Theory & Practice in Rural Education (TPRE)
2024, Vol. 14, No. 2, Pp. 21-67
 ISSN:2641-7170
https://doi.org/10.3776/tpre.2024.v14n2p21-67

Project edPIRATE: A Teacher Residency MAT Program for Rural Educational Justice

Angela Novak, *East Carolina University*
Jennifer L. Gallagher, *East Carolina University*

Rural educational justice demands reconstructing educational structures, including teacher preparation programs. With federal funding from a Teacher Quality Partnership grant, we rebuilt a Master of Arts in Teaching pathway program from the ground up, using a co-teaching residency model and a core framework of rural educational justice practices. With goals of establishing a healthy racial climate, building the racial literacy and culturally responsive teaching capacity of the teaching resident and mentor teacher teams, and fostering rural humanizing community spaces designed to cultivate genius, joy, love, intellect, and criticality (Muhammad, 2023), the first two years of the five-year grant are the subject of this theory-to-practice analysis. Utilizing a school-university-community collaboration approach, we identified, placed, supported, and mentored teacher residents in a place-conscious approach to the rural, racialized communities and contexts in which they teach. The purpose of this article is three-fold: (a) to contextualize the educational inequities and opportunities that exist in the rural Southeast Black Belt, (b) to present our rural educational justice teacher education framework, curriculum, and processes to members of the field of rural education, and (c) to share emerging themes from our experiences creating a teacher education program for rural educational justice. What we offer is not yet an exemplar. However, it provides theoretical foundations, an ambitious curricular framework for rural teacher education, and an analysis of lessons learned.

***Keywords*: teacher pathways, Black Belt, research-practice partnerships, rural educational justice**

The paradigms of neoliberalism, racial capitalism, and globalization have negatively impacted schools in the southeastern U.S. Black Belt. This history has left our rural public schools underfunded and Black genius within them undervalued. Traditional teacher education to support our rural schools, often decontextualized, ahistorical, practice-oriented, and including only additive (rather than centralized) components of culturally responsive pedagogy, has failed to respond to these educational crises - as evidenced by ongoing educational debts and disparities (Owens, 2019; Swain & Baker, 2021; The Education Trust, 2022). Instead, community-based teacher residencies grounded in historically responsive literacy and place-based social foundations offer a

new path to meet the demands of rural educational justice (REJ), which Corbett (2017) outlines as "recognitional (domination, disrespect, and marginalization of groups) and associational (the extent to which individuals and groups are involved in decisions that affect their lives) [problems]" (p. 1–2) in addition to redistribution of resources within a spatial educational frame.

Disparate education in the rural southern Black Belt is operationalized through "space, place, and power collide[ing] with the historical antecedents of settler colonialism and white supremacy" (Swain & Baker, 2021, p. 17). The Black Belt refers to counties stretching across southern states, with dark, fertile soil formerly tilled by enslaved souls on plantations and since then has been home to a majority Black population. Current reports of Black Belt locales (e.g., Owens, 2019; The Education Trust, 2022) detail the historical and present-day systemic exclusion of and discrimination against Black students, such as having fewer opportunities than their peers (e.g., AP courses or high-speed internet access; Owens, 2019) and having less qualified teachers (e.g., less experienced or not credentialed in their field; Owens, 2019; The Education Trust, 2022). This has historically been a political issue, with white politicians divesting Black children and the rural sector from appropriate, equitable educational experiences (Anderson, 1988; Biddle et al., 2017; Fultz, 2004).

While many laud the historic Brown v. Board of Education landmark case as a breakthrough for equality, the effect was political shifts in southern states' laws. This included abolishing several states' public education requirements, compulsory attendance regulations, and modification of tenure laws (Fultz, 2004). As a result, Black teachers and principals were dismissed from the workforce in alarming numbers (Fenwick, 2022; Fultz, 2004). To this day, Black teachers have not returned to the pre-Brown numbers, nor are teachers' racial and ethnic identities representative of the student populations they serve. In NC, 25% of students are Black, with Black teachers only 15% of the educators. In contrast, 48% of students are White, with White teachers comprising 77% of the workforce (The Education Trust, 2022). With these needs in mind, a focus on reimagining and restructuring schools emerges.

Over fifty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke about reimagining from just such an unjust society for the enhancement and promotion of everyone's dignity, stating that he was "convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society" (King, 1967, 42:12). This person-oriented shift requires a stronger focus on students and a shift in educators' understanding of themselves: racially, culturally, and in the contexts of power and place. bell hooks (1994) offers a vision of repair in teaching and learning spaces by teaching to transgress obstacles and boundaries as well as against systems of oppression. Teachers must engage both their own and their students' mind and body wholeness and create

spaces of possibility where teachers and students grow and are empowered in educational pursuits toward freedom (hooks, 1994). Such teaching requires teachers to work and live within the disparities evidenced in the Black Belt and see the genius, hope, and possibility for freedom that lives there.

However, where, and how do we prepare teachers to heed hooks's call? Housing teacher education within nearby university settings (although commonplace for much of the last century) risks entangling transgressive education with the negotiations between the roles of academic disciplines and professional practice (Labaree, 2008). On the other hand, recent teacher education programs that have subverted university preparation (e.g., Teach for America) have abstained from commitments to the democratic education underpinnings of public education or engagement with community assets and resources (Zimmerman, 2018). These issues are compounded in rural settings, where recruitment and retention contribute to a professional educator shortage (Biddle & Azano, 2016; Tran et al., 2020).

Democratic rural education should be of attention for teacher preparation universities and policymakers alike in North Carolina as it is consistently ranked as a highest-priority state with rural students much more likely, as compared to their peers in other states, to "live in a household with an income below the poverty line, attend a racially diverse school located in a community where many families live below the federal poverty line, and have moved residences within the last 12 months" (Showalter et al., 2023, p. 22). While there are oft-cited challenges to rural teaching (e.g., pay, fewer resources, taking on multiple roles, and personal and professional isolation; Biddle & Azano, 2016; Owens, 2019; Tran et al., 2020), rurality is steeped in assets. Rural districts may have more teacher autonomy, lower class sizes, richer school culture, and community camaraderie (Tran et al., 2020). Within the rural community setting, there may be more small-town engagement indicative of the rural lifestyle, which also comes with a lower cost of living among a natural, less-polluted environment than urban locales. Tran et al. (2020) also noted in their literature review that rural areas have less crime than urban locales and that teachers are seen as having higher status in these typically friendly communities. This asset-based view of rurality is important to convey in teacher education programs.

In addition to location, the approach to teacher education matters. Educator preparation programs must align the focus of their coursework with their educational and democratic commitments. Increasingly popular high-leverage practices and ambitious teaching frameworks (e.g., Ball & Forzani, 2011; Lampert, 2010) focus teacher education on decontextualized practices as tools for engaging students in high-level academic pursuits. However, as education historians and foundations scholars alike have noted, the practice-based turn to teacher education must be deepened by work in socio-historical foundations of education that is contextualized through a place-conscious approach and

an adjustment of the location of expertise in teacher education (Zeichner, 2015; Zeichner et al., 2015) to truly account for the "macro socio-historical forces that push and pull teaching, learning, and schooling" (Bowman & Gottesman, 2017, p. 233). Importantly, place-conscious approaches need to center the needs and assets of the community. Teacher education programs should dialogue with community and school district members to engage in equitable partnerships to support teacher education that aims to repair educational injustice (Zeichner, 2019). In particular, the needs of rural educational systems, each singularly unique in their community needs and assets but often geographically distant from universities, can only be understood in research-practice partnerships that offer site-specific and mutually sustaining collaboration. Teacher residencies offer a third-space avenue for such collaboration (Coffman & Patterson, 2014). Whereas a growing body of scholarship has been documented on partnership style teacher residency partnerships that focus on urban areas (Berry et al., 2008; Hackett et al., 2021; Klein et al., 2013), there are less models focused in rural areas, and even less scholarship to understand the unique opportunities and obstacles that are afforded in rural school-university-community partner residencies.

REJ demands a reconstruction of educational structures, including teacher preparation programs (e.g., increasing enrollment of teacher candidates of color and improving the quality of programs regarding racial bias and cultural responsivity; The Education Trust, 2022). With federal funding from the Teacher Quality Partnership grant, our team is working toward that goal by rebuilding a teacher education program that seeks to transform rural schools from systems of inequity to humanizing community spaces cultivating genius, joy, love, intellect, and criticality (Muhammad, 2020, 2023). We have centralized Muhammad's Historically Responsive Literacy Framework in our vision of effective teaching and teacher education curriculum. Utilizing a school-university-community collaboration (Reardon & Leonard, 2022), we have identified, placed, supported, and mentored teacher residents in a place-conscious approach to the rural, racialized communities and contexts in which they teach. The purpose of this theory-to-practice paper is three-fold: (a) to contextualize the educational inequities and opportunities that exist in the rural Southeast Black Belt, (b) to present our REJ teacher education framework, curriculum, and processes to members of the field of rural education, and (c) to share emerging themes from our experiences creating a teacher education program for REJ. What we offer is not yet an exemplar. However, it provides theoretical foundations, an ambitious curricular framework for rural teacher education, and an analysis of lessons learned.

Positionality of Authors

We crafted this manuscript on behalf of the grant team; our written work represents the substantial collaboration and sustained effort behind a collective vision of rural

educational justice. The grant team is led by the PI, who also serves as the Director of REI, and the Teacher Residency Co-PIs. The core grant team also includes School Leadership Co-PIs, College of Arts and Sciences faculty, teaching faculty for the Teacher Residency and School Leadership facets, support staff, members of East Carolina University (ECU) Support Services from the research and educator preparation offices, and LEA Superintendents. We represent a Teacher Residency Co-PI (Gallagher) and a member of the teaching faculty (Novak), both white, in the teacher residency program. We acknowledge that we see the work through our lenses as we engage in the reflective work of crafting the story of our edPIRATE thus far. Our racial identities undoubtedly limit our reflection on the complex racial justice goals our work seeks to further.

Literature Review

The Where – Rural Education in the Black Belt

While it has always referred to a geographic region of the South, the term Black Belt has had multiple origins as early as 1901, as explained by Booker T. Washington:

> The term was first used to designate a part of the country which was distinguished by the colour of the soil. The part of the country possessing this thick, dark, and naturally [sic] rich soil was, of course, the part of the South where the slaves were most profitable, and consequently, they were taken there in the largest numbers. Later, and especially since the war, the term seems to be used wholly in a political sense — that is, to designate the counties where the black people outnumber the whites. (as cited by Tullos, 2004, para 5)

Rural Black Belt communities today reflect divergent characteristics of place, with higher rates of unemployment, poverty, food and health apartheid, and lower than average educational achievement scores, while at the same time boasting a rich cultural heritage of civil rights movements: all but two of the Black Belt counties have at least one marker on the N.C. Civil Rights Trail (N.C. African American Heritage Commission, n.d.), literary tradition (e.g., W. E. B. DuBois's 1903 work, *Souls of Black Folk;* Richard Wright's *Black Boy;* Tullos, 2004*),* and educational innovations, with North Carolina establishing the most Black-community-led Rosenwald schools than any other state (Anderson, 1988; Hanchett, 1988).

