

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Conversations surrounding the topic of education often focus on the word, *future*. Indeed, the idea that education is a non-negotiable prerequisite for empowered *future* populations begins with the notion that children ARE the *future*. Embedded within the educator collective is the responsibility to guard that *future* through meaningful validation of the consequential work they do.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic changed educators' stereotypically consistent identifiable handling of the *future* to an elusive and ever-changing process which has now caught the eye of countless researchers. The pandemic did not create student inequities: it exposed them, forced them to the forefront of research focus, and created multitude opportunities for reflection of practice, policy, planning, and invention. In short, Covid-19 forced the educational system to look beyond how things *have always been done* in order to plan better for *how things must be done*. Such institutional soul searching is necessary to ensure that the current public health crisis does not become a generational education crisis.

And so, they say it doesn't matter how hard you fall, but rather how high you bounce back. Although 2020 proved to be a challenging year, 2021 provided just as much of a test of educators' ability to persevere. That is perhaps the most encouraging common thread in this year's lineup of contributions to *The Texas Forum of Teacher Education*: perseverance. The articles within this issue offer a myriad of insightful opportunities for meaningful change to for the betterment of our work, to support and encourage effective educators who consistently strive to deliver high-quality learning experience rooted in research-based strategies in order to ensure that all students' needs are met.

- *Laura Shelton* brings the unique perspective of a first-year doctoral student transitioning into academic life as a preservice teacher educator after years of working in the K-12 setting, negotiating those experiences with the challenges of COVID-19 and connecting those themes to inform the future of teacher preparation.
- *Dr. Pauli Badenhorst* shares how chaos and complexity can be integrated as a vital component of teacher preparation contexts relative to the emergent development of teacherly dispositions.
- *Dr. Doug Monk* explores the causes of low confidence, negative attitudes, and reduced efficacy that many female pre-service elementary teachers have toward science and science instruction and discusses techniques to change those perspectives.
- *Dr. Cynthia Lima and Dr. Lucinda Sohn* present an action research approach to adapting the traditional face-to-face workshop to an online experience as a result of the pandemic; a shift that presented science methods faculty with opportunities to maximize support of teacher candidates.
- *Dr. Amy Ray and Dr. Julie Herron* explore the beliefs of pre-service teachers about math, revealing that most pre-service, and discuss how field experiences have the potential to shift pre-service teachers' perceptions and beliefs about mathematics teaching and learning.
- *Dr. April Sanders, Dr. Laura Isbell, and Dr. Kathryn Dixon* use qualitative research strategies to understand teacher candidates' focus and progress during lesson planning and discuss the value of early and authentic experiences with instructional design.
- *Dr. Olivia Modesto, Shauna Cooke, and Dr. Mike Desiderio* present the beneficial outcomes of a qualitative research project in an ELA pedagogical course and offer practical strategies for adoption.
- *Geronima Nale and Dr. Mary Petron* describe the experiences and encouraging outcomes of supplementing traditional field experiences with virtual field experiences in ESL preparation through a collaboration with a partnership school district.

- *Dr. Lorraine Killion and Dr. Daniella G. Varela* explore methods and strategies for preparing teacher candidates for a TExES content exam based on the qualitative feedback of a preservice teacher focus group, and offer practical, sustainable strategies proven to improve exam performance and pass rates.
- *Dr. Miriam Boesch, Dr. Alexandra Da Fonte, Anna Mohler, and Samantha K. Papp*, in response to reported low levels of knowledge and skills in augmentative and alternative communication, advocate for future pre- and in-service training to serve students with complex needs.
- *Dr. Benita Brooks, Dr. Burcu Ates, and Dr. Jannah Nerren* focus their research on ensuring that teachers are both classroom and community ready with a discussion based on the experiences of an after-school initiative at one educator preparation program.

As TxATE prepares for the next edition, the call for papers to be submitted to the *Texas Forum for Teacher Education* will go out in spring 2022 with the deadline for manuscripts set for **July 1, 2022**. Authors are asked to direct submissions to the 2022 Managing Editor, Dr. Daniella G. Varela (daniella.varela@tamuk.edu).

Respectfully submitted,
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Managing Editor, *Forum* 2021