

A VOLUME IN CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN CLINICALLY BASED TEACHER EDUCATION IN ACTION

# The Complex Work *of* Teacher Educators

*Cases That Illustrate Teacher Educator Standards in Action*

*edited by*

Rebecca West Burns | Jennifer Jacobs

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A volume in  
*Contemporary Issues in Clinically Based Teacher Education in Action*  
Eva Garin and Rebecca West Burns, *Series Editors*

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*edited by*

**Rebecca West Burns**

*Kutztown University*

**Jennifer Jacobs**

*University of South Florida*



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## SERIES FOREWORD

Welcome to the second book in our series, *Cases in Clinically Based Teacher Education*. Each book in this series published by Information Age Publishing, follows a similar structure of a case-based format. Cases serve as a natural impetus for collaboration between researchers teacher educators, and case development hopefully leads to opportunities for rich discussion through educational partners in K–12, higher education and the greater community.

As you read the book *Complex Work of Teacher Educators: Cases that Illustrate Teacher Educator Standards in Action* (Burns & Jacobs 2023), you will see how the cases are organized around a standard and in the case of this book, *Teacher Education Standards* published by the Association of Teacher Educators (2008). Each chapter is organized around a particular standard and begins with an introduction and review of the standard to build common understanding among readers. Following the introduction, there are cases to demonstrate the standard in action followed by opportunities for collaborative conversations through discussion questions and field-based activities.

We are happy to add the Burns and Jacobs book to our series and hope that readers find that the standards-based cases support their teacher education work. We congratulate Rebecca West Burns and Jennifer Jacobs and each of the case authors in bringing the Teacher Education Standards into their daily work.

—Eva Garin  
Rebecca West Burns

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# FOREWORD

It is my extreme honor and pleasure to compose a foreword for the volume you are about to read. The work is framed around the Teacher Educator Standards published by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), a professional organization that celebrated its centennial anniversary in February of 2020, just as the world entered the maelstrom of the COVID-19 pandemic. After more than 2 years of virtual meetings and virtual schooling, the Association, in tandem with its members and the institutions of learning they represent, returned to an altered learning landscape. Fueled by a strategic plan forged in the crucible of the pandemic, the Association launched into its second century of work determined to make a greater impact on the profession. Among the action items in that strategic plan—review the Association’s seminal works for their usefulness in a post-pandemic environment and beyond. As president of ATE in 2022–2023, I requested and the board of directors approved the appointment of a commission to re-examine the first edition of the Teacher Educator Standards, published in 2008. The commission is actively engaged in that work, as this volume goes into distribution, it couldn’t be a more timely contribution to the field.

There are many reasons to recommend *The Complex Work of Teacher Educators: Cases That Illustrate Teacher Educator Standards in Action*, to you; I’ll enumerate just a few. The subject matter itself is compelling. Being a pupil under the tutelage of an instructor is a universal experience; therefore, everyone has an opinion about what makes a good (or bad) teacher, and the continuum ranges from “Those who can’t do, teach” to “If you can read this, thank a teacher.” The sentiment that anyone can step in front of a group of

students and be a successful teacher is detrimentally pervasive in our society. The general public knows little about the process of becoming a professional educator and knows even less about those who prepare the next generation of classroom teachers. Teachers who enter very different classrooms than most of them experienced as students. Today's teachers may be asked to arm themselves, to stand between their students and the unexpected violence that may come through the door, to make split-second life-ending decisions, but may not be allowed to make decisions about the books their students will read. Today's teachers face the absurd constraints of standardized testing on students whose lives and learning experiences are far from standardized. Today's teachers must combat the social media influencers and the ubiquitous distractions of hyper-connected children. Who prepares individuals for these tasks and how are they prepared? Editors Burns and Jacobs, with their case authors, create a brilliant mosaic piece-by-piece, case-by-case, of the challenging, sometimes contradictory, and as Burns and Jacobs conclude, the complex work of those called to be teacher educators.

