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Abstract

While educational research promotes integrated instruction that supports the needs of emergent bilinguals (EBs) and students with disabilities (SWD), educator preparation programs (EPPs) do not currently provide fully integrated curricula for multi-specialty certification as part of their undergraduate programs. This article chronicles a journey out of the traditional silos in teacher preparation as we - as curriculum designers – collaboratively designed and piloted an innovative multi-specialty course sequence (MSCS) that includes English as a second language (ESL), bilingual education, and special education competency-based curriculum and pedagogy within a university-based undergraduate EPP.

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The Journey Out of the Silos: A Multispecialty Course Sequence for Educator Preparation Programs

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The educational landscape of today's K-12 classrooms is characterized by diverse student populations, making the responsibilities of teachers more complex and integral in student achievement. To support these responsibilities and to promote equity in education, educator preparation programs (EPPs) must prepare teacher candidates (TCs) as inclusive practitioners who can create supportive learning environments that accommodate the unique learning needs and backgrounds of each student, including emergent bilinguals (EBs) and students with disabilities (SWD) (D'Haem & Griswold, 2017; Florian & Linklater, 2010; Welsh & Swain, 2020).

Recent demographic data for United States student populations indicate growing diversity among public education K-12 populations, with approximately 10% identified as EBs, 55% identified as nonWhite, and 15% identified as receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2023). Thus, it is time to move beyond the inequitable standardized approaches to educator preparation and work proactively to reimagine teacher certification (Matias & Aldern, 2019). Traditional EPPs that only supplement content regarding diverse student populations, including EBs and SWD, have proven ineffective, and the educational opportunity gap for diverse student populations is well documented in seminal literature (Gay, 2014; Waitoller et al., 2010; Zeichner, 2003). Teacher educators from specialized fields such as bilingual education/English as a second language (ESL), special education, and multicultural education must venture out of the traditional silos and work collaboratively to create coursework that supports the teaching of diverse student populations (Artiles et al., 2002; Counts et al., 2018; Pugach & Blanton, 2012).

Prompted by conversations with stakeholders, including school-district partners, a university-based educator preparation program in the Southwestern United States answered the call to build a multispecialty course sequence (MSCS) with content, assignments, and assessments that reflect the multifaceted needs of students. As teacher educators and researchers, we came together from various specialty fields to navigate our way out of our perspective silos and embrace innovation. This conceptual paper details this journey and the lessons we learned along the way. Although revolution is necessary, it is never easy.

Positionality

The authors are research practitioners with teaching experience in the United States K-12 education system. Our identity as educators was formed through our experiences as classroom teachers. Thus, this is the lens through which we conducted our research and work, prioritizing a preparation program-to-field connection.

Author 1 holds advanced degrees in curriculum and instruction and special education and undergraduate degrees in sociology and English. She has 17 years of K-12 experience as a general-education teacher, self-contained special-education teacher, intervention specialist, and educational diagnostician in rural and urban districts. She maintains teaching certifications in ESL (EC-12) and special education (EC-12) and the credential for Educational Diagnostician (EC-12). She has 7 years of experience in higher education, serving as a

postdoctoral researcher, an assistant professor of practice, an assistant professor, and a co-curriculum populations anchor.

Author 2 is a bilingual educator with undergraduate and advanced degrees in curriculum and instruction, early childhood, and 6 years of K-12 classroom experience. She has current teaching certifications in bilingual education, ESL, and special education. During her time in public education, she served as a classroom teacher, a dual language teacher, and an ESL coordinator. She has 11 years of experience in higher education as a grant director, bilingual/ESL science and mathematics coach, instructor, and cocurricular anchor.

Author 3 is a bilingual/ESL educator specializing in multicultural education and holds corresponding degrees in curriculum and instruction in bilingual education and English. She was a classroom teacher for 5 years at Title 1 schools and holds current teaching certifications in fourth–12th grade English language arts, reading, and bilingual education. She is in her 11th year in higher education, where she has held the positions of research associate, student teaching site coordinator, instructor, and program co-curriculum anchor.

