions between dated, less effective models of field placements in teacher preparation, and integrated clinical practice that honors university-based (faculty), school-based (mentor teachers), and boundary-spanning (coaches and supervisors) teacher educators who can, collaboratively, integrate coursework and effective, contextualized teaching practice.

The AACTE (2018) report addresses the current systems and structures that underlie the silos we find ourselves within, but we found that guidance incomplete. Building memorandums of understanding, clarifying roles and responsibilities, as well as convening partners are all necessary, but the implementation of this work requires intentional practices that build, strengthen, and sustain individual and organizational relationships. To be candid, this work is messy and not linear because human beings are messy creatures who work in communities with difficult histories of inequity and injustice. Organizational relationships between schools, school divisions, and teacher preparation programs require consistency across the quality of interactions and clinical practice, but consistency should not mean standardized models. As Parker et al. (2016, p. 43) remind us:

High quality clinical practice cannot be mandated in a one-size-fits-all manner and does not need to look the same in every context. In fact, it is this mindset that often hinders innovation, halts progress toward real reform, and creates a dichotomous view.

In this article, we reconceptualize challenges related to clinical practice and equity as opportunities to develop a diverse pipeline of equity-focused teacher leaders through school-university partnerships. Focusing on Virginia, we make clear how our state context represents national trends while also acknowledging the contextually bound aspects of our work that may not apply beyond this region. We share our experiences as organizational examples of partnership work, as well as the literature that inform our practices, in the hope that this may provide models and scaffolded support for colleagues who want to engage in similar processes.

Barriers to Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline and Equitably Serving All Students

Students of color comprise 50% of U.S. public school enrollment, yet only 20% of the national workforce are teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Virginia's demographic data look quite similar; students of color comprise 49% of the student population, while teachers of color comprise only 21% of the workforce (Report from the Task Force on Diversifying Virginia's Educator Pipeline, 2017). It is worth noting that Virginia's "educator pipeline is becoming more racially homogenous over time" (Report from the Task Force on Diversifying Virginia's Educator Pipeline, 2017, p. 2). Only 17% of first year teachers in Virginia identify as Black or Hispanic (Miller, 2018). Compared to their white colleagues, Black and Hispanic teachers exit the teaching positions in Virginia at much greater rates (Miller, 2018). This is especially visible in years three and five, notably when Virginia teachers may move from a probationary to a continuing contract status. School divisions may choose to move teachers from a probationary to continuing contract in year three or year five. In year three, Black and Hispanic teachers exit at rates of 22% and 18%, respectively, while white teachers exit at a rate of 13%. In year five, Hispanic teachers in Virginia exit at a 20% rate, while Black teachers exit at 15%; white teachers' exit rate is approximately 12% (Miller, 2018).

These attrition rates are especially concerning because historically underrepresented students benefit from having teachers with similar characteristics or background, as this helps to establish a better connection between teacher and student (Dilworth & Coleman, 2014). Increasing the number of teachers of color in a school setting can provide positive diverse examples to students of color and thus these teachers could become beacons of change (Dukes, 2018). As students are exposed to a diverse range of teachers, they often begin to see more positive potential outcomes for their own futures. This representation provides historically underrepresented students with a greater sense of inclusion within their school. Their improved sense of community may increase academic and social achievement (Atkins et al., 2014).

Why then might attrition rates among teachers of color be significantly higher than white teachers? In addition to facing day to day challenges of teaching, teachers of color have been the target of injustice, lack of administrative support, lack of mentorship, lack of recognition, and isolation (Matthew, 2017; Ingersoll & May, 2011). Novice teachers, regardless of their race and/or ethnicities, need extra support to learn and adjust to the social norms and community culture where they accept employment. However, novice Black and Latino teachers face an additional workload challenge as they are often assigned classes with challenging student behaviors or learning challenges that cause them to feel overwhelmed (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Furthermore, when school staff and leadership lack cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge, we also see a lack of policy and practices that support the implementation of professional development focused on inclusive and equitable pedagogical practice. This absence of familiarity, knowledge, and skill leads to lack of sense of belonging and self-efficacy among teachers with backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities that are not represented among the majority of the teaching workforce (Lee, 2015). While working conditions contribute to teacher attrition, inexperienced leadership and exclusion from faculty decision-making are also significant causes of attrition among teachers of color. Underrepresented teachers express often feeling as though they are undervalued and feel a lack of sense of belonging (Bristol, 2015).