You can also trust these guides. Rebecca West Burns and Jennifer Jacobs provide exceptional insight regarding the field of teacher preparation. Their explanations of the standards that introduce each chapter are singularly valuable. These individuals have been engaged in the work at every level; they can interpret the shorthand of classroom teachers who have no time for extended narratives, and they can decipher the academic prose of university faculty. As active scholars themselves, they make multiple connections between the experiences described in the cases and the most current research. Their vision for the work is manifested in a unique volume that will be useful for a variety of individuals and institutions.

The structure provides multiple valuable access points. Each chapter is organized around one of the existing ATE Teacher Educator Standards, with an introductory description provided by editors Burns and Jacobs. Brief summaries of the cases applicable to the standard follow. Burns and Jacobs provide an informative analysis in a special section of each chapter entitled, "Looking Across the Cases." Then the selected cases for each chapter/standard are presented. Each case provides discussion questions and an activity to stimulate discussion and personal reflection. Any one of these pieces might provide an access point; start with the standard or start with the cases. You could even start with the activity/discussion questions, then examine the cases, and see if your discussion encompasses the professional experiences presented. Use the work to develop course assignments, to facilitate seminar discussion, or to do program development; it's a resource for each of these and more.

Two additional aspects of the work deserve your attention. First, the sheer number of cases, 70, in a single volume is noteworthy. If you can't find a case that will challenge you or inspire you, then you're simply not taking

advantage of this collection. Second, the diversity of voices and settings is remarkable. You will recognize the names and/or the institutions of some case contributors, but you will also hear from voices not normally present in the teacher educator literature—undergraduates, graduate students, doctoral candidates, and assistant professors teaching their first methods course, are all contributors to this compendium. The contexts range from program development to individual course assignments, from R1 research institutions to public school classrooms, from Maine to Hawaii and from North Dakota to Texas.

*The Complex Work of Teacher Educators: Cases That Illustrate Teacher Educator Standards in Action*, is a unique window into the often maligned and misrepresented work of teacher preparation. Like a stained-glass window, each case provides its one-of-a-kind shape and color to the overall image. Burns and Jacobs, and their case contributors, have crafted a dramatic representation that should capture our attention and let the light refract through each piece on our own professional practice. Let it inspire us and move us; it has for me already. I trust it will do the same for you.

—**Rachelle Rogers, EdD**

President, Association of Teacher Educators  
2022–2023

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# INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is rapidly changing, pushing the field to reposition clinical practice as *the* central feature of teacher preparation programs, increasing the role that schools play in teacher preparation, and advocating for greater collaboration between schools/school districts and universities/colleges of education (see [American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2018](#); [National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010](#)). As the field evolves, so does the meaning and understanding of the work of teacher educators.

The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) has a long history of supporting and advocating for teacher education and teacher educators. The quest to understand who is a teacher educator and what a teacher educator does began in the early 1990s. Simply put, a teacher educator is an individual with specialized knowledge and skill about supporting the professional learning of teachers. Through the work of various commissions, ATE developed, refined, and published a set of standards for teacher educators in 2008. Since that time, countless institutions and individuals have used these standards to guide their work and understanding of what it means to be a teacher educator. Given that the first edition of the Teacher Educator Standards was written more than a decade ago, Dr. Rachele Rogers, ATE President from 2022–2023, created a national commission during her presidency to examine the first edition of the standards. The ATE Commission on the Teacher Educator Standards has been charged with reviewing the standards and recommending updates for a second edition. As of the publication of this book, a date for the second edition has yet to be released.

The hope is that this book can inform the second edition of the standards illustrating how current teacher educators view their work and align it to the ATE Teacher Educator Standards.