All three authors are tenure-track research faculty, and thus, while developing this new program, we were also working to meet our research and service expectations. Authors 1 and 2 served as the co-curriculum anchors of the MSCS and were tasked with the design, development, and revision of coursework, assignments, and assessments, the alignment of the MSCS to state certification standards, the course compliance with accreditation standards, the specialty certification preparation, recruitment, and development of course instructors, the collaboration with other anchor faculty, the staff and stakeholders, and the course scheduling and staffing. Author 3 consulted on the development of courses and course content.

MSCS Design: Working Within the Silos

Educational inequities result from multifaceted societal realities; a predominantly homogeneous teaching force is not prepared to support and advocate for the diverse student population it serves (Anderson et al., 2022). Educational systems must be reimagined to support and center the needs of SWD and EB student populations (Klingner et al., 2005). The antiquated approaches of (EPPs) that include supplementary coursework and content, if at all, on serving, supporting, and advocating for SWD and EBs have unfortunately contributed to a myriad of educational woes, including the disproportionate recommendation of EBs to special-education services, harmful subtractive linguistic practices, opportunity gaps for EBs, and underserving of SWD (Artiles, 2009; Linn et al., 2008). The standardization reflected in policy and EPPs is not the reality of classrooms today, and thus, it is imperative that we make a significant pivot in educator preparation (Pugach & Blanton, 2012).

In response to this need and at the request of our school-district partners, we—as curriculum-anchor faculty—created an MSCS that integrates ESL, bilingual education, special education, and critical pedagogy using blended content for a university-based EPP with three delivery systems: a traditional in-person model (2-year education coursework with 1-year-long clinical residency); a traditional online model (2-year education coursework with 1-year-long clinical residency); and a fast-track online model (1-year education coursework with 1-year-long clinical residency). These three models are illustrated in Table 1.

A distinct advantage of partnerships between an EPP and school-district allies is the collaboration that informs the creation of structured programs that meet EPP requirements and specific district needs while also providing teacher candidates (TCs) opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions through coursework and authentic clinical settings. This structure allows for a reinforced connection between educational theory and classroom practice, where TCs practice their skills in classrooms, demonstrate teaching proficiency in real time, and are supported by expert mentor teachers and EPP faculty. This programmatic evolution and

systemic change toward a more collaborative nature are essential to addressing equity issues in education. Ladson-Billings (2009) proposed that "no single course or set of field experiences can prepare preservice students to meet the needs of diverse learners; rather, a more systemic, comprehensive approach is needed" (p. 463). The education system must be transformed to be as diverse as the student populations it serves.

Table 1

MSCS Scope and Sequence

Course	Semester	Course Focus	Credits	Model
1102 - Special Populations for Community College Transfers	Summer	Eligibility, Services, Programs, & Ethical Responsibilities (Fast-Track Online Model Only)	1	Fast-Track
3301 - Programs & Services for Special Populations (EC-12)	Summer Fall	Eligibility, Services, Programs, & Ethical Responsibilities (Traditional Models Only)	3	Fast-Track Online Traditional In-Person Traditional Online
3303 - Foundations of Inclusion and Differentiation for Special Populations (EC-12)	Fall	Learning Environment, Differentiation, & Inclusion	3	Fast-Track Online Traditional In-Person Traditional Online
3304 - Behavior Management in General and Special Population Classrooms (EC-12)	Fall Winter Spring	Classroom Design, PBIS, Rules & Procedures, ABA & BIPs	3	Fast-Track Online Traditional In-Person Traditional Online
3305 - Designing Assessments for General and Special Populations (EC-12)	Fall Spring Summer	Formative, Summative, Portfolio, & Language Assessments; Data Collection, Connecting Assessment to Instruction	3	Fast-Track Online Traditional In-Person Traditional Online
4380 - Content Area Development for Special Populations	Spring	Fundamental Language Concepts, Academic Language Development, & Second Language Acquisition	3	Fast-Track Online Traditional In-Person Traditional Online

4302 - Advanced Methods for Special Populations (EC-12)	Spring May	Theories, Inclusive Pedagogies, SIOP, SEL, Multicultural Case Analysis, RTI Strategies	3	Fast-Track Online Traditional In-Person Traditional Online
3320 - Content Area Instruction in Spanish for Dual Language Classrooms	Spring	Teacher-training course taught entirely in Spanish emphasizing instructional language for bilingual education across content areas in dual language classrooms. (Required for bilingual education certification)	3	Fast-Track Online Traditional In-Person Traditional Online

