# Learning From Learners:

## Teacher Recommendations for Improving the Clinical Teaching Experience

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# INTRODUCTION

The clinical experience, or school-based teacher candidate training, is indispensable to producing effective teachers. By entering classrooms before becoming teachers of record, teacher candidates fine-tune their classroom management and instructional delivery skills in low-pressure environments. For new teachers and candidates paired with experienced, high-performing, and dedicated mentor and cooperating teachers, the benefits of clinical experiences are augmented through collaboration and feedback cycles.[1]

We are a diverse group of 50 demonstrably effective Texas teachers committed to effectuating change in education policy by advocating for our students. As Teach Plus Policy Fellows, we sought to explore how schools, districts, policymakers, and educator preparation programs (EPPs) could improve the clinical experience for candidates to better prepare them for early-career effectiveness. Specifically, we wanted to determine the key components of a high-quality clinical experience and which teacher competencies are most essential to develop. With that goal in mind, we conducted a survey and asked participating teachers about their clinical experiences and recommendations for Texas policymakers and EPPs.

## Findings

1. Teachers desire more than the state's minimum requirements in a mentoring program.

2. Teachers expressed that starting early in multiple school and classroom settings is key to a high-quality clinical experience.

3. Data-driven instruction and technology integration are core competencies not being developed effectively in teacher candidates.

4. New teachers feel unprepared to demonstrate cultural competence and deliver effective classroom instruction to English Learners and students with special education needs.

## Recommendations

1. Improve teacher mentoring programs by setting stringent criteria for mentor selection, providing robust training for mentors, and establishing a minimum amount of non-teaching contact time.

2. Improve teacher candidate readiness by emphasizing early experiences in schools and classrooms in at least two settings with diverse student populations.

3. Prepare teacher candidates for data-driven instruction by establishing and requiring dedicated, scenario-based, student data analysis coursework.

4. Prepare teacher candidates to integrate technology into classroom instruction by establishing and requiring relevant hands-on coursework.

5. Intentionally develop teacher candidates' cultural competence and ability to deliver instruction to special populations by exposing them to best practices.

# METHODOLOGY

The survey engaged over 200 Texas teachers from elementary (24 percent), middle (43 percent), and high schools (31 percent)[2] in urban (73 percent), suburban (23 percent), and rural (3 percent) school districts.[3] We invited participants to complete our survey through the Texas Teacher Network Newsletter, partner organizations, and by spreading the word among our friends and colleagues. Participating teachers answered over 40 questions covering mentor programs, clinical experience components, teacher competencies, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Questions included:

1. What recommendations do you have to increase the effectiveness of your educator preparation program's clinical experience?

2. What recommendations do you have for the qualification, training, or matching of cooperating/mentor teachers?

3. For each teacher competency standard that you were "[s]omewhat unprepared or [v]ery unprepared" to meet, what recommendations do you have for educator preparation programs to strengthen their training?

After facilitating focus groups, we aggregated and analyzed participant responses to gather frequently occurring themes and insights. Afterward, we synthesized our findings to create actionable recommendations for Texas policymakers and EPPs.

# FINDINGS

**1.** **Teachers desire more than the state's minimum requirements in a mentoring program.**

The Texas Education Code, revised in 2019, requires mentor teachers to have three years of experience and a "superior record of assisting students."[4] When asked about minimum qualifications for mentor teachers, respondents showed strong support, 66 percent and 63 percent respectively, for two qualities: A satisfactory or above-average evaluation and a minimum of five years of teaching experience.[5] This is a clear indication that teachers want to be supported by effective, experienced, and committed mentors.

When it comes to standards within a mentoring program, participating teachers believe that candidates and mentors should be afforded a set amount of non-teaching contact time. Sixty-five percent of respondents called for time to co-plan, discuss ideas, and build a relationship.[6]