Rural Educational Spaces

The field of rural education, intrinsically connected to life within the Black Belt although not often the focus of academic study, is as deep as the roots of public education itself. The historical development of rural communities cannot be separated from the educational institutions that many rural communities became centered around. Since the idea of public schools started and expanded across the nation, rural people have worked

together “to run their schools, to build schoolhouses, to hire teachers, and to collect taxes” (Kaestle, 1983, p. 185). However, this did not mean educational access was always equally afforded to all members of rural communities. Rural schools, particularly in the South, were often the most reluctant to integrate and open access to all members of the community (i.e., Cotton, 1972). And yet, even within this troubled history, tremendous promise and possibility remains situated and ripe for cultivation within rural education.

Today, rural schools are often the most integrated educational spaces in the country. According to Orfield and Frankenberg (2008), “the only areas where levels of intense segregation have declined since the early 1990s for black and Latino students are in rural areas and smaller towns” (p. 2). And despite data indicative of rural schooling deficits, such as the lack of access to technology, college-level coursework and diverse extracurriculars (Croft & Moore, 2019), many practitioners and scholars alike celebrate and find value in the meaningful cultural wealth innate to rural spaces and schooling, such as rural resourcefulness, rural ingenuity, rural familism, and rural community unity (Crumb et al., 2023). To center rural cultural wealth in classrooms, valuing those funds of knowledge needs to be cultivated through rural teacher preparation. The reality is that within larger contexts of teacher shortage (Fischer et al., 2022), coupled with the underlying racism found in teacher education (Kohli et al., 2022), rural districts are facing staffing crises that demand context-specific strategies to address them (Oyen & Schweinle, 2020). One promising pathway that naturally incorporates cultural capital, rural community unity, and local cultural understanding is the homegrown or Grow Your Own (GYO) program (Idahor, 2022; Valenzuela, 2017)

Homegrown Educators

Homegrown and GYO programs may be used synonymously, though programs vary in their specific definitions. These programs are efforts on the part of districts and/or universities (and/or partnerships between the two) to pursue community-based individuals who are representative of the diversity of the district–who understand the community context, the cultural lives of the children, the local political landscape, and so on–and make a purposeful investment in these individuals (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Idahor, 2022; Valenzuela, 2017). This investment leads to the individuals’ teaching licensure and typically involves a repayment-based district contract. Assistance can be financial (e.g., tuition or reimbursement, stipends), time and effort related (e.g., work release), and involves mentorships, job shadowing, affinity groups, and other structures designed to support the individuals’ and program’s success (Bland & Smith, 2023; Carver-Thomas, 2018). For some programs, the recruitment effort may be limited to employees within their districts (e.g., supporting classified personnel to complete their Bachelor of Arts degree with licensure, which is more typical of GYO programs) while others may involve open recruitment (i.e., edPIRATE).

Districts, universities, and research-practice partnerships can benefit from "equitable approaches and critical perspectives that combine the powerful role of 'homegrown' teachers, culturally relevant curriculum and social justice pedagogy in addressing achievement and opportunity gaps, especially for the nation's woefully underserved" (Valenzuela, 2017, p. 1), particularly homegrown pathways that recruit teachers whose racial and ethnic identity mirror the students in the district. These programs, in similar ways to all teacher education, must be explicit in providing a healthy racial climate. Seeking a diverse student group alone will not replace the whitewashed curriculum and pervasive systemic racism found in teacher education policies and programs (Kohli, 2022; Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2020).

The How – Co-Teaching Residency Model for Teacher Education

One university-based teacher preparatory strategy that can be coupled with a GYO approach, the teacher residency model, is gaining traction throughout teacher education programs, many with positive results. They have been found to improve the quality of new teachers (Azar, Casciano, et al., 2020; Azar et al., 2021; Educators for Excellence, 2018; Rockman et al., 2018), increase retention (Barnes et al., 2007; Rosenberg & Miles, 2017; National Center for Teacher Residencies [NCTR], 2017), and positively impact student achievement (Azar, Casciano, et al., 2020; Azar et al., 2021; Lindsey & Hart, 2017;). Teacher residencies are also a proven approach to increasing diversity in teacher pathways (Azar, Hines et al., 2020; Rowland et al., 2023).

In general, teacher residencies are characterized by partnerships between teacher preparation institutes and LEAs, year-long student teaching internships, ongoing feedback and coaching with an experienced mentor teacher, and rigorous coursework aligned with the experiential aspects of the internship (National Education Association, 2024; NCTR, 2023). NCTR replaced standards in teacher residencies with levers: "partnering and designing for equity; training site recruitment, selection, and support; mentor recruitment, selection, and support; resident recruitment and selection; residency leadership; residency year experience; financial sustainability; and graduate support" (NCTR, 2023, para. 3–10; updated from the 2021 iteration). These interconnected levers are used as benchmarks in consultation for the successful implementation of both new and existing residency programs.

Another key element of teacher residencies, critical to developing equity-focused teacher practice in democratic education, is building communities of practice for beginning teachers (Grossman et al., 2001). This develops open dialogue around equity and social justice issues, establishes relational trust, and builds leadership capacity in the teacher resident (Grossman et al., 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2015; Tschida et al., 2024). Within this community of practice, Tschida et al. (2024) note, "Although practicing teachers serve as mentors to their student teachers, the duality of the relationship

acknowledges that student teachers also contribute to the knowledge and growth of their mentor teachers" (p. 11). This is particularly relevant in co-teaching models, which are often utilized in teacher residencies to help novice teachers develop their pedagogical skills or create classroom communities (Bacharach et al., 2010; Goodnough et al., 2009; Roth & Tobin, 2005; Ruys et al., 2010; Tschida et al., 2024; Weinberg et al., 2019).

Within a teacher education paradigm that centers equity, includes the essential elements of pedagogy, and prioritizes relationships and classroom community, the structure of co-teaching has the potential to embrace all of the above (Tschida et al., 2024). While co-teaching should automatically incorporate co-planning, Cayton & Grady (2024) delve specifically into the benefits of co-planning as equity support during rural internship experiences, identifying the benefits and concerns of six models of co-planning, akin to the co-teaching strategies, along with a corresponding equity checklist for teacher residents' and mentor teachers' use. Considerations for co-planning and co-teaching responsibilities are important, in terms of a gradual release of responsibility model, as the resident teacher should assume more of the day-to-day classroom duties over time (Cayton & Grady, 2024; NCTR, 2023).

For What Purpose – Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Educational Justice in Rural Spaces

The needs of rural schools in the Black Belt go beyond merely filling positions with qualified teacher candidates; newly minted educators should be prepared to enact equitable change in rural communities. Author, activist, and educator bell hooks lamented the post-Brown loss of Black educators in her own educational journey in rural Appalachia, remarking that Black teachers understood her, taught her, loved her, unlike any other teacher (1994). In racially segregated schools, with students and teachers who were culturally relevant, responsive, and equity-minded, hooks described "education as a practice of freedom" (p. 3); once she attended integrated schools, education was no longer a "messianic zeal to transform our minds and beings" but "knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle" (p. 3). hooks's zest for learning was shut down, as obedience, not enthusiasm, was the expectation; "too much eagerness to learn could easily be seen as a threat to white authority" (p. 3). In much of her work, hooks issued a clarion call for authentically engaged pedagogy, liberatory teaching, and building a multicultural community grounded in democratic education (hooks, 1994, 2003); this is the need for culturally responsive pedagogy and rural educational justice (REJ).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Healthy Racial Climate

Culturally responsive pedagogy, a field often explored in urban spaces (Sirrakos & Emdin, 2017), offers concepts, strategies, and goals that are just as relevant in rural

educational spaces. Cultural responsivity is an emancipatory approach to pedagogy based on students' individuality (e.g., cultural strengths) and how the educator develops relationships with the students, adjusting materials in a critically responsive manner (Sleeter, 2011; based on a synthesis of definitions by Geneva Gay and Gloria Ladson-Billings). Rigorous explorations of culturally responsive pedagogy tell us that: "Today's Black children need Black pedagogy, curricula, and educators who understand, care for, believe in, and are willing to nurture them as the optimal possibility in reversing the current crisis of Black education" (Wright, 2023, p. 2). At the very foundation, teacher residents should value the genius that exists in the Black Belt by acknowledging and centering cultural and historical literacy practices (Muhammed, 2020, 2023).

REJ practitioners must begin by developing racial literacy, such as through an archaeology of self (Sealy-Ruiz, 2021). Educators need an understanding of the potential and life-altering effect of their–as well as systematic and others'–biases and attitudes on outcomes for Black learners (Picower, 2009; Sealey-Ruiz, 2011, 2021; Wright et al., 2023). Sealey-Ruiz states that "racial literacy asks that teachers take action against injustice in their school settings once they recognize it. Racial literacy requires familiarity with unconscious bias, unintentional racism, microaggressions, and structural racism" (2011, p.118). Purposefully engaging in reflecting on and promoting racial literacy is an essential component of the behavioral dimension of a healthy racial climate in teacher education programs (Kohli et al., 2022). In addition, a healthy racial climate involves the historical dimension (by first acknowledging and then addressing the ongoing legacies of racism in the teacher education programs and local districts and communities); the operational and structural dimension (by understanding the teacher education program's commitment to racial justice–and adherence thereto–through the policies and structures, e.g., recruitment and retention, curriculum, and internship placement); the compositional dimension (in which there is a proportional representation, or critical mass, of same-race minoritized teacher candidates as well as faculty, mentor teachers, university supervisors); and the psychological dimension (through which the emotional toll of existing in a predominantly white space, likely in both their coursework and internship placements, is recognized through open and empathetic dialogue, and support services are offered freely and without judgement; Kohli et al., 2022). Once educators dig deep into this reflective archaeological site of self-understanding (Sealy-Ruiz, 2021) within a healthy racial climate (Kohli et al., 2022), the work of REJ comes into play.

Rural Educational Justice (REJ)

Gorski (2013) commented on the word salad that can be made when talking about diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice initiatives, committing to several actions to differentiate and ground social justice work. "Put justice before peace: Racial justice, rather than racial harmony or awareness, is the inverse of racial injustice. Social justice

is the inverse of social injustice. So the results of my social justice work should be less injustice" (Gorski, 2013, para. 12). Thus, REJ must come before harmony or peace and is the inverse of rural educational injustice. It is the recognition of disrespect, domination, oppression, and/or marginalization of groups (Corbett, 2017) that causes disharmony and disrupts neighborly peace (Gorski, 2013). Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from New York declared, "Justice is about making sure that being polite is not the same thing as being quiet. In fact, oftentimes, the most righteous thing you can do is shake the table" (2019, 1:45).

Gorski's second point is crucial in justice work: it is action-oriented. Awareness and recognition are important steps, but "not, in and of itself, social justice . . . These are the sorts of activities that prepare us for social justice. But they also can be distractions from social justice if they don't point toward action for social change" (Gorski, 2013, para 13). Teacher residents, mentors, and the community can become catalysts leading political and cultural decisions for systemic and societal (e.g., working to change policy and redistribution of resources): rural educational justice (Corbett, 2017; Gorski, 2013). While the work can begin with culturally relevant practices, REJ also requires dismantling inequities beginning in the teacher resident's spheres of influence.