In considering how to transform our EPP and ensure that our TCs would be highly qualified inclusive practitioners, we utilized a conceptual framework situated in culturally responsive educational systems and high-leverage practices in special education. Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (CRES) defines reforms needed to overhaul the education system by enacting change and development in the three critical areas of policy, practice, and people. Founded on the theoretical tenets of critical race theory, Latinx critical theory, and culturally relevant/culturally responsive scholarship, this framework examines reform across educational policy, practice, and people to "promote the creation of conditions, produce resources and tools, and support multiple stakeholders in the creations of educational systems that are responsive to cultural diversity" (Klingner et al., 2005, p. 8). To support special-education content and pedagogy, we integrated the Council for Exceptional Children's High-Leverage Practices (HLPs), which focus on methods for supporting TCs as they learn to use effective practices in their classrooms to instruct SWD. The HLPs are organized around four aspects of educator practice—collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral practices, and instruction—and are designed to provide those who work in school districts and EPPs with a clear vision of effective teaching for SWD (McLeskey et al., 2017).

The next step in our development process involved examining the licensure requirements for multispecialty certifications in ESL, special education, and bilingual education. The local education agency requires TCs to pass comprehensive certification exams that evaluate their readiness to teach in public schools and measure their pedagogical and content knowledge. Each exam is divided into content domains that reflect organizational principles supported by multiple competencies, which are conceptual statements that reflect the skills, knowledge, and understanding required of educators (Pearson Education, 2023). Table 2 illustrates each domain for the corresponding certification exam and identifies the course alignment. The MSCS is designed to scaffold TCs' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. For consistency, each course is structured with four modules, including complex topics such as the domain and competency structure of the certification exams. Each module includes specific learning objectives aligned to the certification domains, competencies, and assignments designed through the lenses of CRES and the HLPs to scaffold TCs' knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

The assignments and assessments within each course were purposefully designed to a) incorporate TCs' application of theories, research-based strategies, and pedagogy; b) provide TCs with clear grading expectations and structured opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the content; and c) reinforce TCs' course-to-

clinical residency connections. The Spanish Content Area course (3320) was also created to improve academic Spanish proficiency based on research and ideas from leading bilingual teacher preparation specialists (Guerrero, 2003; Guerrero & Guerrero, 2009; Guerrero & Valadez, 2011).

Table 2

Certification Exam Domains and MSCS Alignment

Domain	Description	Course Alignment
ESL Certification Exam		
I	*Language Concepts and Language Acquisition*	4380
	The Structure of English First and Second Language Acquisition	
II	*ESL Instruction and Assessment*	3303
	Standards-Based ESL Instruction	3305
	Communicative Competence	4380
	Achievement Across the Curriculum	
III	*Foundations of ESL Education*	1102/3301
	Cultural Awareness and Family and Community Involvement History of	3304
	ESL Student Diversity and Identity	
	Partnering with Families	
Special-Education Exam		
I	*Understanding Individuals with Disabilities and Evaluating Their Needs*	3305
	Understanding Different Types of Disabilities	
	Informal and Formal Assessment	
II	*Promoting Student Learning and Development*	3304
	Applies and Understands Procedures Involved in Planning for	4302
	Instruction	4380
III	*Promoting Student Achievement in English Language Arts and Reading and Mathematics*	3303
	Knows How to Plan and Provide Instruction in Content Areas	
IV	*Foundations and Professional Roles and Responsibilities*	1102/3301
	History of Special Education	
	Fosters Respectful Relationships Between Families	
	Effectively Communicates with Parents, Teachers, and Administrators	
Bilingual Certification Exam		
I	*Bilingual Education*	1102/3301
	The Structure of English First and Second Language Acquisition History	3303
	of Bilingual Education	3304
	Promotes Diversity Across the Curriculum	3305
		4302
		4380
		3320