Teachers also expressed concern about mentor teacher quality with 55 percent supporting a uniform system for evaluating mentor teacher effectiveness in a district.[7] One teacher addressed this concern by suggesting, *"A more formalized process for choosing mentors. For example, my first year, my mentor teacher was chosen for me as she was the most senior person on campus, but she was overwhelmed, exhausted, and told me, 'I don't know what to do to help you.' So, I effectively received no help from my mentor during my first year and had to seek out help from other people on my own." —High school English as second language teacher.*
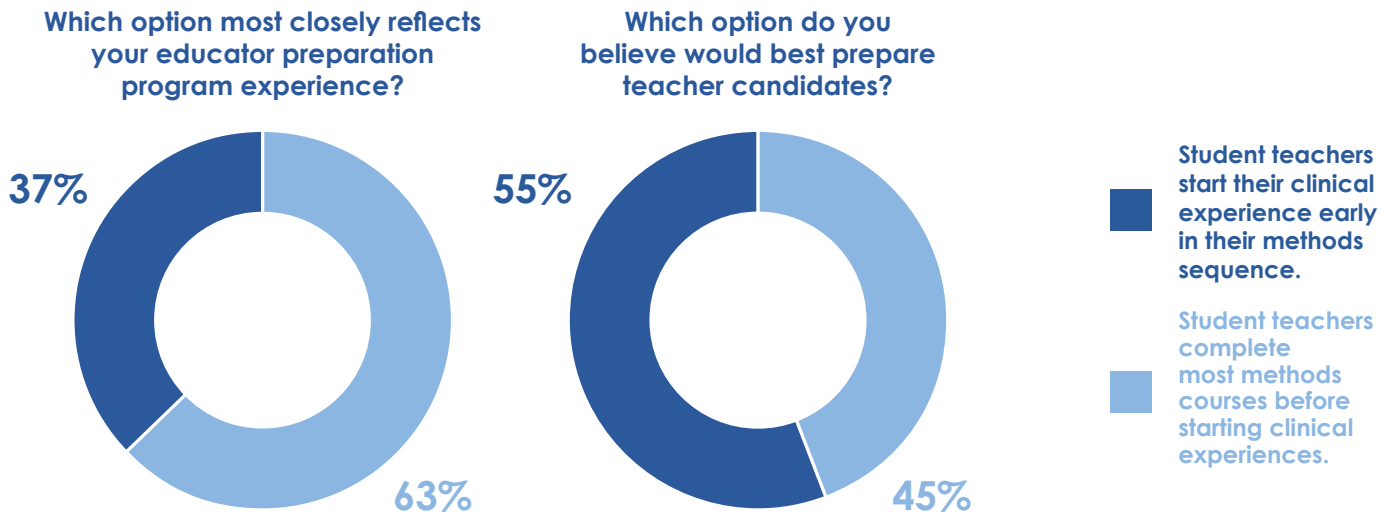
Respondents agreed that a strong mentor program is crucial in supporting early career candidates and teachers. Through their survey responses, teachers emphasized that mentor programs in Texas have not been fully optimized and offered several ideas to improve mentor relationships and outcomes.

**2.** **Teachers expressed that starting early in multiple school and classroom settings is key to a high-quality clinical experience.**

According to our respondents, the largest differences between the clinical experience components teachers recommend and the ones EPPs actually provide are in starting early and being in multiple settings. Starting early means candidates begin their clinical experience before completing most of their methods courses. Multiple settings means candidates are placed in varying geographic settings and grade levels to be exposed to diverse student populations.

## STARTING EARLY

When asked if teachers should begin their clinical experience early in an EPP, 55 percent of teachers agreed,[8] although only 37 percent had started their clinical experience before completing most methods courses.[9] Although method classes were deemed helpful by many, teachers expressed a disconnect between what they learned and their actual classroom experiences. One teacher discussed his/her and their classmates' confusion about practical application when a professor would model a lesson during a methods course and suggested that, *"the most practical and helpful thing would be to start hands on in the classroom as early as possible and continue working in the field throughout the program." —Elementary music teacher, urban district.*

**Which option most closely reflects your educator preparation program experience?**

**37%**

**63%**

**Which option do you believe would best prepare teacher candidates?**

**55%**

**45%**

■ **Student teachers start their clinical experience early in their methods sequence.**