The challenge of being a teacher educator in today's shifting context and accountability climate is real. *The Complex Work of Teacher Educators: Cases That Illustrate Teacher Educator Standards in Action* provides concrete, contemporary examples of the ATE Standards from practicing teacher educators. These cases make transparent the complex work of teacher education and highlight the need for preparing high quality teacher educators who can meet tomorrow's demands for preparing the next generation of teachers. Each chapter closely examines one of the ATE Teacher Educator Standards and then provides several cases from teacher educators across the United States that target that standard. Each chapter also includes discussion questions and an activity designed to promote reflection and change. While the book could be read cover to cover, the hope is that readers can use this book as a resource guide for a deep dive into a particular practice that can be used to improve their practice, innovate within their local contexts, and advance the work of teacher education.

## STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Each chapter is organized by one of the ATE Teacher Educator Standards and follows a similar format. Each one begins with an introduction where the particular standard of focus is briefly summarized. Then, each of the cases in the chapter is summarized. Next is a section, *Looking Across the Cases*, that articulates themes that cut across the cases for that particular standard. The hope is that these themes will evoke discussions about the work of teacher educators as well as inform future standards and practice to better reflect what teacher educators are experiencing in their daily work. From there, each case is presented, and there are generally three to four cases per chapter. Each case concludes with *Case Discussion Questions* to promote dialogue about the particular case. These questions provide an opportunity for the case to promote reflection and professional learning. Finally, there is a *Case Activity* that provides an active opportunity for self-reflection into one's practice as a teacher educator in relation to that particular standard.

## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter 1, "The Complexity of *Teaching in Teacher Education*," highlights Standard 1, Teaching, one of the most central functions of a teacher educator's role. The cases in this chapter showcase the complexity of teaching

by identifying dilemmas that impact innovative teaching in clinically based teacher education. The teacher educators in this chapter reinforce the notion that teaching is an iterative cycle of inquiring into one's practice by experimenting with new strategies, collecting and analyzing data on those strategies, critically reflecting on the data, and promoting growth to reach new advances in practice.

Chapter 2, "The Complexity of *Promoting Social Justice and Cultural Competence in Teacher Education*," focuses on Standard 2, Cultural Competence. This chapter illustrates the complexity of advocating and integrating cultural competence and social justice as part of teacher education. Teacher educators not only must develop knowledge in this area but engage in critical self-reflection in order to enact a pedagogy of teacher education.

Chapter 3, "The Complexity of *Scholarship in Teacher Education*," centers on Standard 3, Scholarship. The cases in this chapter describe how teacher educators conceptualize and engage in scholarship across the continuum of teacher education (i.e., teacher candidates, inservice teachers, and university-based teacher educators). The cases illustrate how scholarship often originates with problems of practice and is done through collaboration.

Chapter 4, "The Complexity of *Professional Development in Teacher Education*," focuses on Standard 4, Professional Development. The cases in this chapter describe how teacher educators engage in professional development to reflect upon and improve their practice in a variety of ways. In the cases shared in the chapter, professional development occurred through systematic inquiry into one's practice, co-planning and co-teaching, and engaging in learning communities.

Chapter 5, "The Complexity of *Program Development in Teacher Education*," illustrates Standard 5, Program Development. This chapter strengthens the argument that program development and data-drive continuous program improvement is the purview of teacher educators. The cases in this chapter reinforce the importance of gathering stakeholder feedback to drive program development and improvement. They also show how program development is a journey, not a quest—it is an iterative, collaborative, ongoing process to advance teacher education.

Chapter 6, "The Complexity of *Collaboration in Teacher Education*," focuses on Standard 6, Collaboration. These cases highlight the need for teacher educators to collaborate with a diverse array of stakeholders in order to navigate the inherent complexity in teacher education to promote high-quality professional learning experiences that center on success for PK–12 students.

Chapter 7, "The Complexity of *Public Advocacy in Teacher Education*," showcases Standard 7, Public Advocacy. This chapter demonstrates the important and yet extremely difficult role teacher educators can and should play in advocacy at multiple levels. The cases make transparent the invisible and labor intensive work of advocacy and argue for this critical work to be

recognized, valued, and accounted for in teacher educators' work; namely, in job descriptions and as part of annual evaluations. Fostering systemic change through advocacy takes time, persistence, and collaboration to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education.