Bilingual Target-Language Proficiency Test		
I	*Listening Comprehension* The Teacher Is Able to Derive Essential Information Interpret Meaning Evaluate Oral Communications in the Target Language	3320
II	*Reading Comprehension* The Teacher Is Able to Derive Essential Information Interpret Meaning Evaluate a Variety of Authentic Materials Written in the Target Language	3320
III	*Oral Expression* The Teacher Is Able to Construct Effective Interpersonal and Presentational Oral Discourse in the Target Language	3320
IV	*Written Expression* The Teacher Is Able to Write Effective Interpersonal and Presentational Discourse in the Target Language	3320

Weekly course schedules require TCs to complete a topic-specific quiz, a written or oral assignment, or a group project aligned to the required certification domains. All written and oral assignments for the MSCS are formatted to include the following: a "Course to Field Connection" section that explains how the assignment connects to the clinical setting; a "Certification Exams" section that identifies the state-mandated competencies for the ESL, bilingual education, and special-education certification and is intended to support TCs preparation for the exams; and a detailed grading rubric to ensure that TCs understand the assignment expectations and to safeguard grading equity across course sections. Each learning module in the MSCS also includes a final comprehensive assignment designed to reinforce the TCs' knowledge and skills acquired within the learning module. These end-of-module assignments vary by course, but each allows TCs to apply what they are learning in their coursework to their clinical placement or residency. Examples of end-of-module assignments include video capture of TCs demonstrating newly acquired pedagogical strategies to EBs and SWD, case studies, and video analysis assignments, which provide TCs with opportunities to apply their conceptual understanding of theories and further connect their knowledge to clinical settings.

Implementation: Moving Out of the Silos

The MSCS launched during the 2018–2019 academic year and replaced two specialty programs focusing on ESL/bilingual education or special education. This EPP is unique in that it has three different delivery systems that offer face-to-face and online courses, and thus, TCs are in 23 different urban and rural districts across the state.

During the initial implementation of the MSCS, we encountered several unexpected obstacles, including issues with an expedited timeline for implementing the new curriculum and limited instructor support for the blended ESL, bilingual, and special-education content. Hodges et al. (2020) explain that the typical design process for an online course, which includes developing curriculum, assignments, assessments, and considerations for digital learning, is 6–9 months, with instructors needing two to three iterations to be familiar and comfortable with the content and teaching format. However, the urgency from our partner districts and the directive from our

college dean required that we design the MSCS during the summer of 2018 and implement it during the following fall and spring semesters. This limited timeline required instructors to learn new content, attend professional learning opportunities, and familiarize themselves with new assignments, assessments, and grading rubrics in real time.

We also received resistance and pushback from instructors who did not want to teach new courses and those who disagreed with blending the content for ESL/bilingual and special education. Through collaborative meetings with instructors and senior faculty, we were informed that several had conflicting views and misconceptions regarding ESL/bilingual and special-education pedagogy even though they had certifications in these areas. Discussions during our collaborative meetings also indicated a lack of buy-in for the new specialized coursework from two (40%) senior faculty who believed that the ESL/bilingual and special-education content should remain in separate courses and not be required for the initial teacher preparation program.

While we anticipated that implementing the new curriculum would generate questions from faculty regarding the new content, we were unprepared for their lack of support. We realized there was a need to broaden the faculty's understanding of the purpose of the curriculum modifications and the new specialized course sequence and that giving them ownership of the dual-certification program was a necessity. McCrickerd (2012) explains that faculty's desire to change their teaching practice requires (a) a perceived need to change and (b) persistence through ongoing difficulties. Another significant barrier to faculty support for changing their teaching practices is that universities do not typically reward advancement through the tenure process based on teacher education program development or student outcomes (DeAngelo et al., 2009).

Through collaboration with MSCS instructors (see Table 3), ongoing data collection, and self-reflection, these conflicts became learning opportunities rather than barriers. We developed training for the MSCS instructors that focused on appropriate pedagogy for second language acquisition, culturally responsive teaching, inclusive teaching, and differentiated instruction. We also scheduled weekly personal learning community (PLC) meetings to discuss and plan lessons and learning activities. This curriculum designer-to-faculty collaboration ensured that expectations regarding course content, assignments, academic feedback to TCs, and grading practices were implemented with fidelity and consistency across all course sections. This level of collaboration and support helped ease the instructors' apprehension about learning and teaching the new curriculum in such a short amount of time.