In Praxis: The edPIRATE Teacher Residency Program

Project edPIRATE is a K-8 Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) residency program with the goal of cultivating high-quality teachers to meet the needs of our Local Education Agency (LEA) partners. The program includes a one-year teacher residency with a living stipend ($41,000), graduate classes taught online (reducing the financial impact for students), and extended support for teachers after graduation (induction model). This rural educator pathway is based on research-based best practices for recruiting and retaining educators of color (Rowland et al., 2023), remaining open to all in recruitment.

Context

North Carolina has the country's second-highest number of rural students: 568,161; roughly 40% of its overall percentage of public school students is spread geographically across the state in 78 out of 100 N.C. rural counties (US Census Bureau, 2023). Additionally, North Carolina has a student population that is poorer and more diverse than most other states (Showalter et al., 2023). East Carolina University (ECU), located in Greenville, North Carolina, is one of 17 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina (UNC) system. With a mission of regional transformation, ECU is a leading producer of teachers and administrators in the state's rural eastern region, averaging 700 program completers annually across all licensure areas.

ECU boasts nine undergraduate colleges, including the College of Education (COE), a graduate school, and four professional schools. While the Rural Education

Institute (REI) has many interdisciplinary projects, it is housed in the COE. Established over 30 years ago with funding from the N.C. legislature to focus on the advancement of education in rural eastern North Carolina, REI has been a major catalyst of improvement in the region. Through edPIRATE, REI is maintaining its focus on collaborative partnerships oriented toward teacher education while developing its research program at a national level, collaborating with community stakeholders toward positive transformation in families and schools through grant-funded projects. edPIRATE's outcomes align with REI's mission and specific goals of improving educational outcomes for schools, students, and communities through collaboration.

All four edPIRATE partner districts are in eastern North Carolina but west of the more prosperous coastal counties. All are counties designated as Tier 1 – most economically distressed by the N.C. Department of Commerce. Our needs assessment found that child poverty (ages 5 to 17) in 2020 ranged from 23.5% to 36.4% in our LEAs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; Table 1 provides data from our partner LEAs as submitted in the grant application).

Table 1

Partner LEA Data

District	Child Poverty %[2]	RLIS/ SRSA [3]	Locale Code[4]	Proficient Math %[5]	Proficient ELA %[6]	ELL Students Count(%)[7]
ECPPS[1]	24.1%	RLIS	RF:41	9.9%	28.1%	216(4%)
GCS	27.9%	RLIS	RD:42	17.6%	30.1%	363(13.3%)
LCS	23.5%	N/A	RF:41	18.6%	27.3%	455(5.5%)
WCS	36.4%	RLIS	RF:41	26.3%	24.3%	43(4.1%)
STATE	17.0%	N/A	N/A	40.0%	46.0%	131,247(9.6%)

Note. [1]ECCPS is Pasquotank County Schools in SAIPE database. [2]SAIPE, US Census Bureau, 2022. [3]DOE, 2022. [4] NCES, 2022. [5]NCDPI, 2021, [6]NCDPI, 2021, [7] NCDPI, 2022b.

Moreover, as documented in Table 2, our partner districts need (a) highly qualified teachers who meet the requirements for full state licensure, (b) structures and support that sustain a new teacher pathway, and (c) structures and support for educator retention. Teacher turnover (i.e., attrition in North Carolina) ranged from 8.7% to 15.7% in LEAs in 2022 compared to an 8.2% state average; each of the districts reported more than 10% of teachers with emergency, provisional or temporary licensure in 2022 (with one LEA at 28%) compared to 6.3% in North Carolina as a whole. All LEAs reported difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers and principals. Moreover, all the LEAs report a need to hire more teachers of color to represent the diversity of their student population

better.

Table 2

Indications of Need for Professionally Trained Teachers in Partner LEAs

District	Teacher attrition rate[1]	Percentage of Teachers with Emergency, Provisional, or Temporary Licensure[2]	Percentage of Initially Licensed Teachers[3]
ECPPS	12.3%	12%	21%
GCS	14.5%	15%	25%
LCS	8.70%	11%	9%
WCS	15.7%	28%	26%
STATE	8.20%	6.3%[4]	19%[5]

Note. [1] LEA self-report, 2022. [2] LEA self-report, 2022. [3] LEA self-report, 2022. [4] NCDPI, 2022c. [5] NCDPI, 2022c.

Vision, Mission, and Vision of Effective Teaching

Centering all this work is our vision, mission, and vision of effective teaching (VET). The vision of the edPIRATE program is rural school classrooms and rural teacher education programs that are humanizing, asset-based, and equity-oriented. The mission of edPIRATE is to equip educators for this vision and utilize the power of collaboration between ECU educator preparation and community partners to reimagine and grow REJ. Therefore, our VET in this REJ MAT includes the following: (a) Rural educators engage themselves and their students in important questions of democracy and justice, (b) Rural educators effectively utilize practices that engage, elevate, and expand the wealth of rural communities resources and literacy tools to empower themselves and others (e.g., rural resourcefulness, rural ingenuity, rural familism, rural community and rural unity; Crumb et al., 2023), (c) Rural educators effectively integrate students' funds of knowledge and disciplinary inquiry and literacy practices, and (d) Rural educators recognize school is a hub and home of the community. While a vision of what effective teaching for REJ looks like was imperative to understand what we were working toward, it was also necessary to formulate the building blocks–the regular teaching practices designed for and implemented within rural Black Belt schools–that would enable teacher residents to build toward this vision. These became our Rural Educational Justice (REJ) practices, which are explicated below.

Core REJ Practices

Elmore (2002) famously stated, "Only a change in practice produces a genuine change in norms and values. Or, to put it more crudely, grab people by their practice and

their hearts and minds will follow" (p. 3). At its core, this project focuses on the pre-service preparation of teachers and future leaders who will strengthen and support rural educational justice (REJ). Our curriculum framework, developed by the faculty involved in the project, is driven by 11 REJ practices in their work. By intentionally spiraling them throughout the courses, our goal is for teacher residents and, by proxy, their mentor co-teachers to embody the REJ practices in their daily teaching. These practices are intended to be innately place-conscious and context-dependent in application, which differs from other practice-centered approaches. Table 3 presents each practice, a brief description of the foundational commitment, and what it looks like in action.

Table 3

Rural Educational Justice (REJ) Practices

REJ Practice	Foundational Commitments	How it Looks in Action
1 Active Self-Reflection on Justice-Oriented Educational Philosophy + Commitments	The exploration of justice-oriented educational frameworks and philosophies (e.g., Freire, Gorski, Love, Muhammad) that address historically oppressive practices that have harmed marginalized communities, must also seek to provide antiracist, anti-bias, justice-oriented, approaches to teaching and actively call participants to collective commitments and action.	Teacher residents must first explore their identities, histories and experiences and engage in active self-reflection. This draws on the work of Dr. Yolanda Sealey Ruiz's archaeology of self, where she focuses on the importance of deep self-excavation, exploring the beliefs, biases and ideas that shape how we engage in this work (Sealey-Ruiz, 2021). This self-reflection includes racial literacy development which teacher residents practice to interrupt racism, develop an awareness of history that shapes the world today, reflect on their identities, understand the limits of their views, and be profoundly committed to their communities. Having engaged in self-excavation in the context of their community school, teacher residents are situated to recognize and nurture their students' identities.
2 Asset-Based Relationships with Students, Families, and Communities	Asset-based relationships are relationships built on honoring, validating and celebrating the strengths of students, their families, and our communities (Nieto, 2013, Minor, 2023).	The social and cultural capital that students bring into the classroom is valued and used as a foundation for learning. Teacher residents integrate this information into coursework, sharing examples and engaging in collectivity with their peers in this learning process. Key to this work is for the teacher residents–and by proxy the mentors in the co-teaching model–to actively recognize and dismantle the existing deficit ideologies that might already exist in their practices and schools. Further, teacher residents take the asset-based lessons created in the coursework into their residency experience to teach.
3 Humanizing	Humanizing and democratic classroom cultures and routines	Faculty model how to facilitate a democratic culture. Together, the individuals are engaged in shared understandings of the norms and

Democratic Classroom Culture and Routines	are grounded in the value and autonomy of individuals (Parker, 2022; Shalaby, 2017).	expectations required of them to share space, be vulnerable with one another, engage in learning together and make decisions together. Teacher residents practice the democratic culture as modeled by faculty. Instead of focusing on rewards and punishments of behavior, community norms are maintained by continual commitments to each other as humans and relationships developed through a community of care.
4 Student-Centered Authentic Assessment that Values Collaboration, Creativity, Curiosity, Flexibility, and Complexity	Assessment is any way teachers understand their students and then use that information to make decisions. It can be thought of in three broad ways: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning (Harapnuik, 2020). The ideal assessment for REJ is equitable assessment that values student voice (Milner, 2018).	Teacher residents are actively involved in the process of goal setting; products are authentic and meaningful, and time in class is spent in collaborative groups with activities that challenge individuals at appropriate levels of depth and complexity. Teacher residents apply the assessment principles taught in each methods course to their co-teaching experiences, remaining flexible and responsive to student needs, modeling this so that students can engage in similar flexibility and responsibility with their peers. Teacher residents and students remain open-minded and curious, asking and responding to questions that push each other's creative and critical thinking in the content.
5 Planning and Enacting Justice-Oriented Inquiry Curriculum in the	Social-justice inquiry practices have students take an active role in learning by asking questions that challenge or disrupt inequity, stereotypes, oppression, discrimination, etc. Students take ownership for their learning, seeking out information,	Through inquiry-based practices, teacher residents will plan curriculum that center questions important to students, their communities, and justice. Their inquiries allow teacher residents to develop and improve their disciplinary (History, Math, Science) inquiry and literacy practices and engage with multimodal disciplinary resources. Inquiries might focus on interdisciplinary questions about providing educational opportunities, excellence, access, and advancement for historically marginalized and