In our work across Virginia, we regularly observe examples of lack of safety, marginalization, and lack of respect that must be addressed to stem the attrition rates of, and psychological harm to, teacher candidates of color. We also notice discrimination and micro-aggressions that occur in partner school settings that serve as a catalyst for our work; we feel compelled to affect positive change. While we don't yet have large scale evidence that confirms (or disconfirms) our experiences that white teacher candidates leave schools that serve diverse and homogeneous populations of historically marginalized/underserved communities, our teacher preparation programs in Virginia wrestle with this additional challenge.

Inequity in Clinical Experiences

Urban and diverse school partnerships are necessary because they provide experiences with complex, interrelated issues, including poverty, racial and ethnic diversity, and bureaucracy. There exist reports of positive change (e.g. increased preparedness, motivation, commitment, and cultural competence) when preparing teacher candidates with an understanding of the community and analysis of the school setting as part of culturally relevant pedagogical preparation (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Anderson & Stillman, 2013). In these settings, candidates have the opportunity to develop self-efficacy, commitment and cultural competence necessary to be successful as they accept employment in similar communities (Anderson & Stillman, 2011).

Inexperienced and Unqualified Teaching Workforce. White, middle class teacher candidates are often unprepared for teaching in urban communities with low-income, children of color because they lack necessary cultural competencies (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017) and have minimal experience with language diversity and teaching in a linguistically diverse classroom (Faltis & Valdés, 2016). Teacher preparation programs can be disconnected from the context of diverse clinical experiences, and may not adequately address the gaps in "skills, knowledge and experiences…required to successfully serve low-income youth and youth of color" (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017, p. 76). In order to adequately prepare teacher candidates for the realities of teaching in any setting, many educator preparation programs place teacher candidates in some schools with student populations that represent historically underserved and/or diverse communities. Clinical experiences in such settings may build a candidate's capacity for cultural competence by working with diverse learners. However, there exists evidence that these experiences may perpetuate and reinforce misconceptions and biases about students of color and urban school settings as well as confirm deficit thinking. Teacher candidates placed in these settings without intentionally scaffolded opportunities to analyze the placement and their

responses to it express decreased confidence and low self-efficacy in their skills teaching diverse learners (Abramo, 2015; Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Further, candidates hold negative perceptions of teaching in diverse and urban settings due to inequities found in their clinical experiences such as lack of resources, understaffing, underprepared teachers, and high turnover (Abramo, 2015; Anderson & Stillman, 2013).

White, middle class teachers often serve as mentors for teacher candidates, potentially unfamiliar with current research and practice to effectively serve diverse student populations as funds for professional learning opportunities were reduced following the recession a decade ago. Nationally, over six percent of teachers in urban schools are uncertified (Cardichon et al., 2020). Over 17% of teachers in schools with high percentages of students of color are new to the profession and nearly 19% of teachers in urban schools are in their first or second years (Cardichon et al., 2020). In practical terms, this means that large percentages of teachers in urban and diverse school settings don't hold the qualifications (certification or experience) to serve as effective mentors for teacher candidates.

Some mentor teachers recognize micro-aggressions and address them with their colleagues and/or administration, while many of the classroom teachers with whom we work don't recognize them as problematic, lack the language or skills to respond, or serve as the perpetrators of such micro-aggressions. Unlike our current candidates, enrolled in coursework that prepares them to be culturally competent and responsive educators, many of our experienced educators have not had this preparation. This is similar to mentor teachers who welcome future teachers into their rooms, but have not seen integrated clinical practices; they lack the conceptual knowledge of their role as school-based teacher educators or the skills to enact such a role.

Anecdotal data in multiple teacher education programs across one university indicate that there are increasing instances of micro-aggressions (Hopper, 2019; Sue et al., 2007) witnessed and/or experienced by candidates in clinical experiences. For example, candidates report mentor teachers or other building staff who perpetrated *micro-assaults*, *micro-insults, and micro-invalidations.* A *micro-assault* would be something akin to a teacher indicating in a high school English class that Judaism is not a religion; an elementary teacher telling a Spanish-speaking child to go back to their own country; white, rural, upper elementary students calling a practicum student of Asian descent an ethnic slur). An example of a *micro-insult* may be comments made to a general education intern not to spend too much time in planning lessons for their students with disabilities because they are not able to learn. An example of a *micro-invalidation* would be a school culture where many students wear confederate flags on their clothing and most parents fly confederate flags on their cars. Candidates feel at a loss as to how to handle these events when they occur because of the power differential between them and experienced, licensed teachers.