Chapter 8, "The Complexity of *Contributing to the Teacher Education Profession*," focuses on Standard 8, Teacher Education Profession. The cases in this chapter illustrate ways that teacher educators can contribute to the profession. One of these ways includes becoming involved in professional organizations. Additionally, there is the importance of giving back to the profession through mentoring colleagues.

Chapter 9, "The Complexity of *Leading with Vision in Teacher Education*," illustrates Standard 9, Vision. This chapter highlights four examples of vision at various levels—individual coursework, college, and national. The cases demonstrate the importance of teacher educators to be able to see connections across ideas, concepts, people, and/or spaces. Leading with vision means being able to see a larger picture, listening to various stakeholders, and mobilizing groups of people to advance the work within a particular domain or sphere. This chapter illustrates how complex and emotionally exhausting but critically important leading with vision in teacher education can be.

Chapter 10, "Implications for the Future of Teacher Education," summarizes the book by identifying themes across the chapters that exist as implications for the future of teacher education. We, as editors and scholars of teacher education, contend that the future of teacher education will require intentionally pointing to clinical practice in the work of teacher educators, making the work of teacher educators valued, and attending to the preparation of teacher educators. We argue that while this book made transparent the complex work of teacher educators, there needs to be increased attention to how the work of teacher educators should be resourced and valued. Three ways that the work of teacher educators can be valued includes: (a) Using the standards to inform evaluations of faculty both annually and in tenure and promotion, (b) Recognizing the role of school-based teacher educators in teacher preparation, and (c) Resourcing the work of teacher educators appropriately both in institutions of higher education and in schools.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the purpose of this book was to do just as its name implies—make transparent the tacit, implied, hidden, and incredibly complex work of teacher educators. The book offers 32 cases written by almost 70 authors from across the United States. By taking an indepth look at each of the ATE

Teacher Educator Standards, readers can see how teacher educators are enacting the various facets of their roles and responsibilities. Their work encompasses the domains of teaching, promoting social justice and cultural competence, conducting scholarship, partaking in professional development, designing and leading program development and continuous improvement, encouraging collaboration, engaging in public advocacy, contributing to the profession, and leading with vision. Defining such a comprehensive articulation of the scope and nature of the work helps those outside understand what it means to be a teacher educator. Now defined, these descriptions can and should inform policies and procedures within and outside of the academy to ensure that those who prepare teachers are not only provided with the necessary preparation and support needed to actualize their work but also that their work is recognized and valued—that it is no longer marginalized among other scholarly fields and disciplines. Teacher educators play a critical role in educating the nation’s teaching force, and that complex work warrants visibility.

— **Rebecca West Burns**  
**Jennifer Jacobs**

## **REFERENCES**

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## CHAPTER 1

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# THE COMPLEXITY OF TEACHING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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### ATE TEACHER EDUCATOR STANDARD 1: TEACHING

Model teaching that demonstrates content and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions reflecting research, proficiency with technology and assessment, and accepted best practices in teacher education. ([Association of Teacher Educators, 2008](#)).

Standard 1 for the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) Standards for Teacher Educators is *Teaching* (ATE, 2008). It has ten indicators. Standard 1 contends that teacher educators must be exemplary teachers of teachers. Exemplary teaching means being a role model for the teachers whom

they are teaching by demonstrating reflective thought about their teaching, implementing research-based strategies to meet the diverse needs of students, and using data to continually improve their teaching. Exemplary teaching should promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Exemplary teaching also means that teacher educators should mentor novice teachers and teacher educators. In essence, Standard 1 indicators that above all else, teacher educators are teachers; thus, they must embody excellence in teaching. This chapter offers four examples of Standard 1 in action.