Content Areas	evaluating their sources, and collecting data to answer these questions in a way that promotes agency and critical thinking (Conrad & Gallagher, 2023; Conrad et al., 2024; Borden, 2022).	underserved populations in rural communities. Once planned, teacher residents will use the curriculum in their practicum experience.
6 Planning and Enacting Universal Design for Learning and creating Justice-Oriented Spaces	UDL meets the diverse educational needs of all students, including those with exceptionalities, in the rural classroom. Building with UDL, to begin all classroom activities with equitable access for all learners, is the ideal way to create spaces that can be justice-oriented both in process of learning and cultivating spaces to meet justice-oriented civic goals (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) that benefit rural communities.	Teacher residents will plan lessons using varying sources of engagement (affective networks), representation (recognition networks), and action/expression (strategic networks), providing all students with the necessary resources to encourage their talents and strengths to emerge and develop agency for social change (Borden, 2022; CAST, 2024). UDL framework will be integrated across disciplines and consider exceptional children, multilingual learners, gifted and talented students, and any/all students without district-provided labels that may benefit from individual accommodations or modifications. By using UDL, teacher residents are continuously reflecting, designing and adapting classroom environment, instruction and resources to meet justice-oriented goals.
7 Integrating Arts into the Curriculum	Arts integration is the purposeful inclusion of visual arts, music, drama and movement (The Vision Board, 2024). By integrating the arts, educators can increase achievement, teaching and	Authentic arts integration is more than adding arts-based activities to curriculum and/or assessment. Integrating arts purposefully into the curriculum requires an entire approach to teaching that values self-expression, inspiration, imagination and creativity. Teacher residents will leave room for these affective, subjective, and highly personalized goals

	assessing content more equitably (Long, 2022; The Vision Board, 2024).	and opportunities at the forefront of curricular goals, to be included in learning opportunities and assessed along with disciplinary standards.
8 Intellectual and Humanizing Engagement, Pacing, and Questioning	The social constructivist theory of teaching and learning is built on the idea that knowledge is constructed through discourse (Vygotsky, 1978). How questions are structured, of whom they are asked, and how often they are directed to different individuals requires deep reflection and practice–this reflection may point out unconscious biases.	For teacher residents, this can look like a myriad of social interactions. Discourse opportunities should provide students (both teacher residents in class with faculty, and students who have teacher residents as educators) avenues to share their initial thinking and changes in their thinking in deep and meaningful ways. This should go beyond call and response *guess what's in my head* teacher questioning and include higher order thinking questions and multiple forms of expression for students to participate in knowledge making. Teacher residents should always keep the humanity of students at the forefront in their mind as students are social beings in a socially complex classroom environment, and they should adapt the pacing and creation of their questioning to reflect the needs of their students in the knowledge construction process.
9 Choosing and Utilizing High Quality Resources that Support Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	High quality resources that support culturally responsive pedagogy are resources that serve to provide access to information that is important to students and helps them discover and engage in the world around them while learning content knowledge in meaningful ways. High quality resources show multiple perspectives, disrupt deficit perspectives, challenge the	High quality resources not only provide content knowledge, but they also show that teacher residents have an awareness of the students they serve; along with content knowledge, these resources validate and affirm the lives, experiences, and identities of students. The questions provided below are provided to assist teacher residents in selecting high quality resources that support culturally responsive teaching. • Who is represented in the text/resource, and how are they represented? • Who is silenced or minimized in the text/resource and how? • How can this text challenge incomplete or harmful dominant narratives about different identities?

	status quo, help to amplify voices that are often silenced and help our students view the world through mirrors and windows (Bishop, 1990).	• Does the writer treat their subject with complexity and nuance and avoid stereotypes? • In what ways can this text help to develop a positive social identity for my students? • What does this text not do or include that I will have to supplement with another text? What counternarratives will my students need after this text? (Ebarvia, 2023)
10 Integrating Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning	Mindfulness is "the awareness that emerges through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). Democratic classroom environments incorporate mindfulness and awareness of the whole child.	In a mindful approach to teaching, teacher residents establish a classroom community with opportunities to ground teachers and students alike in the present moment, to reflect on their activity with purpose, and to treat themselves kindly in their full humanity. Mindfulness cannot be separated from social emotional learning opportunities and goals in which students and teachers take time to build knowledge and practices about their emotions and social skills such as empathy, self-awareness and relationship building. Without taking time to reflect and foster understanding around the process, students (and teacher residents) may not have the context to make mindfulness meaningful.
11 Teacher Leadership through Advocacy for Rural Educational Justice for Children, Families,	All students, families, and community members must be invited and welcomed in the process of building equitable and supportive schools (IDRA, 2022). Teacher leadership skills have been defined generally by the field to include cultivating a collaborative culture, utilizing	Teacher residents do not improve any teacher leadership skills in a vacuum. They must also be aware of the ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) within which they are teaching and within which their students are learning. A deep awareness of their place and space provides an apt understanding for teacher residents to utilize the best strategies and avenues to enact their own agency. While every context may not provide the most conducive environment to implement REJ practices, schools and communities rely on teacher residents to advocate on behalf of children and their communities to make the

and Communities	research to enhance practice and student learning, and boosting family and community engagement, among others (National Education Association, 2020).	changes that are necessary to pursue justice. Each skill demands nuanced, context-specific application when used in pursuit of REJ.

Processes

The edPIRATE program has now graduated our first two residents. Our process to get to this stage of our program development, including the development of our team and grant-writing process, the creation of our framework including the REJ practices explicated above and the bureaucratic processes necessary to pave the path for the curricular changes and the administrative support needed to graduate our first cohort could all be described with innumerable adjectives: from the positive, to the improbable, to the frustrating, to the hopeful. While we cannot explain all the various components of our process within this article, we think several key points of our process may be helpful to other rural teacher resident programs trying to do similar work.

Support from the National Center for Teacher Residency (NCTR)

After being awarded the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant that would see the edPIRATE teacher residency program into fruition, our team engaged with support provided by the National Center for Teacher Residency (NCTR). We attended online trainings as well as in-person workshops and even hosted members of the NCTR team on our campus for individual team support. NCTR's almost 20 years of evidence-based practice in teacher residency informed much of our processes (see Azar, Casciano et al., 2020; Azar et al., 2021; Azar, Hines et al., 2020; NCTR 2017, 2023).

Recruitment to Placement

We engaged in various activities to recruit potential teacher residents, support them through the application process, get them on contract, and place them in the district partner school where they would complete their residency. We relied heavily on districts and local advertisements in the first year. We put flyers in local coffee shops and libraries throughout the target counties, ensured that each school had a supply for their staff, family, and friends, and spent a great deal of time going to in-town recruitment events in the first year, such as science nights, with the hope of passing the word through the community. We held online information sessions (providing an application fee waiver to attendees) and ran a social media campaign on X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram. In our second year, we continued with these methods but also spent time recruiting at our university as well, sending emails to graduating seniors in a variety of departments, attending a graduate 'bash' that offered recruitment tables, and having an edPIRATE representative dropping in to personally speak to a myriad of courses that had graduating seniors in different departments, such as world languages, psychology, and sociology. For the third year, we plan to purchase billboards served in the local areas and media advertisements.

After their application to the program, qualified applicants were interviewed by three members of the teacher residence team. Approved candidates were accepted into

the program but still needed to meet the requirements for ECU graduate school admission. After all new resident teachers were accepted, the Associate Director of Teacher Residency (ADTR) provided a group online orientation, discussing logistical information (e.g., graduate school requirements, upper division requirements, internship applications), engaging in community building and relational trust activities, and giving an introduction to the REJ practices, historically responsive literacy framework (Muhummad, 2020, 2023), and self-excavation through the archaeology of self (Sealey-Ruiz, 2020).

The contract is an important facet of edPIRATE; ideally, this is provided at orientation. The contracts outline their commitment to four days a week at their residency, requirements for licensure, and the obligation to serve as a teacher for three years in their assigned district. Also stipulated is if residents do not meet the contract obligations, they must repay the living allowance ($41,000) that they have received up to that point, provided in three payments during the year (July, December, April). If teacher residents do not serve all years of their three-year district commitment, their repayment obligation is prorated.

Both last year (for year one) and for the current (year two) cohort, we invite new teacher residents to choose their preferred partner LEAs and request grade levels for residency placement. The ADTR works directly with district staff, mostly HR directors but also administrators, to secure placements in high-need schools. Unlike typical placements through the Office of Clinical Experiences at ECU, if teacher residents are already employed by their LEA of choice and they request the same placement, edPIRATE will work to find them a residency position in their existing school if possible, assuming their MAT program for licensure is commensurate with this placement. This honors our commitment to the values of rurality and place.

Coursework

Residency co-teaching placements (for previous and future cohorts) are for a full year; teacher residents are in their schools for four days per week for 3/4 of the school year. The co-teaching model offers frequent opportunities for modeling planning (using any co-planning strategy) and teaching (using one teach-one observe or one teach-one assist co-teaching strategies, as well as chances to engage in practicum teaching (using station or alternative/differentiated co-teaching strategies). Teacher residents engage in self-reflection as part of their coursework and receive structured feedback from their mentor teachers, course faculty, and a university supervisor. In the second semester, teacher residents remain at four days per week while completing the edTPA, which is required for N.C. licensure. Later in the second semester, teacher residents begin to gradually assume more teaching responsibilities from their co-teachers as they are required to teach all subjects full-time for two weeks as part of their internship requirements.

Teacher residents have one day per week in which they do not go to their residency site so that it can be fully allocated for their graduate studies (in addition to evenings and weekends). The REJ practices discussed earlier are intentionally woven throughout the 30 credit hours of graduate courses (see Table 4). Teacher residents take courses over four semesters: Summer, Fall, Spring, and Summer. Summer sessions are five weeks, and in the fall and spring semesters, one course (internship) is a 15-week course while their other courses are taken as 8-week sessions, consecutively. Between coursework and the co-teaching opportunities in their placements, teacher residents can engage in lower-stake, supportive aspects of teaching practice in the first semester before taking on the reality of full-time classroom responsibilities in the second semester.

The MAT is organized into cohort design; teacher residents move through the courses as a group, coached by the ADTR, a university supervisor, and supportive teaching faculty. Courses have literacy-embedded (including the five essential components of reading instruction as defined by legislation) and an equity focus, with a throughline concentration on multilingual and exceptional children's education. Coursework is aligned with the N.C. Standard Course of Study Courses as well as inTASC standards and accreditation standards. Table 4 provides the year 2 schedule for the elementary MAT. The edPIRATE grant identifies ECU COE faculty as teaching faculty; we also have additional ECU full-time and adjunct faculty who teach the courses.

Table 4

Elementary REJ MAT Courses

Course Title & REJ Practices	Course Description	Course Objectives
First Summer		
Democratic Education in the Rural South (K-12) REJ: 1, 2, 10, 11	Examines historical and contemporary policies and practices of public education within a rural southern context to develop place-based praxis.	Critically reflect on and explore personal experiences, values, and beliefs to examine the relationship between self, schools, and society (especially as it relates to our local contexts of education). Explain the ways traditional schooling has impacted local demographics and created and sustained educational inequities. Analyze historical and contemporary patterns of controversies and trends in education and the relationship to political and economic power in rural eastern North Carolina. Develop shared language of the characteristics of democratic education and articulate a vision for REJ in eastern North Carolina.
Universal Design for Learning to Support Inclusive Rural Classrooms (K-12) REJ: 4, 6, 7, 10	Applies the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to meet the diverse educational needs of students, including those with exceptionalities, in the rural classroom. Emphasis is on providing flexible, holistic, and inclusive learning opportunities to remove	Through the UDL framework, students will: Utilize UDL to plan and teach inclusive instruction within a justice-oriented space. Develop authentic integration of the arts, mindfulness, and social emotional learning into curriculum. Apply REJ practices that engage, elevate, and expand the wealth of rural community resources to meet the needs of exceptional learners through the UDL framework providing whole class and intensive interventions. Analyze the historical and current theories and trends in assessment to determine an appropriate assessment model for an equitable and racially just classroom environment within the rural educational system.

	barriers, using authentic assessment, and teaching effectively in REJ to develop strategic, resourceful, and motivated learners.	Develop student-centered authentic assessments that value collaboration, creativity, curiosity, flexibility, and complexity for racially literate and equitable classroom learning and assessment. Apply self-excavation and learning theories to schooling experiences.
Fall		
Introduction to K-5 Literacy Instruction for Rural Educational Justice REJ: 4, 5, 7, 8, 9	Foundational literacy course that teaches methods for literacy instruction in grades K-6 with a focus on culturally responsive instruction, REJ, and meeting the diverse needs of students.	Apply the concepts of literacy and developmental stages of reading and or writing. Implement multiple ways to teach reading in elementary grades through a justice oriented, inquiry lens. Implement various authentic, student-centered literacy assessments to inform instruction through collaboration, creativity, curiosity, and flexibility. Analyze various reading strategies in literacy instruction. Evaluate appropriate methods and materials used in the teaching of reading in the elementary grades. Utilize high quality and diverse resources that support culturally responsive and academic language as well as racial literacy. Design inclusive reading instruction to meet the individual needs of elementary-aged students, including advanced readers and readers who may not yet be meeting grade-level expectations
Responsive Community-Based Rural Classrooms (K-12)	Supports teacher candidates' development of asset-based dispositions toward students and	Use self-excavation theory as a tool: Reflect on one's identity and self as teacher within the rural space. Reflect critically on and analyze personal experiences, values, and beliefs to examine the relationship between self, schools, and society and to clarify one's aspirations as a teacher.