■ **Student teachers complete most methods courses before starting clinical experiences.**
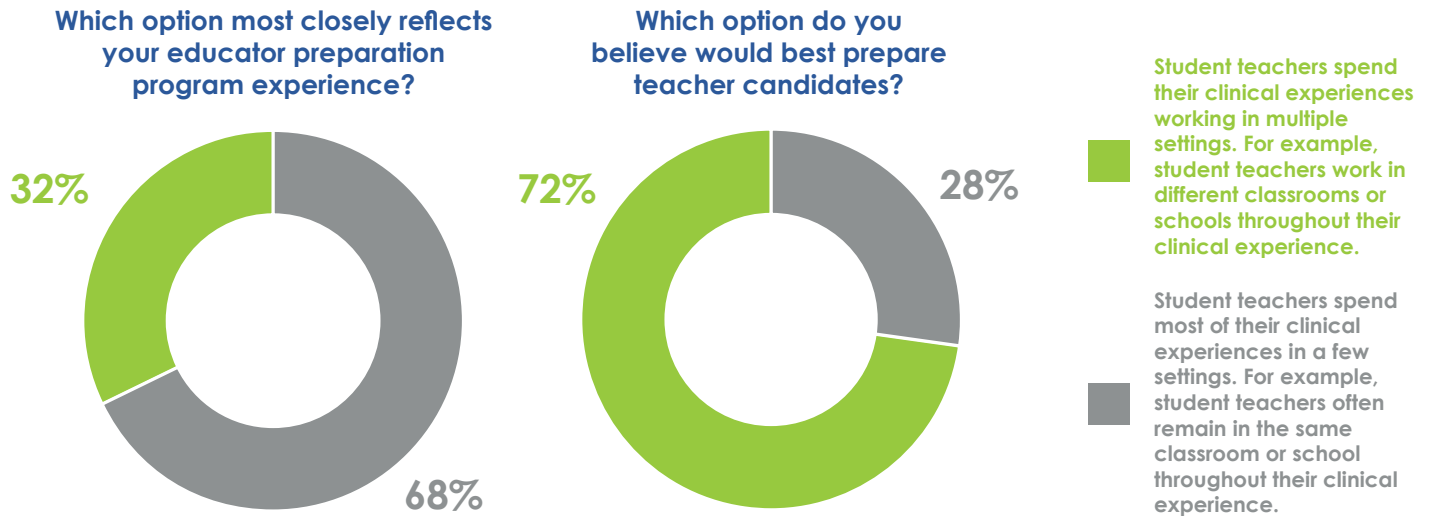
Additionally, teachers called for early access to classrooms to observe veteran teachers, collaborate with on-campus personnel, and interact with students to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their methods courses.[10] *"Add more observation hours of highly effective teachers." —Middle School social studies teachers, urban district*

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*"Teacher candidates need to work in a school setting to learn school culture and to see early on what teaching is really like. Behavior management and classroom management is a large part of the foundation of learning how to work with students. You can have the perfect lesson plan, but if you can not manage your classroom, you will not be teaching at all." —Middle school counselor, urban district.*

There are many components of a high-quality clinical experience but the teachers we surveyed made clear that starting early is crucial to a candidate's development.

## MULTIPLE SETTINGS

**Which option most closely reflects your educator preparation program experience?**

**Which option do you believe would best prepare teacher candidates?**

32%

68%

72%

28%

**Student teachers spend their clinical experiences working in multiple settings. For example, student teachers work in different classrooms or schools throughout their clinical experience.**

**Student teachers spend most of their clinical experiences in a few settings. For example, student teachers often remain in the same classroom or school throughout their clinical experience.**
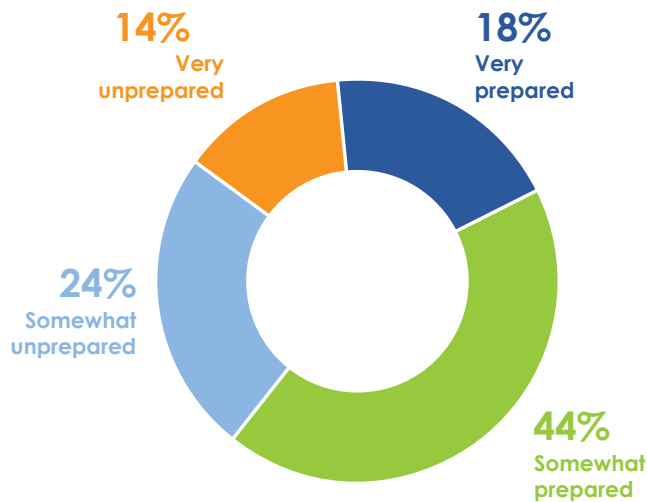
Another key component of high-quality educator preparation is ensuring that candidates gain experience in multiple settings. When teachers in our survey were asked to reflect on their clinical experience, only 32 percent reported placements with multiple grade levels, varied geographical settings (urban vs. suburban), and diverse student and teacher populations.[11] However, even teachers who did not have experience in multiple settings recognized how valuable such an experience is for candidates, with 73 percent agreeing that multiple settings would better prepare candidates.[12] One teacher summarized, *"Multiple varied experiences, including [being] in the trenches teaching but also being able to observe multiple teachers across the spectrum … [and] processing experiences they have seen ... allows them to see the variety of students who are in America's classroom[s]." —Elementary teacher, suburban district.*

