CALL FOR PROPOSALS

AACTE 72nd Annual Meeting
February 28 – March 1, 2020, Atlanta, GA

Disrupting Inequities: Educating for Change

Over the last year, we have witnessed a rapidly changing society. These changes are driven by policy and policymakers with limited knowledge of best practices for working with dynamic and diverse school communities. In turn, this politically-motivated process has produced a grand narrative, while claiming to be colorblind and neutral, that tends to represent a small, privileged portion of the U.S. population.

As educators, scholars, and practitioners, we are keenly aware of the systemic failure occurring in PK-16 environments that serve our most vulnerable populations. We know that high school dropout rates and elementary school reading test score data are being utilized to predict the need for state prisons. We know that teachers, administrators, counselors, and psychologists are mobilized to address issues related to trauma associated with forced separation of immigrant families, disparate policing policies, and intolerance to the LGBTQ community. We also know that people of color, students with disabilities, and individuals from low-income communities are disproportionally impacted by punitive classroom practice and have unequal access to high quality teachers, which is the best predictor of school success. Apathy and a sense of complacency have allowed de facto segregation along racial, geographic, and socio-economic lines at levels that exceed legally-enforced segregation policies of the past, thus entrenching inequalities in under-resourced schools.

As a profession, we are uniquely positioned to obstruct injustice and challenge the dominant ideology and majoritarian narratives. We must promote ways to enhance the learning and development of all students. It is time that we, as educators, become the driving force in crafting our narrative on behalf of our profession, education as a whole, and particularly, PK-16 students. This narrative includes effective educational practices and policies with goals and outcomes that reflect the success of all students. By redefining the meaning and markers for success, we can encourage students to become active learners, productive citizens, critical thinkers, and leaders in their communities and across the globe.

The 2020 AACTE Annual Meeting invites you to join in this unified effort to disrupt inequities while educating for inclusion and change. Proposals are invited that explore strategies for infusing equity and inclusivity into preparation and practice, embrace activism and innovation as methods for transforming democracy, conceptualize practices for establishing a sustainable and diverse profession, and demonstrate successful partnerships and collaborations that advance clinical partnerships and promote community engagement. In addition to the sociocultural frameworks that are commonly utilized, we also welcome the usage of Critical Race Theory (CRT), DisCrit, LatCrit, indigenous methodologies, womanism, queer theory, and other frameworks not commonly represented in educator preparation work.

Strand I: Equity and Inclusivity in Preparation and Practice

U.S. public schools serve individuals and communities with diverse perspectives and needs, and educators must be prepared to work in this complex environment. Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that should guide all educational policies, preparation programs and practices, rather than being the focus of a separate policy. To do so effectively, educators must recognize the principle that education, particularly in a liberal democracy, is both a fundamental right and the foundation for more equitable, inclusive, and cohesive communities. Ensuring that all learners have access to quality education acknowledges the intrinsic value of diversity and respect for human dignity. In this way, differences are seen in a positive light, and as the stimulus for fostering learning. Then the principles of inclusion and equity are not only about ensuring access to education, but also about the educational spaces themselves—having quality learning spaces and pedagogies that enable students to thrive, understand their realities, and work for a more just and democratic society. Therefore, it is important to find ways of addressing the needs of the most underserved students that do not necessarily demand extra funding and additional resources. A culture of inclusion and equity in education needs a shared set of assumptions and beliefs among educator preparation programs and school districts. Central to these assumptions and beliefs is valuing differences, believing in collaboration, and being committed to offering educational opportunities to all students.

Using this knowledge, educator preparation programs must advocate for the integration of the principles of equity and inclusion into programming and practice. We must build a collective understanding that more inclusive and equitable education systems have the potential to promote equality, develop teacher and system capabilities, and encourage supportive learning environments. These various efforts will, in turn, contribute to overall improvements in educational quality.

The purpose of this strand is to share innovative perspectives, orientations, strategies, and technologies designed to address equity and inclusivity among diverse groups of learners and school contexts.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one or more of the following questions:

- How can educator preparation programs ensure that school leaders and teachers understand, embrace, and incorporate the principles of equity and inclusivity?
- What strategies and skills must teachers develop to provide differentiated instruction to special education, gifted, and neurodivergent students?
- In what manner are educator preparation programs adjusting their practices to address the needs of learners in urban, suburban, and/or rural districts?
- What innovative strategies are mission-driven and MSI institutions using to address and support equity and inclusivity?
- Which methods are used to collect, collate, and evaluate evidence on barriers to education access, to participation and to achievement?
- What strategies are used to engage key education and community stakeholders to foster the conditions for inclusive learning, and to foster a broader understanding of the principles of inclusion and equity?
- In what ways can restorative justice be used to build relationships and repair harm?
- What asset-based approaches can be used to recognize the benefits of student diversity, and how to live with, and learn from, difference?

- In what ways can technology and its use create more inclusive and learner-centric environments?

Strand II: Activism and Innovation for Transforming Democracy

The national and local political climate continues to threaten the sustainability and foundation of the education profession. As such, it is essential for scholars and practitioners to embrace and engage in the principles of activism and innovation in the continuing process of disrupting inequities and educating for change in our schools, communities, and educator preparation programs. In the attempt to provide a vibrant and democratic community, the field continues to be challenged, and negatively impacted, by policies set by decision-makers who are unfamiliar with, or are agenda-based, in their approach to educational policies. The voice of students, at all levels, must be allowed to be heard and represented by educators acting as activists and innovators. Educators, of all levels, must actively promote effective and equitable educational practices, and must make strides toward implementing innovative practices necessary to transform education and provide equity for all students. This work cannot be done in a silo; our engagement within and with the systems and people—schools or organizations, local communities, and the adults that our students interact with outside the classroom—must be considered if we wish to transform and promote democratic education.