### SUMMARY OF THE CASES

The first case, *Inquiry for All: Implementing Inquiry Approaches Across Classroom Contexts*, Erin Quast of Illinois State University describes how a methods course instructor can work with teachers to implement inquiry-based literacy tutoring with K–5 students in a laboratory school, a public school, and a bilingual classroom. This case chronicles Dr. Quast’s journey of disrupting preconceptions of which students can and should engage in inquiry-based approaches to literacy development. This case demonstrates how teacher educators can create practice-based coursework that positively impacts not only teacher candidates but also elementary students.

In the second case, *Engaged Pedagogy: Can Teacher Educators Teach With Integrity While Grappling With Accountability Systems?* Sarah Jean Baker, Staci Finley, and Chloe Bolyard, all from Missouri State University, illustrate the effects of varied assessment practices on teacher candidates. In this case, the reader meets Olivia, a teacher candidate who wants to be a teacher and wants to do her best in her teacher preparation courses. However, Olivia is struggling for several reasons. First, she has to balance dedicating time for her studies with spending time working to survive. The need to work to live causes her stress and affects her performance as she cannot always dedicate the time and attention she would like to dedicate to her assignments. Second, Olivia experiences frustration as she has to navigate diverse teaching and assessment practices across her coursework. The case highlights two of her professors, Professor Miller and Professor Hall, who both care about their teaching but who are vastly different in how they approach teaching teachers. Third, Olivia experiences cognitive dissonance in Professor Miller’s class, whose approach to teaching teachers is different than any other course she has experienced to date. Because she has been conditioned by years of schooling to position the teacher as legitimate expert and holder of knowledge, she appreciates but also struggles with Professor Miller’s use of engaged pedagogy that positions her as the primary actor in the construction of her knowledge of teaching, a foreign position for Olivia. The case

leaves the reader with productive tensions that can be used as a self reflective tool both individually and with others in a teacher preparation program.

In the third case, *Revamping Foundational Curricula: Clinical Integration in an Educational Psychology Course*, Raven Robinson from the University of North Florida outlines how she designed her educational psychology course to support teacher candidates in connecting theory and practice. Unlike the first case where all teacher candidates were from the same teacher preparation program, in this case, Robinson describes how she must differentiate for teacher candidates who come from six different teacher preparation programs. Her case provides detailed examples of her thinking through course design while centering reflection and experience through theory and practice connections.

In the fourth case, *Modeling Culturally Responsive Teaching Dispositions*, Nicole Schlaak and Monica Smith both from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa share their dilemma of how a required dispositional assessment tool mandated by their teacher education program was not culturally responsive to their teacher candidates who identify as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. They describe their work with two teacher candidates, Maile and Leilani, during their clinical experiences and share their struggle of how they can model culturally responsive pedagogy in their supervision practices when the tools they are required to use are not responsive to their teacher candidates.

### LOOKING ACROSS THE CASES

The four cases featured for Standard 1 illustrate the complex work of teaching teachers. Looking across the cases, all the authors shared dilemmas they faced in their teaching as they tried to enact Standard 1 of modeling exemplary teaching. Case 1 highlights the dilemma of taking an innovative practice “to scale” by implementing it in multiple contexts; Case 2 highlights the dilemma of how to create coherence of signature pedagogies and beliefs across a teacher preparation program; Case 3 highlights the dilemma of differentiating for teacher candidates across multiple teacher preparation programs that ask them to make theory and practice connections; and Case 4 highlights the dilemma of how to model culturally responsive teaching practices for teacher candidates. Just as problems of practice exist for teachers, it seems that problems of practice, identified as dilemmas in these cases, exist for teacher educators, who can and should embrace dilemmas as opportunities to systematically study their own practice. Teacher educator inquiry or self-study is an accepted methodology in teacher education (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Journals like *Studying Teacher Education* are dedicated to self-study methodology, thus encouraging teacher educators

to study their own practice. By problematizing the teaching of teachers, teacher educators can integrate their teaching and research; therefore, where, what, how, and who they teach becomes their laboratory.