**3.** **Data-driven instruction and technology integration are core competencies not being developed effectively in teacher candidates.**

## DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) defines the data-driven instruction standard as follows: Teachers use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed.[13]

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**How prepared were you to meet the Data-Driven Practice standard?**

**14%**
Very
unprepared

**18%**
Very
prepared

**24%**
Somewhat
unprepared

**44%**
Somewhat
prepared

Thirty-eight percent of teachers in our survey responded that they felt unprepared to provide data-driven instruction after completing their EPPs.[14] Teachers who were fortunate enough to be exposed to data-driven instructional techniques did not recognize how vital the standard was until they reached classrooms as lead teachers. One teacher wrote, *"I had no idea how much data was going to drive my instruction during the educator preparation program. NONE." —High school teacher, urban district.*

Another teacher didn't even recall their EPP mentioning the data-driven instruction at all. *"I don't recall the online alternative certification that I took saying anything about this." —High school math teacher, urban district.*

## TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

TEA does not define a technology integration standard. However, the need for one has been made abundantly clear by the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on instructional delivery and our respondent teachers. For this survey, we defined technology integration as follows: Teachers consistently use and adapt technological resources to differentiate and deliver instruction, gather and respond to student data, and communicate with students and families.

**How prepared were you to meet the Technology Integration/hybrid or blended learning standard?**

**23%**
Very
unprepared

**16%**
Very
prepared

**24%**
Somewhat
unprepared

**37%**
Somewhat
prepared
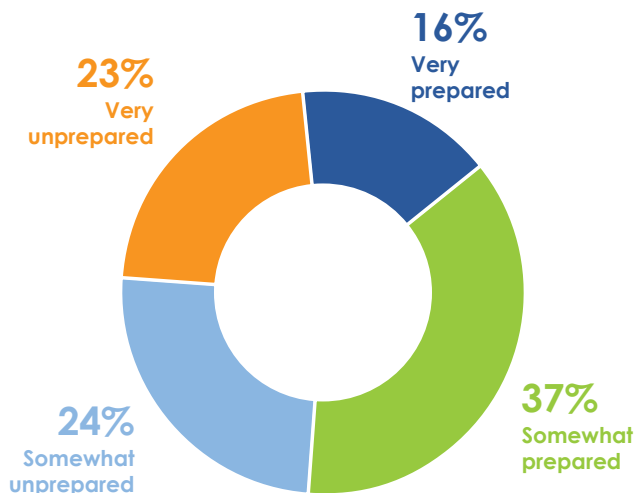
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After completing their EPPs, 47 percent of teachers felt that they were unprepared to incorporate technology into their classroom instruction.[15] One teacher wrote that, *"My program did not discuss technology at all so any integration would be helpful. Most of the schools I trained in were very rural and did not have any technology." — High school social studies teacher, urban district.*

Further illustrating the need for a technology standard and more effective EPP training in this area is the fact that teachers eventually learn to use technology through unofficial means such as via coworkers and colleagues. *"I feel technology wasn't taught by instructors. What I know, I learned from peers." —Elementary teacher, urban district.*

**4.** **New teachers feel unprepared to demonstrate cultural competence and deliver effective classroom instruction to English Learners and students with special education needs.**

| | | Very prepared | Somewhat prepared | Somewhat unprepared | Very unprepared | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teach English Language Learners | Count Row% | 37 18% | 81 37% | 56 27% | 39 19% | 202 |
| Exercise Cultural Competency | Count Row% | 45 21% | 79 37% | 52 25% | 37 18% | 202 |
| Teach students with learning disabilities | Count Row% | 43 21% | 83 38% | 43 21% | 43 20% | 201 |

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

In a definition that The National Education Association has adopted, cultural competence is "the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than our own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, developing certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching."[16]