Distrust and Psychological Safety

Changing behavioral patterns requires candid, courageous conversations. In order to have courageous conversations about these interactions, candidates, university supervisors, and their mentor teachers need to build trust and feel psychologically safe with one another. That is distinctly challenging for teacher candidates placed in schools with systemic obstacles such as those we described above. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) defined trust as, "an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter

party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (p. 189). In opposition to trust is distrust that Schultz (2019) described for schools in three categories: relational (interpersonal), structural (top-down decision-making), or contextual (historical interactions) distrust. Distrust is often associated with a lack of psychological safety, but psychological safety has an added element of how valued and comfortable an employee feels in that work setting (Edmondson, 2004). It is the personal perception about how others would respond to their actions. Edmondson (2004) describes it by the question one would ask themselves, "If I do it, will I be hurt, embarrassed, or criticized?" (p. 242). And if the answer is yes, then this indicates a lack of psychological safety for the individual to interact within the group. Trust and psychological safety are related constructs that can affect various behavioral and organizational outcomes.

Schultz (2019) explained that when distrust, rather than trust, is prominent, teachers are not treated as professionals with top-down decision-making, which leads to teacher attrition on a national level. This may be of importance when considering Virginia's teacher and leader attrition rates; distrust is reported across school buildings, especially within those buildings that house historically underserved student populations. Distrust and a lack of psychological safety intersect with clinical placements in which micro-aggressions systemically occur, creating significant challenges to create effective, innovative, and integrated teacher preparation coursework and practice.

School-University Partnerships as Opportunities to Address Barriers

We view these barriers (distrust, inexperienced and unqualified mentors, and structural challenges across universities and schools) as opportunities for university-based teacher preparation programs to redefine partnerships and to respond to broader challenges around inclusive, equitable school communities in our region. In order to effectively prepare candidates, partnerships can be established to help them learn and practice within the complexity of the many contexts they will need to understand including the classroom, school, community, sociocultural contexts, as well as professional, state and national policies (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014). Likewise, "merely placing them in such contexts does not guarantee opportunity-rich experiences nor intended learning" (Anderson & Stillman, 2011, p. 459). At first glance, an opportunity might be for clinical experiences to take place in only schools that have sufficient resources and faculty with high teaching efficacy, but an ideal context might not serve the important role of preparing candidates adequately within the complexity of the contexts that they will likely face in their careers. Challenging environments with appropriate supports can help candidates develop culturally responsive professionalism by navigating the system (Abramo, 2015).

Focusing on the placement itself is important, but we also learned the value of capacity building across diverse school settings by providing effective professional learning opportunities for potential mentor teachers, coaches, and supervisors working in these settings. Anderson and Stillman (2011) recommend partnerships with exemplary, equity-minded cooperating teachers, with structured and informal learning opportunities for mentor teachers, as the model to address existing barriers. Building the human capacity by empowering our school-based colleagues opens opportunities for effective clinical practice in spaces where it might not currently exist. In the following paragraphs, we describe how we, four teacher educators, and the institutions in

which we work reimagine partnerships as opportunities to create ongoing, multi-tiered professional learning to support evidence- and equity-based teacher preparation and induction.

Teachers as Agents of Change

We rely on our classroom and school building partners to do the work that matters most for preparing skilled, culturally competent educators (mentoring and coaching them in real classrooms), but we must recognize that our colleagues work in complex contexts and received varied preparation experiences along their career paths.

Redefining "Teacher Educator". We view every experienced educator guiding a teacher candidate or novice teacher as a colleague; mentor teachers, coaches, supervisors, and faculty are all teacher educators. Our mutually beneficial partnerships position us to contribute different expertise and knowledge to the relationship, but we understand that those based in schools function within systems that have different incentive structures, policies, and community expectations than those of us based in colleges and universities. We saw the need to translate our programmatic foci on equity and implicit bias training to teacher-leadership development. We recognize that this description may connote a deficit lens; that we look at our classroom-based colleagues from an ivory tower in which we graciously (condescendingly) provide outreach and new knowledge. However, participants in a true mutually beneficial partnership must consider how university-based teacher educators can facilitate research-based, timely professional learning and school-based teacher educators (mentor teachers and coaches) facilitate deeper, nuanced understandings of the context.