REJ: 2, 3, 10	communities. Application through strategies to integrate community in the classroom and classroom in the community, emphasizing curriculum of care. Introduces and provides application of core practices for multilingual learners through humanizing pedagogy.	Apply humanizing pedagogy and democratic classroom culture and routines through relationships where everyone is valued and has autonomy. Analyze the community and cultural assets of a student and community population constructively using asset mapping. Build asset-based relationships with students, families, and communities. Integrate mindfulness and social emotional learning. Design classrooms that support meaningful learning for all students with particular emphasis on scaffolding and support for multilingual learners.
Rural Educational Justice Internship I REJ: 2, 3, 4, 4, 6, 7, 10	Supervised teaching internship in appropriate subject and level classroom. Emphasis on asset-based relationships with students, families, and communities.	Identify asset-based relationships with students, families, and communities. Develop humanizing democratic classroom culture and routines through relationships where everyone is valued and has autonomy. Apply mindfulness and social emotional learning. Select high-quality and diverse resources that support culturally responsive and academic language and racial literacy. Enact student centered justice-oriented inquiry curriculum in the content areas.
Spring		
K-6 Science Instruction for Rural Educational Justice	Implement research-based practices to teach science in elementary grades through a justice-oriented, inquiry, and	Reflect on themselves as science learners and consider how race, ethnicity, rurality and other factors and experiences have influenced their science identity. Align instruction with state and national science standards.

REJ: 4, 5, 7, 8, 9	place-conscious approach.	Engage in science and engineering practices to promote wonder and to develop understandings of the natural and constructed world. Implement research-based practices to teach science in elementary grades through a justice oriented, inquiry lens with a place-conscious approach to teaching and learning. Employ a place-conscious approach to science instruction focused on students' and rural communities' assets to meet the individual needs of elementary-aged diverse learners. Engage in inquiry-based science lessons that promote humanizing democratic classroom culture and routines. Implement authentic, student-centered science assessments that inform instruction and value collaboration, creativity, curiosity, and flexibility. Collaborate with peers in the planning and evaluation of science lessons to develop communication and teacher leadership skills. Utilize high quality and diverse resources that support culturally responsive academic language as well as racial and scientific literacy.
K-6 Mathematics Instruction for Rural Educational Justice REJ: 4, 5, 7, 8, 9	Implement research-based practices to teach mathematics in elementary grades through a justice-oriented, inquiry and place-conscious approach.	Analyze key mathematics concepts in grades K-6 mathematics with a particular focus on whole number operations, properties of numbers, and rational number concepts. Explain how the Standards for Mathematical Practice can provide more equitable ways for students to engage in mathematical learning and to develop their self-identity as learners and doers of mathematics. Apply the Effective Mathematics Teaching Practices to plan and implement lessons that are student-centered and provide opportunities to engage in justice-oriented inquiry.

		Analyze mathematical tasks for level of cognitive demand and for the ways they can support justice-oriented inquiry and culturally responsive language. Apply the five recognized practices for facilitating rich, equitable mathematical discourse. Assess available teaching resources for their mathematical and pedagogical accuracy as well as for the ways that they support culturally responsive teaching practices, academic language, and racial literacy. Develop strategies for creating formative and summative, student-centered, authentic mathematical assessments that value collaboration, creativity, curiosity, flexibility, and complexity.
Rural Educational Justice Internship II REJ: 5, 7, 8, 9	Advanced supervised teaching internship in appropriate subject and level classroom. Emphasis on asset-based relationships with students, families, and communities.	Develop student-centered authentic assessment that value collaboration, creativity, curiosity, flexibility, and complexity in racial literate and equitable classroom learning and assessment. Enact student centered justice-oriented inquiry curriculum in the content areas. Implement Universal Design for Learning and justice-oriented spaces. Utilize intellectual and humanizing engagement, pacing, and questioning.
Final Summer		
K-6 Social Studies & Literacy Integration for Rural	Provides pre-service teachers the opportunity to learn how to meaningfully, effectively, and efficiently integrate social studies and literacy	Reflect on their identity in relation to the social sciences and democratic education - considering how race, ethnicity, rurality and other factors and experiences have and will influence their work as a social studies teacher. Critically analyze standards, curriculum, and teaching resources to reflect a REJ vision.

Educational Justice REJ: 4, 5, 7, 8, 9	through a justice-oriented, inquiry, and place-conscious approach specific to rural learning spaces.	Apply social science disciplinary literacy in rural educational spaces. Design place-based curriculum that integrates literacy and social studies standards and is focused on students' and rural communities' assets. Implement research-based strategies to teach social studies in elementary grades through a justice-oriented inquiry lens with a place-conscious approach to teaching and learning. Plan inquiry-based instructional practices, routines, and talk moves that promote humanizing democratic classroom culture and routines. Implement authentic, student-centered social studies assessments that inform instruction and value collaboration, creativity, curiosity, flexibility. Utilize high quality and diverse resources that support culturally responsive academic language as well as racial and civic literacy.
Community Based Practicum REJ: 2, 3, 10, 11	Summer enrichment program at school sites. Emphasis on asset-based relationships with students, families, and communities.	Implement teacher leadership strategies that advocate for children, families, and communities through a REJ lens. Develop asset-based relationships with students, families, and communities. Design humanizing democratic classroom/camp environments where everyone is valued and has autonomy. Integrate music, art, drama, creative writing, and dance into camp activities. Apply mindfulness and social emotional learning strategies to inclusive daily practices. Engage in place-based community teaching and learning.
REJ Practices (see Table 1 for descriptions)		

1 Active Self-Reflection on Justice-Oriented Educational Philosophy + Commitments; 2 Asset-Based Relationships with Students, Families, and Communities; 3 Humanizing Democratic Classroom Culture and Routines; 4 Student-Centered Authentic Assessment that Values Collaboration, Creativity, Curiosity, Flexibility, and Complexity; 5 Planning and Enacting Justice-Oriented Inquiry Curriculum in the Content Areas; 6 Planning and Enacting Universal Design for Learning and Creating Justice-Oriented Spaces; 7 Integrating Arts into the Curriculum; 8 Intellectual and Humanizing Engagement, Pacing, and Questioning; 9 Choosing and Utilizing High Quality Resources that Support Culturally Responsive Pedagogy; 10 Integrating Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning; 11 Teacher Leadership through Advocacy for Rural Educational Justice for Children, Families, and Communities

Learning Exchanges

Each summer, our first year and second year teacher residents as well as grant members, district partners, and community guests, engage in a summer community learning exchange (Guajardo et al., 2015). We carry the energy of the learning exchange forward throughout the year for our teacher residents. As teacher residents have one day per week that they are not in their residency placements, one of these days per month is reserved for monthly Learning Exchanges (LE). These monthly meetings are ongoing extensions of the celebratory start of the program held in the summer.

The initial LE is a multi-day event that introduces the tenets of the program, builds community, and establishes a groundwork of rural educational justice (REJ). While the teacher residents are the focus, mentor teachers, and administrators from the partner districts are also included in this community engagement event. Part celebration, part orientation, part institute, the initial LE is information-laden, community-oriented, and equity-embedded. It sets the tone for the mission and vision of the upcoming year.

Subsequent monthly LEs are generally in person, but they may be moved online based on weather or schedules. These half-day sessions are led by the ADTR and grant PI. Teaching faculty may attend, and various consultants might be invited, depending on the agenda or needs of the teacher residents. For example, one month might have a focus on the edTPA, required for licensure in NC, as grant funds are utilized to secure an edTPA consultant from November–February for the teacher residents (high touchpoint months). In the first year of the grant, the science course instructor met with teacher residents on Wednesdays to model science experimentation and use of lab materials (a challenge in an online environment). These LEs were further opportunities to engage in relationship building and community trust and ensure a healthy racial climate in the teacher education program.

Discussion

In every educational endeavor, there are opportunities that further cultivate the project's goals, tensions that restrict, change, or circumvent progress, and barriers that may prevent actors from meeting certain goals. Reflecting on these moments and learning from them is an essential component of the evaluation process. Moreover, when working in equity and justice spheres, keeping an open dialogue about fears and hopes, just and unjust, serves to ground us. In her 2003 book *Building Community*, bell hooks wrote, “Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity” (p. 196). But it is in silence that we lose; hooks continued, “Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community” (hooks, 2003, p. 196). In this discussion section, we

present an analysis of learnings in the first two years of the edPIRATE grant, positioned first as opportunities and then as tensions and barriers.

Opportunities

In evaluating the translation of theory to practice, we identified several aspects in which the program was operationalized efficiently, the teacher residents excelled, or the grant team members exhibited strengths or expanded their knowledge base. In the context of this analysis, these aspects are identified as opportunities because they are areas that cultivated expansion and growth toward our robust justice-oriented goals. The following section will discuss opportunities in curriculum, recruitment and retention, and collaboration and collectivity.

Curriculum

During the curriculum dreaming phase (year one, before teacher residents arrived and the course creation and teaching journey began), core grant leaders and teaching faculty met frequently across the year for several hours at a time. While the core grant leaders established a curriculum dreaming framework, the teaching faculty on the grant brought rural and content expertise (Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Sealy-Ruiz, 2021; Wright, 2023) and were invited to contribute to vertical planning around how and why core REJ practices were embedded in each course. Faculty worked collectively to create objectives in alignment with the REJ practices; university, state, and national accreditation standards; and research-based best practices in multilingual and exceptional children education as the program was designed to embed these concepts in each course (CAST, 2024; Conrad & Gallagher, 2023; Nieto, 2013; Milner, 2018; Minor, 2023; Parker, 2022; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021; Shalaby, 2017). This process was iterative, requiring open dialogue, reflection, stepping away–and putting ego away–and then coming back together for more discussion (hooks, 2003).

Another growth opportunity was a partnership with the Educational Leadership program. Faculty in the department created educational leadership micro-credentialing (ELD-MC) to support mentor teachers and school leaders in partner districts, offered for free as part of the grant. The ELD-MCs included Evidence-Based Observations for Equitable Academic Discourse and Authentic Community Engagement in two courses, Part I: Foundations and Part 2: Application. The success of the micro-credentials (Militello et al., 2021; Tredway et al., 2021) led to branching out beyond the COE to other members of the grant advisory board in the College of Arts and Sciences. By year two, the Psychology faculty collaborated with the Educational Leadership faculty, creating two additional ELD-MCs: Trauma-Informed Strategies in Schools and Alternate Interaction Strategies to De-Escalate Challenging Behaviors. These short but effective training modules increased district buy-in and appreciation for the partnership with REI.