Forty-three percent percent of teachers in our survey felt unprepared to exercise cultural competency in their classrooms after completing their EPPs.[17] One frustrated teacher shared, *"Student teachers need more prep work with cultural understanding and positive relationship building ... as the old saying goes, 'kids don't care what you know until they know you care." —High school English as a second language teacher, urban district.*

## STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

When it comes to providing differentiated instruction, support, and special education services for students enrolled in their classes, 41 percent of teachers reported that their EPPs lack both instructional and practical experience in supporting students with 504 plans, IEPs, and other special services.[18] According to one teacher, *"SPED was not as emphasized because many teachers had specialties in those areas, instead of all teachers needing the training, again, it was like a 'chapter' to cover in our EDU classes." —Middle school librarian, suburban district.*

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New teachers' struggles were not limited to instructional delivery but also included challenges with behavior management. Another teacher responded, *"As a teacher in special education, I was not prepared for all the behaviors and other issues students in a centralized program deal with." —Middle school special education teacher, urban district.*

## ENGLISH LEARNERS

An English Learner (EL) is a student who is acquiring English and has another language as their primary language. The terms English Language Learner and English Learner are used interchangeably and are synonymous with Limited English Proficient (LEP) student, as used in Texas Education Code 29, Subchapter B.[19]

Despite the presence of over one million ELs in Texas,[20] 46 percent of teachers in our survey described feeling underprepared by their EPPs to support the needs of ELs on their campuses.[21]

Our diversity, equity, and inclusion responses indicate an apparent disconnect between what candidates learn from their EPPs and what they need to be successful as teachers. First-year teachers are most likely to start their careers in schools with high-need students. Consequently, when teachers lack the training, background, and experience to be successful, they often struggle to meet the needs of the very students who need effective teachers the most.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**1.** **Improve teacher mentoring programs by setting stringent criteria for mentor selection, providing robust training for mentors, and establishing a minimum amount of non-teaching contact time.**

There is no doubt that effective mentoring is the foundation for a successful career in teaching. A highly-qualified mentor teacher not only guides a novice teacher in lesson planning, best practices, and classroom management through observation and practice, but also provides personal support, expertise in school culture, and advice.[22]

To establish these types of effective mentor teacher relationships, districts and EPPs should put into effect the following teacher-supported solutions:

1. TEA should raise the minimum experience level of mentor teachers to five years;
2. Districts should require 12 hours per semester of non-teaching contact time during school hours regardless of Mentor Program Allotment participation;
3. Districts should provide robust training for mentor teachers independent of Mentor Program Allotment participation;
4. Districts should utilize House Bill 3's Mentor Program Allotment to fund training and compensate mentor teachers.

Raising the minimum experience level of mentor teachers not only increases the reliability of the mentor's performance evaluations, but also increases their institutional knowledge which can be passed on to their mentees.

The quality of a mentor teacher and the amount of non-teaching contact time spent with their mentee are paramount to a novice teacher's success and desire to stay in the profession. House Bill 3's Mentor Program Allotment requires 12 hours per semester

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of non-teaching contact time. Districts should ensure they provide early career teachers ample opportunities to work with their mentor, reflect on their performance, and create plans to improve based on their mentor teacher's feedback.

Programs that meet these criteria are a good start. However, our survey respondents also demonstrated a desire for high-quality training for mentors. Mentoring is essentially an expanded teaching role, and appropriate training improves the mentoring program's quality; A mentor's knowledge of how to support new teachers and skill at providing guidance is also crucial.[23]

*"I think the mentor definitely needs to have sufficient training in mentoring and also needs to be fit to be a mentor. Just because a teacher is great at teaching doesn't mean they will be great at mentoring aspiring teachers." —Elementary gifted program teacher, urban district.*

But how do we recruit and retain effective mentor teachers? One solution voiced by teacher respondents in our survey was to incentivize mentor applicants with stipends, professional development hours, or both. One teacher wrote, *"State funding for training and certifying cooperating/mentor teachers while also providing stipends for their commitment to mentoring preservice teachers." —Middle school social studies teacher, urban district.*

*"Mentor teachers should receive PD hours in exchange for serving as a mentor..." —Middle school advancement via individual determination teacher, Suburban District*

While funding mentor training and incentives may give some districts pause, Texas' 86th legislature provided a workable solution. By utilizing House Bill 3's Mentor Program Allotment and meeting the mentor program requirements of the Texas Education Code,[24] districts can earn up to $1800 per mentee for mentor training and stipends.[25]

## 2. Improve teacher candidate readiness by emphasizing early experiences in schools and classrooms in at least two settings with diverse student populations.