The purpose of this strand is to challenge the current mindsets and sociopolitical context that tend to limit activism and innovation within our educational system, and to encourage educators to effectively advocate for and engage in innovative practices constructed for transforming democracy.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one of more of the following questions:

- How can educators be informed about, and participate in, structured activism to encourage the transformation of mindsets to prepare and promote a democratic education?
- What innovative practices encourage educators to embrace trauma-informed instruction and healing-centered engagement to promote transformation and embrace ideas related to educating for change?
- How can teachers and school professionals be prepared to embrace an activist mindset, and respond to political events in an effective manner, to disrupt inequities and promote change?
- How can schools and colleges of education (education programs) be effective activists while also promoting change in the overall relationship with their own institutions?
- What are ways to increase the understanding of the transformative nature of activism for faculty, leaders, and candidates?
- How can activism and innovation in programming lead to building human capacities and impacting educational systems?
- In what ways does reflective practice connect with innovation to promote educational systems?
- How can a systems approach (consideration of school children, adult learners, schools or organizations and local communities) impact teaching and learning, transforming the way we educate our candidates?
- What strategies and activities are needed to establish activism and innovation in impacting policy decisions in educational settings? What role does self-care play in sustaining the activist?
- What evidence of strategies and/or results exist related to activism or innovation around the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)?

- How can schools and colleges of education (education programs) deepen their students' abilities to lead change and implement innovation in their local educational organizations and communities?

Strand III: Establishing a Sustainable and Diverse Profession

Compelling political and social forces are disrupting 'business as usual' in teacher education. Bankrupted state budgets, teacher shortages, school violence, and fractured communities threaten the sustainability of public education. Activist teacher educators and K-12 practitioners struggle to sustain professional standards and teaching integrity during turbulent times. The pipeline for new teachers is uncertain when 'alternative facts' and unsubstantiated opinions defame and slander the teaching profession, and alternative pathways compromise professional standards.

As the education system attempts to address the wide spectrum of student needs and gain understanding about neurodivergent learners, a collection of specialized, culturally-sensitive and innovative pedagogical tools are needed to ensure all students have the opportunity to develop and flourish. Teacher educators and K-12 practitioners must partner to disrupt existing inequitable social and organizational structures in order to invent an educational/schooling system that supports social justice, creates culturally-responsive curriculum, and provides an infrastructure to support mental health, wellness and self-care. Higher education, by redefining and repurposing educational research, can collaborate with K-12 partners to explore how educational structures must be designed to support schools, teachers, students, families and communities.

The purpose of this strand is to explore practices that sustain the profession by disrupting the inequities that impede progress in educational change. Presentations will provide research to describe innovative, culturally-responsive curriculum and new school structures to support mental health and improved methods for achieving safe schools.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one of more of the following questions:

- How can higher education and K-12 educators unite in perspective and goals to become an effective voice for establishing a sustainable education profession?
- What are exemplary models of collaboration between special educators and content-area experts to develop programs and credentials to better support all students in inclusive environments?
- Which practices create the most innovative, authentic and sustainable partnerships?
- What are the most impactful means to establish advocacy for the profession at all levels?
- What are effective methods for recruiting and preparing teachers who will persist and strive to sustain and advance the profession?
- What is the best infrastructure to support mental health, wellness and teacher and student self-care?
- What are the best practices in diversifying both those who teach in colleges of education (education programs) and in our PK-16 schools?
- How can education become more just, democratic, responsive, and respected?

Strand IV: Clinical Practice and Community Engagement

Sustained and supervised clinical practice, in partnership with schools and communities, results in better-prepared teachers. Through effective clinical experiences, educators are retained in the field longer and more often positively impact student learning. Programs that capture the complexity of place, pedagogy and practice have the potential to disrupt inequities. Teachers who are underprepared often end up in our most vulnerable communities, teaching students who have been historically underserved. The art and science of Education includes an established, professional knowledge base that continues to be questioned and threatened by people who do not have expertise in the field.

In 2018, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) released an updated report, *A Pivot Toward Clinical Practice, Its Lexicon, and the Renewal of Teacher Preparation*. This report expanded upon the *NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel Report* (2010) by outlining proclamations and tenets that assist in operationalizing the field's endorsement of clinical practice partnerships. Two models known to be effective in educator preparation are professional development schools and teacher residencies. In addition, clinical settings may also include local communities, which are essential contributors in how teachers are prepared.

The purpose of this strand is to explore and expand what we mean by partnerships in educator preparation. This strand investigates what we know about practice and pedagogy as it applies to clinical practice partnerships and community engagement.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one or more of the following questions:

- What do school leaders need to know and be able to do to support clinical practice and/or community engagement?
- How do education professionals disrupt clinical practices that perpetuate cycles of racism and oppression?
- In what ways are educator preparation programs leading in their states through leveraging partnerships with schools and/or communities?
- What models and methods of research are being conducted to further the field in clinical practice?
- How is practice-based teacher education enhancing the preparation of teachers and utilizing clinical practice partnerships?
- How are we engaging post-traditional students in clinical practice, and how are we supporting these students as they balance multiple, and often competing, priorities?
- What innovative pedagogies or practices are being used to collaborate with communities?
- How are school-based and university-based teacher education programs working together to prepare teachers to engage in clinical practice?
- What are some examples of how reflective practice has supported effective and collaborative relationships?
- How do we ensure that clinical practice is serving shortage areas such as special education, ESL, bilingual education, STEM, and others?

The final date for proposal submission is May 29, 2019. Acceptance notifications will be sent in August 2019. Visit submit.aacte.org to begin a proposal.