Consortium partnerships, with multiple universities and multiple school divisions, are effective structures for collaborative creation of professional development workshops. Two of us are fortunate to have a long-standing collaboration with seven school divisions and three other institutions of higher education. Together, we have built multiple mentorship workshop curricula that we collaboratively facilitate to mentor both teacher candidates and novice teachers. These workshops provide teachers with skills and tools to develop mentorship relationships rooted in culturally competent practices. We use program evaluation to consistently review and revise any existing programs.

Often housed in different departments, teacher preparation programs and administration/ leadership preparation programs are also well-aligned partners in this larger work. Reaching across the hallway, so to speak, we found opportunities for collaboration. For example, we designed professional learning that concurrently empowers school-based teacher educators (mentor teachers, coaches, and university supervisors) while better serving both preK-12 and university students. Building on educational leadership literature, we designed and implemented coaching workshops to facilitate professional learning and work among school building and division teams; this work aligned understandings and skills across roles in divisions. This work helped us redefine teacher educator and move away from titles assigned by human resources offices to instead focus on the work in which we all engage to facilitate positive change in pedagogical skills. For example, we all facilitate coaching conversations, serve as models of effective practice, and evaluate candidate skill development. Our titles don't adequately describe the skills we enact as we provide guidance and feedback along a continuum of practice.

Teacher-Leaders and Teacher-Candidates: Making the Match

One of the keys to successful placement between mentor teachers and teacher-candidates is the focus of universities and school divisions working *with* one another, instead of *unto* one another (St. John et al., 2018). Relatively little research has been conducted on the national landscape of the teacher candidate placement process and how matches for candidates and mentor teachers are made (St. John et al., 2018). As we discussed earlier, teacher candidates, mentors, university supervisors, coaches, and faculty need to feel psychologically safe in order to thrive. Therefore, dedicated time must be allotted to building their partnership. Ideally, mentor teachers, coaches, supervisors, and teacher candidates are matched based on compatible characteristics. We designed open-ended questions for teacher candidate placements that we share with school building leaders: 1) What do you hope to learn/gain during this internship? 2) Describe the context in which you aim to teach following your teacher preparation program. Building leaders can then share these open-ended questions and candidate responses to match candidates with mentors who find their ideas resonant and whose skills complement candidates' areas of strength as well as areas in which they identify for growth.

We also know how important fit can be for mentoring and coaching roles; effective teaching is only one component of effective coaching and mentoring (Allen et al., 2006a; 2006b; Carter & Francis, 2001). One way of determining fit is through an application process that requires unannounced observations of potential mentor teachers that also involve follow up reflection questions that highlight their coachability and willingness to relinquish control of their classroom. In addition, surveys that underscore a mentor's strengths, areas of challenge, and non-negotiable aspects of teaching (i.e. mentor teacher will not use sarcasm with students) help inform the matching process. Lastly, a "matching party" where mentor teachers and teacher candidates are asked to come together to meet and mingle is another example that has been used when gathering information to make informed decisions for best fit.

However, we recognize how difficult matching can be, especially in schools and/or endorsement areas with higher rates of workforce attrition. When compatible matching cannot take place, we use surveys, such as the Sharing Hopes, Attitudes, Responsibilities, and Expectations (S.H.A.R.E), to help facilitate communication about each individual's beliefs and their alignment with other members of the clinical practice teammates. In our experiences across teacher education programs, we observe the potential and effectiveness of building resilient, professional relationships by coaching all individuals engaged in clinical practice partnerships; by helping our colleagues and candidates communicate with humility and responsiveness (as opposed to reactiveness), we see positive learning outcomes for everyone.

Teacher-Leaders and Teacher-Candidates: Building and Sustaining Trusting Relationships

Partnerships in classrooms will inevitably lead to disagreements and conflicts, so planned protocols we practice before problems arise help facilitate courageous conversations. In addition, a coach or university supervisor whose job facilitates the partnership between the teacher candidates and mentor teachers can help facilitate challenging conversations by being a neutral third party. Ongoing reflection logs between mentor teachers and teacher candidates that are checked by the coach or supervisor is an additional opportunity to reflect on and grow their practice and partnership.

Trust between a mentor teacher and candidate is a developmental progression that takes time and should include effective communication strategies on how to both give and receive feedback. We view the concurrent teacher preparation and teacher-leadership learning described above as an opportunity to develop a common language focused on culturally responsive pedagogy and equity. Such a common language (and the strategic ways in which we prepare teacher-leaders to engage and use it) creates opportunities to build trust with teacher candidates by addressing inequity as they experience it in clinical placements.