Many teachers expressed that they would have liked more candidate experience observing and practicing the day-to-day life of a teacher.[26] To provide teachers with both hands-on experience and a more holistic and realistic view of teaching, EPPs should place candidates in the classroom early in the program. One teacher said, *"New teachers don't know what they don't know." —High school English language and reading teacher, urban district.*

To discover what they do not know and apply their learning from methods courses, candidates should be in schools from the beginning of their EPP in at least two different geographical and grade-level settings. Getting candidates into classrooms early may also have the benefit of allowing them to ensure their careers are headed in the appropriate direction. *"Teacher candidates should have several different experiences in multiple grade levels before being placed to understand if they're chosen level is right for them." —Elementary dual language teacher, urban district.*

Early and consistent classroom experiences were frequently mentioned by teachers when asked how EPPs could improve candidate preparation for instructional planning and delivery. Combining early classrooms with diverse experiences by assigning candidates to multiple settings with diverse student/teacher populations would dramatically impact their candidate preparedness. Observing, assisting, and teaching ELs and students with special education needs will better prepare

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candidates to become teachers of record. Finally, diverse clinical experiences will help prepare candidates to face their own biases and teach effectively in the highest-needs communities.

### 3. Prepare teacher candidates for data-driven instruction by establishing and requiring dedicated, scenario-based student data analysis coursework.

Survey respondents made clear that they can only develop data-driven instruction skills through extensive practice. *"I think these programs should give assignments on how to analyze student data. Then, grade us based on our responses to ensure accuracy and a full understanding. This is especially important when looking at data on race disparities." —High School teacher, suburban district.*

EPPs should establish and require dedicated scenario-based data analysis courses to improve the problem-solving skills of candidates. Another teacher shared how such an approach might work. *"A course specifically driven towards this type of analysis & problem solving (potentially scenario-based - could be working on project with hypothetical class throughout the semester so teacher can practice tracking student & class period data across time, consistently making adjustments based on new understandings) & giving ways to track quantitative as well as QUALITATIVE information -- differentiating between data causes (& how to determine) Is the kid unmotivated? Does the kid not understand? Is the kid under emotional distress? Does this student need a reteach or to be sent to the counselor?" —High school English teacher, urban district.*

A course utilizing hypothetical data layered throughout a semester would provide candidates with a philosophical background for data-driven instruction while simultaneously offering hands-on opportunities to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data used to make instructional delivery decisions.

### 4. Prepare teacher candidates to integrate technology into classroom instruction by establishing and requiring relevant hands-on coursework.

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered instructional delivery methods for teachers across the state and country.[27] Most teachers have had a crash course in integrating technology to develop and deliver instruction and communicate with students and families.

EPPs should expose candidates to high-quality technology resources by establishing and requiring dedicated hands-on technology integration courses. For maximum impact, EPPs should separate candidates by their self-assessed comfort with technology.

*"Have labs included where teachers can improve and grow in using technology. Separate them based on experience. There is nothing worse than being next to someone who Masters technology when you are a beginner." —High school English and creative writing teacher, suburban district.*

Additionally, candidates should be separated by grade-level and the subjects they teach.

*"Technology will be best incorporated within the content areas. For example, I would like to see science teachers learning how to integrate technology concurrently with methods classes." —Elementary science teacher, suburban district.*

When developing technology integration courses, EPPs should include both hardware and software training for candidates. One teacher writes, *"This section should include practice on all devices that are relevant in schools Chromebook Apple desktop laptop depending on comfortability of technology integration." —Elementary English language and reading teacher, urban district.*

Another teacher notes, *"Educator preparation programs should select a few high-heeled apps to model how to use them consistently so teacher candidates can develop a transferable base knowledge." —Middle school math teacher, urban district.*

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how integrating technology into classrooms can be beneficial to students; however, it also revealed that many Texas teachers need more training. EPPs should integrate technology coursework into their curriculums to ensure candidates are ready to deliver 21st century instruction to their students.