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment was both a challenge and an opportunity; we will share some growth points in our recruitment efforts in this section and discuss tensions and barriers in the next section. As we shared in the process section above, since we spent considerable time on the ground in the districts for recruitment, this process strengthened our working relationships with the districts beyond the central office level (NCTR, 2023). We got to know the leadership and faculty of the schools on a more personal level, and our team spent countless hours in the communities (Crumb et al., 2023). We also grew as a team and attended these events together, whether online information sessions or staffing a booth in a middle school gymnasium; we heard how our peers presented the program, picked up tips, and often learned something new about the program and each other (Boggs, 1998).

Collaboration and Collectivity

While it is a theme seen in both curriculum and recruitment/retention, the opportunity for collaboration and collectivity is also a category of its own. The learning and growth the grant team experienced through collaboration and collectivity cannot be understated (Boggs, 1998). In addition to quarterly meetings as a full grant advisory team, the core grant team met regularly (sometimes several times a week, sometimes bi-weekly or monthly – depending on issues that had arisen), and teaching faculty met regularly, as described in the curriculum section, as did the Educational Leadership team. The meetings often involved team building and working together not just on grant work but on advancing our knowledge in racial equity, teacher residencies, the communities where we were doing our work, and more (Crumb et al., 2023; hooks, 2003; Picower, 2009).

We took retreats and immersed ourselves in work and one another, always staying in rural spaces to better understand our place and context (hooks, 1994, 2003; Oyen & Schweinle, 2020; Valenzuela, 2017). Members of the grant faculty read, shared, and discussed rural, racial literacy, and social justice books and articles, attended conferences together–as presenters and/or attendees–and brought understandings and implications back to the team. We regularly reserved time and space for dreaming, particularly in the new curriculum we were building for teacher residents (Boggs, 1998; Crumb et al., 2023; Love, 2019; NCTR, 2023).

Tensions & Barriers

A positive effect of democratic education is “a commitment to ‘radical openness,’ the will to explore different perspectives and change one’s mind as new information is presented” (hooks, 2003, p. 48). It is in this spirit of democratic education and radical openness that we explore the tensions and barriers that we experienced in the first two

years of the edPIRATE program organized in three categories: political climate, recruitment and retention, and curriculum.

Political Climate

In North Carolina, the current political climate around anti-Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) legislation created barriers and tension through legislation such as the Parents' Bill of Rights (colloquially known as 'Don't Say Gay' Bill, S.B. 49, 2023), Nondiscrimination and Dignity in State Work Act (shortened to the Compelled Speech Act, S.B. 364, 2023) and the proposed Equality in Education Act (referred to as the Anti-CRT Bill, H.B. 187, 2023). Governor Roy Cooper and the white, conservative majority N.C vetoed both S.B. 49 and 364. Congress voted to override the veto; H.B. 187 passed the House and has been stalled in its second reading in the Senate since March 2023.

One example of how this political climate created tension was when we experienced misinformation from local school districts about the contents of the Parents' Bill of Rights. Teachers indicated that due to this legislation, they were required by district policy to send home permission slips prior to read-alouds of any diverse texts; the legislation does not comment on racial or ethnic diversity or family structure, merely that "Instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality shall not be included in the curriculum provided in grades kindergarten through fourth grade" (S.B. 49, 2023, p. 8). This reinforced the overwhelming whiteness of education (Picower, 2009).

Another legislative hurdle was the outcome of the Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina, which held that the admissions programs at the University of North Carolina violated the 14th Amendment, Equal Protection Clause. As a result, ECU's Office of Research, Economic Development, and Engagement (REDE) shared new policies that could negatively impact our recruitment goals to increase racial diversity amongst rural teachers through this teacher residency pathway (Rowland et al., 2023). As our grant aimed to diversify the workforce, but recruitment remained open to all, edPIRATE was within the letter of the new law. However, any recruitment efforts going forward to protected class organizations would be under scrutiny.

While the polarized reaction to anti-DEI legislation (Zerquera, 2023) did not overtly influence those of us individually teaching in the edPIRATE program, as a team, it did create stress points as we worked to fulfill our mission and vision in this new context. We were apprehensive of how much the REJ practices might create tension and/or barriers for our teacher residents, mentor teachers, and administrators who were strongly invested in the homegrown pathway program (NCTR, 2023). Moreover, we questioned if new policies based on legislation might disrupt the recruitment of future cohorts, and impact the forward movement of our induction process, set to begin this year with our first round of graduates finishing their final courses as we write this manuscript.

Recruitment and Retention

We faced challenges in our first year with recruiting and retaining students. Our first living allowance was set at $25,000. However, through careful budget adjustments, the grant PI raised the living allowance to $41,000, which substantially offset the cost of living for teacher residents to pursue this full-time residency model degree. In our first year, we did not extend our recruitment efforts as far (or as close to home), nor did we have as broad of a staff. These factors impacted recruitment (Bland & Smith, 2023). We also had several students who were not able to continue with the program as it progressed for financial and/or family reasons or goodness-of-fit (e.g., online learning, justice focus).

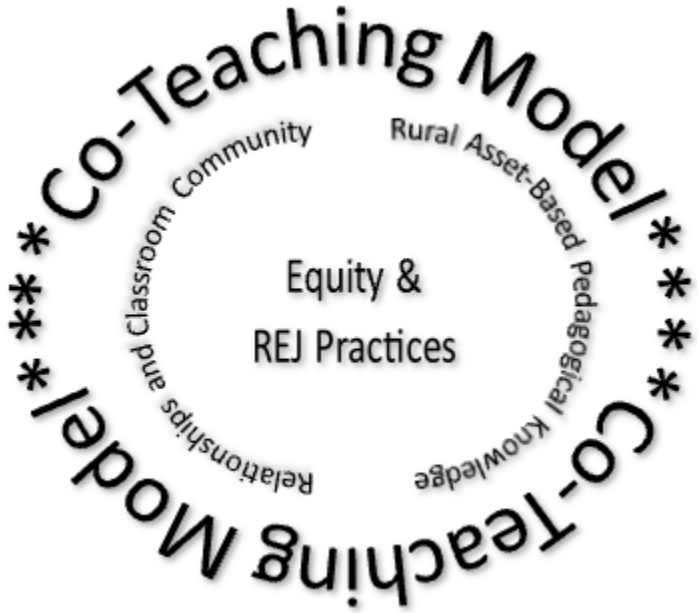
As described in the Opportunities section, we expanded our recruitment methods substantially in the second year. This has more than doubled our starting enrollment for the second cohort, who will begin engaging in the REJ curriculum starting in summer 2024, while the first cohort finishes and begins their first full year teaching and receiving edPIRATE induction support.

Curriculum

The REJ curriculum was an additional hurdle. A hallmark of university education is academic freedom. However, we are still bound by the constraints of the university catalog and the curriculum set forth in it. Curriculum dreaming takes time and effort, which was exerted during the first year of the grant. The university curriculum and catalog change process takes time and effort, and will not be complete until the close of the second year for the elementary courses. During this curriculum writing process, we integrated REJ and asset-based rurality (Crumb et al., 2023) into an existing framework of co-teaching (Tschida et al., 2023); Figure 1 demonstrates how these concepts work together. As we taught the first cohort, we simultaneously worked through this process while still teaching the old courses–using the tenets of academic freedom to adjust the content and materials to the rural and democratic foundational needs (e.g., Crumb et al., 2023; Ebarvia, 2023; hooks, 2003; Moll et al., 1992) of REJ, but with the challenge of being in a liminal space.

Figure 1

REJ Co-Teaching Model



Note. Adapted from Tschida et al., 2024

While this barrier has been removed for the elementary curriculum, in this upcoming year of the grant (2024–2025), we will make the same catalog adjustments to the secondary (middle grades) curriculum. As edPIRATE faculty, we will practice the balancing act more. The second cohort will experience the first year of the full edPIRATE elementary curriculum, with aligned objectives representing the catalog description; the program that will live on, ensuring sustainability even after the grant TQP grant ends (NCTR, 2023).

Next Steps – Induction and Synergy with School Leadership

As we reflect on the discussion of opportunities, tensions, and barriers, part of these cogitations are the next steps in this grant work. While typically, articles project future directions, this section discusses the near future. It is less ideology of what could be done as we describe plans that were part of the original grant submission that are still in the process of development.

The grant was written in collaboration with our Educational Leadership Department with the idea that the edPIRATE programs would create synergistic movement toward REJ throughout and between spaces of teacher education, leadership preparation, district administration, and district teachers. While the Educational Leadership team has been successful in producing, launching, and facilitating micro-credentials and is continuously forging relationships with district administration, we are not yet sure if we have capitalized on the potential synergy our teacher education/educational leadership partnership could cultivate. The summer LE is one process where we have started this work.

Additionally, we do not think we have formulated regular enough processes with the mentor teachers to engage them and cultivate energy around the potential of the REJ practices. By the time of the publication of this article, we will have hosted a Beginning Teacher Summit for all Beginning Teachers in partner LEAs, along with Mentor Teachers and teacher residents, focused on bringing the REJ practices to full capacity in classrooms. We also have brainstormed ideas for a micro-credential specifically created for Mentor Teachers on coaching teaching residents, with the REJ practices embedded.

Lastly, an additional benchmark of our program's success–our graduates' induction from beginning teacher to professional licensure at the conclusion of their commitment to the district– is a process that we need to fully flesh out. North Carolina has new teacher support and induction process. We intend to create a support system that coincides with the district process to meet state requirements while also focusing our graduates' attention on further cultivating REJ practices in their classroom. This will require continued mentoring and professional learning that includes the edPIRATE Educational Leadership arm, district/school leaders, and potentially the creation/facilitation of additional micro-credentials.

Conclusion

If we were to tease out a theme from the tensions and barriers presented above, it would be vision and mission versus pragmatism: that is, what we wanted to accomplish – what we freedom-dreamed (Love, 2019) as the grant was written and in year one – vs. the realistic political reality that we found ourselves working within. We deeply felt bell hooks's words, "Working as an academic within institutional structures designed to contain ideas, to repress imaginations and indoctrinate the mind, I have consistently felt extremely frustrated. More often than not, the demands of academics were at odds with intellectual life" (2003, p. 186). Yet hooks continued, and in this praxis piece, we share our practices and pitfalls as an act of reflective processing, looking back and moving forward. Education as the practice of freedom, teaching to transgress, is how minds and hearts open; it is in the dialogue that change happens (hooks, 2003).

Have we advanced the goal of REJ in our small segment of the rural Black Belt? Have we increased the racial literacy and cultural and historical literacy practices of our teacher residents entering rural classrooms? Have we, ourselves as teacher educators, cultivated more depth and expansion in our purpose to collaborate with, serve, and transform rural educational spaces in the Black Belt? Of these three questions, only the third and final one can be answered thus far in the undoubted affirmative. In a small amount of irony, our edPIRATE story so far reminds us of a simple but powerful quote from an activist who spent most of her life/work in urban spaces. Grace Lee Boggs wrote, "In order to change/transform the world, they must change/transform themselves" (1998, p. 153), not as an excuse to focus ourselves completely inward but to help us understand

that revolution and change must take place both within ourselves and in our institutions. To us, this also means that the changes we seek to happen in rural classrooms must be observable in our own relationships and practice. At this stage in our journey, we can only be sure that we have begun one side of Boggs's call.