Table 3

MSCS Instructor Profile

Role	Description	Teaching Requirement
Curriculum Anchor Faculty	Tenure-track faculty	2 courses per semester Intersession and Summer courses
Full-Time MSCS Instructors	An EPP department instructor with credentials in special education, ESL, or bilingual education	4 FTF courses per semester; 1–2 intersession courses as assigned

MSCS Course Lead	Full-time MSCS instructors who assist curriculum-anchor faculty in preparing course syllabi and learning management system shells, and developing and editing course content, assignments, and assessments as needed with anchor approval.	3 FTF courses per semester with a course release for assigned duties
Site Coordinators	An EPP department instructor assigned to supervise, coach, and evaluate TCs during clinical placements and residencies.	1–2 courses per semester
Adjunct Instructors	Current or retired practitioners with credentials in special education, ESL, or bilingual education (examples: teacher, instructional coach, LSSP, educational diagnostician, principal, superintendent, counselor)	1–2 online courses per semester

We also utilized MSCS instructor feedback regarding each course's content, resources, assignments, assessments, and grading rubrics to identify areas of improvement for the course content and additional training opportunities for the MSCS instructors. Most importantly, allowing instructors to provide feedback and contribute to the course design and implementation gave them ownership in the MSCS and helped create a shared vision in preparing our TCs to be inclusive practitioners for all students.

Moving Beyond the Silos: Creative Staffing

As new educational systems are constructed, special attention must be given to developing the staff equipped with the capacity to work within the new system (Klingner et al., 2005). Given the rarity of multispecialty course sequences, most teacher educators trained themselves in programs with traditional models (Pugach & Blanton, 2012). Staffing for the MSCS is organized and completed by both curriculum-anchor faculty. This means curriculum anchor-faculty interview, hire, and train adjuncts and full-time instructors. Since the EPP has three programs (2+1, 2+2 traditional, and 2+2 online), the MSCS is taught the entire calendar year. Regardless of content area expertise, all TCs enrolled in the EPP must complete the MSCS. Therefore, each calendar year, 106 sections of multispecialty courses typically exist. This requires the special populations' curriculum-anchor faculty to be vigilant with enrollment to determine throughout the year if more instructors are needed for course sections.

Currently, three full-time face-to-face instructors and one full-time online instructor teach the MSCS. At this institution, full-time instructors must teach four courses each semester, while adjuncts teach two to three courses online each semester (see Table 3). Adjuncts teaching the MSCS work full-time in school districts throughout the state. This diverse teaching group includes a mathematics teacher, a superintendent, a special-education teacher, a diagnostician, and bilingual, dual language teachers. To staff all sections, site coordinators also teach multispecialty courses. In addition to teaching a class face-to-face on TCs' pedagogical needs, the role of a site coordinator in this EPP is to supervise, observe, and provide detailed feedback on lesson implementation

to TCs in field placements. All instructors have K-12 public school classroom experience and have worked with diverse populations. To teach the MSCS, instructors, adjuncts, and site coordinators are required to have a valid teaching license and certification in ESL, bilingual, or special education.

Additionally, instructors, adjuncts, and site coordinators must also have a master's degree in education, administration, special education, bilingual education, or a related field. Each semester, a combination of 20 full-time instructors, curriculum-anchor faculty, adjuncts, and site coordinators teach the online and face-to-face multispecialty courses. About 30% of these instructors presently have an advanced university degree; two instructors are taking coursework to complete their PhD.

Issues Faced

Staffing for the innovative MSCS has created complications for curriculum-anchor faculty. Specifically, there are four recurring obstacles surrounding staffing since the initial implementation of MSCS in 2018. First, finding qualified instructors with in-depth knowledge of EBs and SWD has become an endeavor. Initially, curriculum anchors were asked to staff courses with current department instructors. This resulted in the curriculum-anchor faculty often being the sole knowledge brokers. For instance, curriculum-anchor faculty led a semester-long professional-development book study for everyone in the EPP to enhance understanding of differentiation. Almost 2 years later, Author 1 was asked to provide additional professional development on differentiation to the site coordinators. Therefore, when asked to staff courses with instructors who lack expertise in this specialized content, curriculum-anchor faculty have advocated endlessly to undo the misconception that teaching EBs or SWD "is just good teaching."