**5.** **Intentionally develop teacher candidates' cultural competence and ability to deliver instruction to special populations by exposing them to best practices.**

There are over 1,000,000 ELs in Texas schools,[28] and over 500,000 students have reported disabilities in the state.[29] Additionally, over 4,000,000 immigrants live, work, and learn in Texas.[30] Despite these overwhelming statistics, over 40 percent of teachers in our survey did not feel prepared to demonstrate cultural competency, teach ELs, and deliver instruction to students with special education needs.[31]

EPPs should begin to address this issue by developing the cultural competency of candidates. According to a 2016 study funded by the University of California, Santa Cruz, "teaching methods that connect with students' real lives and interests and promote understanding of other cultures are associated with better academic outcomes."[32] This idea is supported by our respondent teachers as well.

*"EPPs need to focus on diversity and real-world classroom and school Community components as well illustrate the need for future teachers to have rational capacity with educational stakeholders including students of diverse backgrounds parents, colleagues and other school Community stakeholders." —High school special education teacher, urban district.*

EPPs must be intentional about implementing culturally responsive best practices throughout their training to improve student outcomes. If necessary, that may necessitate seeking third-party entities to assist in embedding culturally responsive pedagogy. Such an approach would help programs become more affirming of our public education system's diverse populations and increase candidates' preparedness for the diverse settings they will enter after completing their programs.

Additionally, EPPs and districts should address the needs of special populations by exposing candidates to best practices through formal and informal means. One respondent teacher explained, *"[EPPs should] 1) require instruction on the SPED, ELL, school counseling and disciplinary programs and policies in the clinical teaching environment … 2) [Districts should] require a mentor teacher to review the class rosters & the special needs of individual students to discuss expectations and strategies to assist students." —High school career and technical education teacher, urban district.*

# CONCLUSION

The teacher respondents in our survey pointed out several opportunities to improve outcomes for teacher candidates and their future students in our state. EPPs should take action to ensure that candidates are starting their clinical experiences early in their programs and across a variety of settings where they are supported by effective, experienced, and committed mentor teachers. EPPs should also provide improved offerings for developing candidates' data-driven practice and technology integration skills, and ensure that candidates are prepared to demonstrate cultural competency and teach special populations. Addressing these areas will lead to increased teacher candidate satisfaction with EPPs and improved outcomes for all Texas students.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

# ENDNOTES

[1] See The Importance of Mentoring New Teachers | Incompassing Ed: https://incompassinged.com/2017/07/14/the-importance-of-mentoring-new-teachers/

[2] Question: "What level do you currently teach?" Responses: (n = 280) "Elementary" (24 percent), "Middle" (42.7 percent), "High" (30.9 percent), "Other" (2.3 percent).

[3] Question: "Please tell us about your school's setting:" Responses: (n = 244) "Urban" (72.5 percent), "Suburban" (22.5 percent), "Rural" (2.5 percent), "Other" (2.5 percent).

[4] See Texas Education Code Section 21.458: https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.21.htm

[5] Question: "Which of the following minimum qualifications for cooperating/mentor teachers do you support? [Choose as many as applicable]" Responses: (n = 246 ) "Minimum 5 years teaching experience" (62.6 percent), "Teach at the same location as the mentee" (59.8 percent), "Satisfactory/Above-average Evaluation" (65.9 percent), "Teach within the same department (if secondary school)" (53.3 percent), "Teach the same content" (52.4 percent), "Proficient in technology integration" (46.8 percent).

[6] Question: "Which of the following cooperating/mentor teacher standards do you support? [Choose as many as applicable]" Responses: (n = 246 ) "Set a minimum amount of non-teaching contact time (e.g. co-planning, feedback, etc.) between cooperating/mentor teachers and student teachers" (64.6 percent), "Set uniform minimum selection criteria for cooperating/mentor teachers across the state" (39.8 percent), "Creating a standard, uniform system for evaluating cooperating/mentor teacher effectiveness in districts" (55.3 percent), "Creating a cooperating/mentor teacher endorsement option for a teaching or administrative license" (45.9 percent).

[7] Seen endnote 6.

[8] Question: "Which option do you believe would best prepare teacher candidates?" Responses: (n = 211) "Student teachers complete most of their methods courses before starting clinical experiences" (45.0 percent), "Student teachers start their clinical experience early in their methods sequence" (55 percent).

[9] Question: "Which option most closely reflects your educator preparation program experience?" Responses: (n = 222) "Student teachers complete most methods courses before starting clinical experiences" (63.1 percent), "Student teachers start their clinical experience early in their methods sequence" (36.9 percent).