Our collective dreaming, our bureaucratic diligence, and our pervasive collaboration have undoubtedly transformed ourselves, individually and collectively, and our institution through the tangible changes we have made to a teacher education program. Moreover, to further connect to Boggs's work, which activated change both for and through *community*, we know that we have cultivated tremendous community amongst our edPIRATE team. Time, future empirical research, and further district collaboration might serve to let us know the broader impacts of the edPIRATE program beyond this. We hope to follow up with these impacts in future contributions to rural education literature.

Funding Disclosure

This work was supported by a Teacher Quality Partnership Program Grant, U.S. Department of Education (Prime # S336S220017)

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the edPIRATE team as thought partners, as this paper would not have been possible without their collectivity and collaboration. In particular, Kristen Cuthrell and Shawnda Cherry were gracious in answering questions regarding processes for which we requested clarification.

References

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the south, 1880–1935*. University of North Carolina Press.

Andrews, D. J. C., Brown, T., Castillo, B. M., Jackson, D., & Vellanki, V. (2019). Beyond damage-centered teacher education: Humanizing pedagogy for teacher educators and preservice teachers. *Teachers College Record, 121*(6), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811912100605.

Azar, T., Casciano, R., & Puma, J. (2020). *Impact of resident-mentor pairs on teacher effectiveness* [Research Brief]. National Center for Teacher Residencies. https://nctresidencies.org/resource/impact-of-resident-mentor-pairs-on-teacher-effectiveness/

Azar, T., Hines, E., & Scheib, C. (2020). *Teacher residencies as a vehicle to recruit teachers of color* [Report]. National Center for Teacher Residencies. https://nctresidencies.org/resource/teacher-residencies-as-a-vehicle-to-recruit-teachers-of-color/

Azar, T., Grossman, T., Lozier, C., & Scheib, C. (2021). *The teacher residency return on investment: A pathway that prepares effective and diverse teachers who stay* [2021 ROI Report]. National Center for Teacher Residencies. https://nctresidencies.org/resource/the-teacher-residency-return-on-investment-a-pathway-that-prepares-effective-and-diverse-teachers-who-stay/

Bacharach, N., Washut Heck, T., & Dahlberg, K. (2010). Changing the face of student teaching through co-teaching. *Action in Teacher Education, 32*(1), 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2010.10463538

Ball, D. L., & Forzani, F. M. (2011). Building a common core for learning to teach: And connecting professional learning to practice. *American Educator*, *35*(2), 17–21, 38–39. https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ball_forzani_17-39.pdf

Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). *The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study.* National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. https://eric.ed.gov/id=ED497176.

Berry, B., Montgomery, D., & Snyder, J. (2008). Urban teacher residency models and institutes of higher education: Implications for teacher preparation. *Center for Teaching Quality*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED503644.pdf

Biddle, C., & Azano, A. P. (2016). Constructing and reconstructing the "rural school problem": A century of rural education research. *Review of Research in Education, 40*(1), 298–325. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16667700

Biddle, C., Mette, I. & Schafft, K. A. (2017). Education and information. In A. R. Tickamyer, J. Sherman, & J. Warlick (Eds.), *Rural poverty in the United States,* (pp. 322–348). Columbia University Press.

Bishop, R. S. (1990, March). Windows and mirrors: Children's books and parallel cultures. In M. Atwell & A. Klein (Eds.). *California State University, San Bernadino reading conference: 14th annual conference proceedings* (pp. 3–12). CSUSB Reading Conference. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED337744.pdf

Bland, J. & Smith, K. (2023, February). *Recruitment and retention: Pilot solutions designed by teachers of color (Phase I)*. Digital Promise. https://doi .org/10 .51388/20 .500 .12265/168

Boggs, G. L. (2013). *Living for change: An autobiography.* University of Minnesota Press.

Borden, R. (2022). The case for inquiry-based practices in social justice language education. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Education Strategies, Issues, and Ideas, 95*(3), 142–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2022.2066059

Bowman, M., & Gottesman, I. (2017). Making the socio-historical visible: A place-conscious approach to social foundations in practice-centered teacher preparation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *68*, 232–240. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.09.001

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. Lerner & W. Damon (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (6th ed., pp. 793–828). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/diversifying-teaching-profession-report

CAST. (2024). *About universal design for learning.* CAST. https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl

Cayton, C. & Grady, M. (2024). The use of co-planning to support equitable learning experiences during student teaching. In C. M. Tschida, E. A. Fogarty, J. N. Stapleton, K. Cuthrell, D. B. Lys, & A. Bullock (Eds.). *Co-teaching in teacher education: Centering equity,* (pp. 49–62). Teacher's College Press.

Cochran-Smith, M., Carney, M. C., Keefe, E. S., Burton, S., Chang, W., Fernandez, M. B., Miller, A., Sanchez, J. G., & Baker, M. (2018). *Reclaiming accountability in teacher education.* Teachers College Press.

Coffman, A. N., & Patterson, R. (2014). *Teacher residencies: Redefining preparation through partnerships* [Report]. National Education Association. https://www.nea.org/resource-library/teacher-residencies-redefining-preparation-through-partnerships

Conrad, J., & Gallagher, J. (2023). Designing questions for critical inquiry. *Social Education*, *87*(1), 22–30. https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/87/1/designing-questions-critical-inquiry

Conrad, J., Gallagher, J. L., & Chan, W. (2024). Getting critical with compelling questions: Shifts in elementary teacher candidates' curriculum planning from inquiry to critical inquiry. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 1–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2024.2340496

Corbett, M. (2017). [Review of the book *Understanding social justice in rural education,* by H. Cuervo]. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 32*(1), 1–4. https://jrre.psu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-08/32-1.pdf

Cotton, B. (1972). *The struggle to implement the desegregation decision in the south: A special case study of Kemper County, Mississippi.* [Master of Arts thesis, Western Illinois University]. WIU Graduate Theses Collection. https://wonder.wiu.edu/items/fb697daa-a252-49ad-b82e-3e138ffb88a0

Croft, M., & Moore, R. (2019). *Rural students: Technology, coursework, and extracurricular activities.* (Report No. R1734). ACT Center for Equity in Learning. https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/R1734-rural-equity-2019-02.pdf

Crumb, L., Chambers, C., Azano, A., Hands, A., Cuthrell, K., Avent, M. (2023). Rural cultural wealth: Dismantling deficit ideologies of rurality. *Journal for Multicultural Education, 17*(2), 125–138. https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-06-2022-0076

DuBois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folk.* Project Gutenburg ebook. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm

Ebarvia, T. (2023). *Get free: Antibias literacy instruction for stronger readers, writers, and thinkers*. Corwin Press.

Educators for Excellence. (2018). *Voices from the classroom*. 2018 voices from the classroom: A survey of America's educators. https://e4e.org/sites/default/files/2018_voices_from_the_classroom_teacher_survey.pdf

Elmore, R. (2002, January/February). The limits of "change." *Harvard Education Letter, 18*(1), 7–8. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED474556.pdf

Employees Subject to Chapter; Exemptions. Chapter 126 Article 1 G.S. § 126-5. (2023). https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_126/GS_126-5.pdf

Equality in Education. N.C. House Bill 187 G.S. Chapter 115C Article 8 Section 1 § 115C-81.61, Section 2 § 115C-218.85(a), Section 3 § 115C-238.66(1), Section 4 § 116-239.8(b)(2). (2023). https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/House/PDF/H187v2.pdf

Fischer, A., Erwin, B., Pechota, D. & Syverson, E. (2022). *50-state comparison: Teacher recruitment and retention.* Education Commission of the States. https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-teacher-recruitment-and-retention-2022/

Fultz, M. (2004). The displacement of Black educators post-Brown: An overview and analysis. *History of Education Quarterly*, *44*(1), 11–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-5959.2004.tb00144.x

Gallagher, J., Blaisdell, B., Howard, C. & Avent-Harris, J. (2021). Navigating contentious times in rural education [Introduction to Special Issue]. *Theory and Practice in Rural Education,11*(2) pp. 1–14. https://doi.org/10.3776/tpre.2021.v11n2p1-14

Goodnough, K., Osmond, P., Dibbon, D., Glassman, M., & Stevens, K. (2009). Exploring a triad model of student teaching: Pre-service teacher and cooperating teacher perceptions. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(2), 285–296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.10.003

Gorski, P. C. (2014). Poverty, class, and the cultivation of economically just educational policy. *Research Intelligence*, *125*, 14–15.

Gorski, P. C. (2013, February 19). *Social justice: Not just another term for 'diversity'* The CSJE Blog. https://acpacsje.wordpress.com/2013/02/19/social-justice-not-just-another-term-for-diversity-by-paul-c-gorski/

Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., & McDonald, M. (2009). Redefining teaching, re-imagining teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching, 15*(2), 273–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600902875340

Grossman, P., Wineburg, S. S., & Woolworth, S. (2001). Toward a theory of teacher community. *Teachers College Record, 103*(6), 942–1012. https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00140

Grubb, N. (2007). Dynamic inequality and intervention: Lessons from a small country. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(2), 105–115. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170708900206

Guajardo, M. A., Guajardo, F., Janson, C., & Militello, M. (2015). *Reframing community partnerships in education: Uniting the power of place and wisdom of people.* Routledge.

Hackett, J., Williams, R., Davis, C., Cross, S. B., Behizadeh, N., & Hearn, E. (2021). Tensions in designing a third space in a justice-oriented teacher residency: Toward an authentic collaborative for clinical practice. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *96*(1), 32–42. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2020.1864244

Hanchett, T. W. (1988). The Rosenwald schools and Black education in North Carolina. *North Carolina Historical,* 65(4), 387–444. https://historysouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Rosenwald_Schools_NC.pdf

Harapnuik, D. (2020, December 24). *Assessment of/for/as learning*. It's about Learning. https://www.harapnuik.org/?p=8475

hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope.* Routledge.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom.* Routledge.

Idahor, I. (2021). *Cultivated at home: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experiences of Black homegrown teachers and the reimagining of mainstream ideas of quality teaching and community engagement.* [Doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University). N.C. State Theses and Dissertations. https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/resolver/1840.20/38869

IDRA. (2022). *6 advocacy lessons learned from fighting against classroom censorship policies.* Intercultural Development Research Association. https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Advocacy-Lessons-Learned-Classroom-Censorship-11-x-8.5-in-reduced-1.pdf

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *10*(2), 144–156. https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bpg016

Kaestle, C. F. (1983). *Pillars of the republic: Common schools and American society, 1780–1860.* Hill and Wang.

King, Jr., M. L., (1967, April 4). *Beyond Vietnam–A time to break silence.* [Speech audio recording]. American Rhetoric. https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkatimetobreaksilence.htm

Klein, E. J., Taylor, M., Onore, C., Strom, K., & Abrams, L. (2013). Finding a third space in teacher education: Creating an urban teacher residency. *Teaching Education*, *24*(1), 27–57.

Kohli, R., Dover, A. G., Jayakumar, U. M., Lee, D., Henning, N., Comeaux, E., Nevárez, A., Hipolito, E., Carreno Cortez, A., & Vizcarra, M. (2022). Toward a healthy racial climate: Systemically centering the well-being of teacher candidates of color. *Journal of Teacher Education, 73*(1), 52–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871211051980

Lampert, M. (2010). Learning teaching in, from, and for practice: What do we mean? *Journal of Teacher Education*, *61*(1–2), 21–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109347321

Labaree, D. F. (2008). An uneasy relationship: The history of teacher education in the university. In *Handbook of research on teacher education* (pp. 290–306). Routledge.