Equity-Focused Teacher-Leaders

Observing and collaborating with cooperating teachers who model antiracist and equity-minded instruction, engage in responsive practice, advocate for youth, and reflect critically on issues regarding race and racism, may help candidates to put their theoretical and pedagogical preparation into practice and have a strong impact on the type of teacher they will become (Anderson & Stillman, 2011). These placements can provide opportunities to develop "pedagogical integrity grounded in ideological clarity" (Anderson & Stillman, 2011, p. 458). Research suggests that clinical practice partnerships need to be maximally educative so that they are tailored to the needs of the individual (Anderson & Stillman, 2011), including cultural and linguistic matching (Strage et al., 2009). A candidate's complex background including class, religion, prior experiences in school and social justice, and racial consciousness will influence their learning during clinical experiences (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Anderson and Stillman (2013) indicate that a cultural match "is both possible and productive for learning" (p. 41), and there is evidence that candidates of color working with teachers of color are more committed to teaching in urban schools, exhibit culturally responsive teaching practices and increase their ability to meet the needs of students of color. On the contrary, a candidate of color who has an experience with a lack of diversity can feel less powerful than white candidates at the same site.

As institutions of higher education and school divisions begin to look into the best ways to advance equity, developing a program to match future teachers of color with practicing teachers of color is an opportunity that may help attract and retain more diverse candidates into the field. Given our state's challenge regarding teachers of color and attrition rates, we seek opportunities to place candidates in schools with building leaders of color and/or matching them with coaches or supervisors of color. We also note the importance of knowing the team of educators with whom a candidate will work. For example, we suggest placing candidates on a grade level team that includes a teacher of color if we cannot identify adequate numbers of effective or experienced mentor teachers of color. Teacher education programs can also create affinity groups for their teacher candidates to feel supported in a safe space to promote personal and pedagogical growth while navigating the many barriers within the education system (Pour-Khorshid, 2018). In central Virginia, multiple university teacher preparation programs partner with a non-profit organization dedicated to mentoring and providing financial support to African American teacher candidates and novice teachers. Each of these opportunities has the potential to overcome the barriers in our current education landscape, but both time and resources must be invested.

Implications

Clinical practice partnerships require time to create, strengthen, and sustain organizational relationships necessary to support effective educator preparation. Yet this time is important, given the tremendous potential of effective partnerships to effectively prepare future teachers, support novice teachers, and, ultimately, serve the diverse P-12 students in our schools (AACTE, 2018; Parker et al., 2016; Zeichner et al., 2016). As we work towards greater co-construction of school-university partnerships, we can learn from some existing successes, such as the importance of a joint venture, a long-term commitment, and collaboration because of a shared investment in student learning in Professional Development Schools (Gebhard, 1998). However, we make note of the flexible and malleable structures needed to sustain this work (Parker et al., 2016), particularly in contexts such as ours in Virginia; the complex history of schools, race, and equity require learning from and adapting such models. Some clinical practice partnership opportunities can take place in the university classroom. Examples may include working with model teachers to develop video footage of classroom teaching, footage of interviews with exemplary teachers sharing their thinking and decision making, and sharing examples of materials and student work, which can be powerful tools for candidates to learn how to work with diverse communities (Anderson & Stillman, 2011). Partnerships can include P-12 students interacting with candidates as evidenced by a study with low-income high school students of color having a powerful impact on learning in a school university-partnership where they shared their lived experiences and interact with candidates in college classes (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017). Sleeter and Milner (2011) suggested that, "programs to support university students of color typically offer financial and academic support as well as social and cultural support to combat alienation on predominantly White campuses" (p. 85). Our partnerships with area non-profits and philanthropic organizations provide opportunities to better serve candidates of color in our predominantly white institutions.

The approaches we share here focus on creating equitable opportunities for teacher candidates with diverse backgrounds. We recommend embedding culturally responsive teaching and leadership development into ongoing professional learning, developing a program to match future teachers of color with practicing teachers and leaders of color, and building psychological safety and trust among clinical practice partners; these multi-faceted approaches to clinical practice partnerships will help teacher candidates, and their P-12 students, to thrive. We encourage our colleagues to consider these approaches while engaging their school and community partners from a place of humility and inquiry; this work is most effective when we consider the unique strengths of each partner and the varied ways we can collaboratively create and sustain true partnerships.

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