[10] Question: "What final recommendations do you have to increase the effectiveness of your educator preparation program's clinical experience?" Open response question.

[11] Question: "Which option most closely reflects your educator preparation program experience?" Responses: (n = 221) "Student teachers spend most of their clinical experiences in a few settings. For example, student teachers often remain in the same classroom or school throughout their clinical experience" (68.3 percent), "Student teachers spend their clinical experiences working in multiple settings. For example, student teachers work in different classrooms or schools throughout their clinical experience" (31.7 percent).

[12] Question: "Which option do you believe would best prepare teacher candidates?" Responses: (n = 211) "Student teachers spend most of their clinical experiences in a few settings. For example, student teachers often remain in the same classroom or school throughout their clinical experience" (27.5 percent), "Student teachers spend their clinical experiences working in multiple settings. For example, student teachers work in different classrooms or schools throughout their clinical experience" (72.5 percent).

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[13] See Texas Administrative Code: https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=2&ch=149&rl=1001

[14] Question: "Data-Driven Practice: Teachers use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed. How prepared were you to meet the Data-Driven Practice standard?" Responses: (n = 198) "Very prepared" (18.2 percent), "Somewhat prepared" (43.9 percent), "Somewhat Unprepared" (24.2 percent), "Very unprepared" (13.6 percent).

[15] Question: "Technology Integration definition (not a TEA definition): Teachers consistently use and adapt technological resources to differentiate and deliver instruction, gather and respond to student data, and communicate with students and families. How prepared were you to meet the Technology Integration standard?" Responses: (n = 199) "Very prepared" (16.1 percent), "Somewhat prepared" (37.2 percent), "Somewhat Unprepared" (24.1 percent), "Very unprepared" (22.6 percent).

[16] See Promoting Culturally Competent Teaching: https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.udel.edu/dist/8/4456/files/2017/09/Cultural-Competency-Brief-092217-web-1-1l7jxku.pdf

[17] Question: "How prepared to exercise cultural competency in your classroom did you feel as a result of completing your educator preparation program?" Responses: (n = 202) "Very prepared" (20.8 percent), "Somewhat prepared" (36.6 percent), "Somewhat Unprepared" (24.8 percent), "Very unprepared" (17.8 percent).

[18] Question: "How prepared to teach students with learning disabilities did you feel as a result of completing your educator preparation program?" Responses: (n = 201) "Very prepared" (20.9 percent), "Somewhat prepared" (37.8 percent), "Somewhat Unprepared" (21.4 percent), "Very unprepared" (19.9 percent).

[19] English Learners in Texas Fact Sheet: https://www.txel.org/media/jvehnvgp/fact-sheet-1-7-15-20-final.pdf

[20] See endnote 19.

[21] Question: "How prepared to teach English Language Learners did you feel as a result of completing your educator preparation program?" Responses: (n = 202) "Very prepared" (17.3 percent), "Somewhat prepared" (36.6 percent), "Somewhat Unprepared" (27.2 percent), "Very unprepared" (18.8 percent).

[22] See The Importance of Mentoring New Teachers | Incompassing Ed: https://incompassinged.com/2017/07/14/the-importance-of-mentoring-new-teachers/

[23] See The Benefits of Mentoring - Educational Leadership: http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may01/vol58/num08/The-Benefits-of-Mentoring.aspx

[24] See endnote 4.

[25] See Texas Education Agency House Bill 3 Implementation: Mentor Program Allotment:

[26] See endnote 10.

[27] See Navigating the Texas Pandemic Recovery: Teacher Recommendations for a New Normal: https://teachplus.org/news-events/publications/navigating-texas-pandemic-recovery

[28] See endnote 19.

[29] See TEA's 2019 - 2020 Special Education Reports: https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/cgi/sas/broker?_service=marykay&_program=adhoc.std_driver1.sas&RptClass=SpecEd&_debug=0&SchoolYr=20&report=StateState&format=html

[30] See English Learners in Texas: Demographics, Outcomes, and State Accountability Policies: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/EL-factsheet2018-Texas_Final.pdf

[31] See endnotes 17, 18, 21.

[32] See Does Culturally Relevant Teaching Work? An Examination From Student Perspectives - Christy M. Byrd, 2016: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244016660744

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