These cases also demonstrate that modeling exemplary teaching is not easy and should not be equated with perfectionism. In fact, modeling should be equated with experimentation and coupled with thoughtful risk taking. Such a stance models vulnerability, and vulnerability paired with reflection in and on practice (Schön, 1983) is essential in exemplary teaching. All four cases illustrate teacher educators reflecting on their practice and taking risks to try to improve their practice. Gathering data about their teaching and using data to drive their experimentation and innovation would also be a means for demonstrating exemplary teaching.

The next section includes the four cases written by various authors. At the end of each case, there are discussion questions and an activity for you to use by yourself or with others to deepen your understanding and practice of Standard 1: Teaching.

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## CASE 1

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# INQUIRY FOR ALL

## Implementing Inquiry Approaches Across Classroom Contexts

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*Yeah, but students at this school can do this type of learning. What about students in public schools who struggle with the basics?*

—Teacher Candidate, Spring 2018

During the 2017–2018 school year, I collaborated with a fourth grade teacher in the university’s laboratory school to redesign a literacy tutoring course around inquiry learning. For 12 weeks, teacher candidates (TCs) worked diligently to craft a research project around a fourth grader’s topic of interest, designing lessons that developed students’ literacy skill sets within the projects. From a modeled ski lift to a research brief on cat eye mechanisms to a blog advocating for children’s engagement with video games, the final inquiry presentations signified that the tutoring redesign had been a success. Yet the statement above made by a TC during the final week of clinical weighed heavily on me. During final course discussions, assumptions surfaced that this type of learning was reserved for certain students, like the predominately affluent and white students attending the laboratory school.

While troubling, the TCs' sentiments were not surprising, reflecting pervasive deficit views (Valencia, 2010) of students from non-dominant backgrounds needing basic skill sets (Dyson, 2013; Lasater et al., 2021). I was grateful for the laboratory context that allowed me to reimagine what literacy learning could look like, but I recognized the importance of TCs implementing this instructional approach in other school contexts. Thus, I focused on collaborating with local public schools to support TCs in engaging *all* students in inquiry-based learning environments.

This case describes my journey as a teacher educator to implement an inquiry-based tutoring clinical experience across four elementary contexts: a laboratory classroom, a public primary classroom, fourth grade in a public school, and a bilingual classroom. I begin by explaining the redesign that foregrounded inquiry within a literacy tutoring course, demonstrating that the basics can be developed through constructivist approaches. I then describe the implementation of the course across different classrooms, attending to the unique assets, obstacles, and insights of each context.

## REDESIGNING FOR INQUIRY

Grounded in constructivist approaches, inquiry emphasizes learning through students' active pursuit of intellectualism. Despite decades of research showing benefits of inquiry approaches (Chen & Yang, 2019), its adoption within schools has been slow and stagnant. In literacy, teacher-directed isolated skill development (Botzakis et al., 2014) continues to have a stronghold despite evidence that children engage in sophisticated literacy interactions across diverse home contexts (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019; Heath, 1983).

I was first assigned to our department's literacy tutoring clinical course in Fall 2017. The aim of the course is to develop TCs' assessment-instructional cycle by providing one-on-one literacy tutoring in an elementary classroom. Unique in its format for a methods course being housed within a clinical, I saw possibility for TCs to experience inquiry approaches to literacy learning and explore how foundational skills can be developed within learning environments attuned to students' intellectual curiosities. Innovation in teacher education involves hard work but at times also luck. Luck came for me in being placed within Amy's fourth grade classroom. Amy had a history of student-centered classrooms focused on relationship-building and student engagement. Housed within the university laboratory school, Amy's classroom provided a space to imagine and alter existing practices.