Lindsay, C. A., & Hart, C. M. D. (2017). Exposure to same-race teachers and student disciplinary outcomes for Black students in North Carolina. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 39*(3), 485–510. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373717693109

Long, C. (2022). *Express yourself! Arts integration in the classroom*. NEA Today. https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/express-yourself-arts-integration-classroom

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom.* Beacon Press.

Militello, M., Tredway, L., Hodgkins, L., & Simon, K. (2021). Virtual reality classroom simulations: How school leaders improve instructional leadership capacity. *Journal of Educational Administration, 59*(3), 286–301. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-10-2020-0219

Milner, H. R. (2018). *Confronting inequity/assessment for equity.* ASCD. https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/assessment-for-equity

Minor, K. (2023). *Teaching fiercely: Spreading joy and justice in our schools*. Jossey-Bass.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., Gonzales, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes to classrooms. *Theory into Practice 31*(2), 132–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534

Muhammad, Gholdy. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy.* Scholastic.

Muhammad, Gholdy. (2023). *Unearthing joy: A guide to culturally and historically responsive teaching and learning.* Scholastic.

National Education Association. (2020). *The teacher leader model standards.* National Education Association Resource Library. https://www.nea.org/resource-library/teacher-leader-model-standards

National Center for Teacher Residencies (2023). *Levers for equitable teacher residencies.* https://nctresidencies.org/levers-for-equitable-teacher-residencies/

National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2017). *Recommendations for state support for effective teacher residencies.* [Policy Report]. https://nctresidencies.org/resource/recommendations-for-state-support-for-effective-teacher-residencies/

N.C. African American Heritage Commission. (n.d.). N.C. civil rights virtual trail. Retrieved on May 23, 2024, from https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/nc-civil-rights-trail/nc-civil-rights-virtual-trail

Nieto, S. (2013). *Finding joy in teaching students of diverse backgrounds: Culturally responsive and socially just practices in U.S. classrooms.* Heinemann.

Ocasio-Cortez, A. (2019). *Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: 'Oftentimes the most righteous thing you can do is shake the table', women's march – 2019.* Speakola: All speeches great and small. https://speakola.com/ideas/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-womens-march-2019

Orfield, G. & Frankenburg, E. (2008). *The last have become first: Rural and small town America lead the way on desegregation.* The Civil Rights Project. https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/the-last-have-become-first-rural-and-small-town-america-lead-the-way-on-desegregation/frankenberg-last-have-become-first-2008.pdf

Oyen, K., & Schweinle, A. (2020). Addressing teacher shortages in rural America: What factors encourage teachers to consider teaching in rural settings? *Rural Educator*, *41*(3), 12–25. https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v41i3.923

Parents' Bill of Rights, N.C. Senate Bill 49 G.S. Chapter 114 § 114A-1 *et seq.*, G.S. Chapter 115C Article 7B § 115C-76.1 *et seq.*, G.S. 115C-150.16 Section 2.(b) *et seq*, G.S. Chapter 90 Article 1A Section 3.(a) § 90-21.10A. *et seq* (2023). https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/Senate/PDF/S49v4.pdf

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244

Parker, K. N. (2022). *Literacy is liberation: Working toward justice through culturally relevant teaching*. ASCD.

Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined whiteness of teaching: How white teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 12*(2), 197–215, https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320902995475

Reardon, R. M. & Leonard, J. (Eds.). (2022). *School-university-community collaboration for civic education and engagement in the democratic project.* Information Age Publishing.

Rockman, S., Sloan, K., Allen, A., Blazevski, J., Carson, F. (2018). *A different, more durable model* [Report]. Rockman et al. Research and Evaluation. https://rockman.com/docs/downloads/TQPXCombinedReport_10.23.18-1.pdf

Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S. O., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. A. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*(3), 475–514. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215585562

Rosenberg, D., & Miles, K. (2017). *Growing great teachers: How school system leaders can use existing resources to better develop, support, and retain new teachers—and improve student outcomes.* Education Resource Strategies.

Roth, W., & Tobin, K. (Eds.). (2005). *Teaching together, learning together.* Peter Lang.

Rowland, C., Martin Goggins, K., Williams Eubanks, A. & Simpson Zulfiqar, A. (2023). *Doing better for Black educators: Six policy recommendations for improving the recruitment and preparation of Black educators* [Report]. National Center for Teacher Residencies. https://nctresidencies.org/resource/doing-better-for-black-educators/

Ruys, I., Van Keer, H., & Aelterman, A. (2010). Collaborative learning in pre-service teacher education: An exploratory study on related conceptions, self-efficacy and implementation. *Educational Studies, 36*(5), 537–553. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055691003729021

Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2011). Dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline through racial literacy development in teacher education. J*ournal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, 8*(2), 116–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/15505170.2011.624892

Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2021). The critical literacy of race: Toward racial literacy in urban teacher education. In H. R. Milner IV & K. Lomotey (Eds.). *Handbook of urban education* (2nd ed., pp. 281–295). Routledge.

Shannon, P. (2017). [Review of the book *White folks: Race and identity in rural America*, by T. J. Lensmire]. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 32*(1), 1–4. https://jrre.psu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-08/32-9.pdf

Showalter, D., Hartman, S.L. Eppley, K., Johnson, J., Klein, B. (2023). *Why rural matters 2023: Center equity and opportunity* [Annual Report]. National Rural Education Association. https://www.nrea.net/why-rural-matters

Sirrakos Jr., G. & Emdin, C. (Eds.). (2017). *Between the world and the urban classroom.* Sense Publishers.

Sleeter, C. E. (2011). The quest for social justice in the education of minoritized students. In C. E. Sleeter (Ed.). *Professional development for culturally responsive and relationship-based pedagogy* (pp. 1–22). Peter Lang.

Souto-Manning, M., & Emdin, C. (2020). On the harm inflicted by urban teacher education programs: Learning from the historical trauma experienced by teachers of color. *Urban Education, 58*(6), 1238–1270. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920926249

Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina et al., US No. 27-107. (2023). https://www.supremecourt.gov/search.aspx?filename=/docket/docketfiles/html/public/21-707.html

Swain, A. & Baker, T. (2021). Whiteness owns it, Blackness defines it: Rural reality in the Black belt. *Theory and Practice in Rural Education, 11*(2), 15–27. https://doi.org/10.3776/tpre.2021.v11n2p15-27

The Education Trust. (2022). *Educator diversity state profile: North Carolina.* https://edtrust.org/resource/educator-diversity-state-profile-north-carolina/

The Vision Board, LLC. (2024). *Inside the institute.* Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM. https://artsintegration.com/about-us

Tran, H., Hardie, S., Gause, S., Moyi, P., & Ylimaki, R. (2020). Leveraging the perspectives of rural educators to develop realistic job previews for rural teacher recruitment and retention. *The Rural Educator, 41*(2), 31–46. https://doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v41i2.866

Tredway, L., Militello, M., & Simon, K. (2021). Making classroom observations matter. *Educational Leadership: The Empowered Principal, 78*(7), 56-62. https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:9265946a-4abd-4735-af93 7f4e30396811#pageNum=1

Tschida, C. M., Fogarty, E. A., Stapleton, J. N., Cuthrell, K., Lys, D. B., & Bullock, A. (2024). How co-teaching centers equity in the work of educators. In C. M. Tschida, E. A. Fogarty, J. N. Stapleton, K. Cuthrell, D. B. Lys, & A. Bullock (Eds.). *Co-teaching in teacher education: Centering equity,* (pp. 3–22). Teacher's College Press.

Tullos, A. (2004). The Black belt. *Southern Spaces*. https://southernspaces.org/2004/black-belt/ https://doi.org/10.18737/M70K6P

U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *2020 census results: Access data*. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/2020/2020-census-results.html

U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Small area income and poverty estimates (SAIPE) program.*https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe.html

Valenzuela, A. (2017). *Grow Your Own educator programs: A review of the literature with an emphasis on equity-based approaches.* Intercultural Development Research Association. https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Grow-Your-Own-Educator-Programs-Lit-Review-IDRA-EAC-South-2017.pdf

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Harvard University Press.

Weinberg, A., Sebald, A., Stevenson, C. & Wakefield, W. (2019). Toward conceptual clarity: A scoping review of coteaching in teacher education. *The Teacher Educator, 55* (2). 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2019.1657214

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*(2), 237–269. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312041002237

Williams, S. M. (2021). Strong rural learners. In C. Howley and S. Redding (Eds.). *Cultivating rural education: A people-focused approach for states*. Information Age Publishing

Wright, J. (2023). Racist norms until interests converge: A long tradition of egregious educational policy patterns and global implications. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *56*(20), 1–18 https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2023.2272952

Yosso, T. J. (2005) Whose culture has capital?: A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8(*1), 69–91, https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006

Zeichner, K. (2015). Engaging local communities in the preparation of teachers. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, *51*(3), 118–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2015.1056662

Zeichner, K., Payne, K. A., & Brayko, K. (2015). Democratizing teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *66*(2), 122–135. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487114560

Zeichner, K. (2019). Moving beyond asset-, equity-, and justice-oriented teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, *121*(6), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811912100610

Zerquera, D. D. (2023). *Surviving a polarized response to equity efforts in higher education*. Medium. https://medium.com/national-center-for-institutional-diversity/surviving-a-polarized-response-to-equity-efforts-in-higher-education-6e3449bf40cb

Zimmerman, A. S. (2018). Democratic teacher education: Preserving public education as a public good in an era of neoliberalism. *The Educational Forum,* 82(3), 351–368. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2018.1458358

About the Authors

Angela Novak, Ph.D., an equity advocate, is an associate professor and gifted coordinator at East Carolina University. For 25+ years, Angela has engaged collectively with learners, families, communities, and staff in K-22 education as an inclusion co-teacher in a variety of gifted and talented educator, specialist, and administrative roles in public education and in non-profit academic programming. Multilingualism, equity, and belongingness are deeply embedded throughout her professional work and personal lived experiences, contributing to her publications and presentations in giftedness, educator professional learning, collegians, and play. Angela is a mother-scholar, educator, and current editor of the *Journal of Advanced Academics.*

Jennifer L. Gallagher, PhD, is an associate professor in the Literacy Studies, English Education, and History Education department in the College of Education at East Carolina University, where she teaches social studies education courses and serves as the program coordinator for the undergraduate and graduate history education programs. Gallagher is originally from northern Wisconsin and earned her BA and MEd from the University of Minnesota. She taught social studies for several years in Colorado and then earned her PhD at Iowa State University, where she also taught diversity courses, social foundations of education, and social studies methods. Her research and her professional efforts focus on supporting teacher candidates, in-service teachers, and P-20 students in critical inquiry of the social world. She has also collaborated with colleagues across the college and engaged in related work in literacy education, science education, and educational leadership. Her work has been presented and published in state, national, and international outlets, including Social Education, Social Studies and the Young Learner, Social Studies Research and Practice, Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, and *Journal of Social Studies Research*. She can be reached at gallagherj17@ecu.edu or on Twitter as @DrGSocialEd