Amy and I began by identifying our essentials for the tutoring experience. We both valued literacy assessments as tools for instruction but agreed that students often get lost behind decontextualized assessment data (Lasater et

al., 2021). We prioritized relationship-cultivation between TCs and fourth graders as the foundation for assessment. Amy and I also understood that curriculum content is important, but so, too, is the context in which it is taught. We wanted TCs to cultivate tutoring environments that built on students' strengths and interests. Amy suggested TCs implement inquiry-based literacy research projects. In completing their projects, Amy and I sought for TCs and students to go beyond written reports, reflecting the myriad ways people communicate and connect in the 21st century.

Guided by our shared vision, we redesigned the tutoring into four phases:

*Phase 1: Connecting.* TCs engaged students in relationship-building activities and authentic literacy activities (e.g., reading choice books, creative writing, sharing of student artifacts).

*Phase 2: Planning.* Based on their connections, TCs identified assessments for additional insights into students' literacy patterns and practices. TCs analyzed informal and formal data to write a holistic literacy profile of the tutee.

*Phase 3: Researching.* TCs designed and implemented reading lessons aligned to state standards that supported the tutee in researching their interest.

*Phase 4: Authoring.* TCs designed and implemented writing lessons aligned to state standards that supported tutee in disseminating their project.

By the end of the semester, evidence of the success of the inquiry-based tutoring approach was plentiful. Fourth graders showed heightened engagement and commented on how fun the learning had been. TCs demonstrated immense growth in their abilities to design effective instruction targeting aspects of literacy within an inquiry context.

Yet, as the opening vignette illustrated, TCs seemed to associate student-centered, inquiry-based learning with the laboratory school context. Comparing the tutoring to prior clinical experiences in public schools, many TCs expressed that they just did not see it possible in public education given the demands and needs of students. Recognizing TCs assumptions and biases, moving forward I focused on implementing the redesigned tutoring in varied classroom contexts.

## INQUIRY ACROSS CONTEXTS

Across 4 years, I worked to connect with cooperating teachers open to inquiry tutoring. Each context had unique structures and needs that transformed

the tutoring to better reflect the students and schools. Each context also disrupted TCs' misconceptions about learners and learning approaches, as they witnessed the benefits of inquiry approaches for all students.

## Primary Classroom

Nearing the end of a substantial teaching career, Diane was eager to support incoming teachers; however, she noted aspects of her classroom that might pose challenges. With 27 second graders, she was navigating an overcrowded classroom. Furthermore, 40% of the students were identified as beginning readers. Diane saw tutoring as a space for the second graders to receive needed individualized support.

Diane's classroom required TCs and me to envision what inquiry looks like in a primary classroom serving students at the start of their literacy journey. We paired two students with one TC, matching different strengths within the second grade pairing. Wanting them to recognize the learners in front of them for their potential, I withheld school assessment data from TCs. When TCs started to notice certain reading behaviors such as emerging decoding skills, I worked with them to move past assumptions that research projects were too complex for the students. Instead, TCs worked to develop foundational reading and writing skills within student-centered research projects.

The transformative tutoring experience was reflected in Alex, a TC who was paired with Nina, an emergent reader new to the school and city. As they connected early in tutoring, Alex learned about Nina's love for horses, an animal that reminded the student of her father and brother who were not able to make the move to the new city. In analyzing her literacy development, however, Alex identified Nina was not meeting many grade level benchmarks and expressed uncertainty to me in how to proceed forward. I challenged Alex to use what she knew about Nina, her strengths, desires, and life experiences to cultivate a student-centered literacy environment.

Alex seized the challenge, visiting libraries and searching the internet for textual materials on horses. She started by reading with Nina an informational book on horses. When they came across the word foal, they spent time making sense of it, reading it out loud, and making connection to other terms for animal offspring. Alex then created phonics lessons exploring vowel pairings like "oa" in foal and located decodable texts on horses that introduced Nina to additional letter-sound patterns. Connecting reading to writing, Alex supported Nina in writing a series of poems on horses that further developed her phonetic knowledge. Finally, the pair returned to informational books, gathering textual evidence to create a poster that detailed Nina's dream stable.