While most MSCSs are taught by adjuncts, an issue constantly encountered with staffing has been attrition. The salary for full-time instructors is $10,000 below the state's average teacher salary, thus forcing full-time instructors to leave the EPP and seek jobs in school districts that offer competitive salaries. In many cases, experienced interviewees are interested in full-time instructor positions; however, upon learning about the salary level, their interest drastically diminishes.

A third issue with staffing connected to the high turnover rate of instructors has been the need to train and support new instructors regularly. Curriculum-anchor faculty teach instructors how to navigate the learning management system utilized by the institution. Additionally, curriculum-anchor faculty lead and oversee a professional learning community in courses with over 15 sections. Lastly, the fourth issue with staffing has been navigating the institution's procedures for hiring instructors. The procedures set by the institution are clear; however, every step in the process requires approval from various individuals, making the hiring process tedious.

Lessons Learned

Over the last five years, we have learned valuable lessons related to staffing the MSCS. First, to help with instructor turnover, curriculum anchor faculty intentionally assign summer and intersession courses to full-time instructors who have shown interest in teaching during these times. This strategy has proven beneficial in two ways: a) full-time instructors can increase their pay by teaching summer and intersession courses, making them less likely to leave their positions, and b) because the content taught during the regular 16-week semester is not modified for summer and intersession courses, full-time instructors are the most qualified to meet the grading and communication demands during intersession and summer schedules—tasks that adjunct instructors are unable to complete because of their full-time employment in local school districts.

Since the hiring process requires multiple steps, curriculum-anchor faculty have learned to start hiring at

least two to three months before the semester begins. Failure to start the hiring process early has resulted in curriculum-anchor faculty being placed as instructors of record for several courses until the hiring process is completed. Furthermore, because adjunct instructors do not have contracts, we have learned that they must be reinstated into the university's system yearly. If adjuncts are not reinstated in a timely manner, they do not have access to email, the learning management system, or the ability to start their online courses.

One of the most important lessons we have learned about staffing has been the need to be creative with full-time instructor roles and to train these instructors to be leaders in the MSCS. For instance, in the second year of MSCS implementation, Author 2 created the role of course lead. Course leads are full-time instructors who assist curriculum-anchor faculty in preparing course syllabi and learning management system shells and developing and editing course content, assignments, and assessments as needed with anchor approval. Additionally, course leads conduct Zoom meetings with other instructors, adjuncts, and site coordinators to review course content and assignments. Currently, we have trained three course leads to help lead the implementation of the MSCS. The role of course lead has been revolutionary in creating allies who believe in the mission of the MSCS.

Recommendations

Preparing TCs for today's diverse classrooms is a multifaceted process that requires dismantling the traditional silos that separate general and specialized training in ESL/bilingual and special education. To provide fully integrated curricula for multispecialty certification in undergraduate programs, educational researchers, policymakers, and EPPs should consider collaborating with stakeholders to identify new and innovative ways to prepare TCs to teach all student populations in K-12 classrooms. We offer the following recommendations for EPPs interested in developing their own MSCS:

The MSCS should be a collaborative effort between stakeholders. The proposed collaboration with stakeholders is essential to developing effective multispecialty courses. By engaging various stakeholders, such as educators, administrators, community members, and policymakers, these programs can draw upon a diverse range of expertise and perspectives. This collaborative approach ensures that the courses are informed by real-world needs and aligned with the expectations of the education community.

The MSCS should be intentionally connected to TCs' clinical residency experiences. Intentionally connecting coursework to clinical experiences is another crucial aspect highlighted in this paper. By integrating practical experiences into the curriculum, aspiring educators can apply theoretical knowledge to real-life scenarios, fostering more profound understanding and skill development. This connection between coursework and clinical experiences bridges the gap between theory and practice, equipping educators with the necessary competencies to excel in their professional roles.

The MSCS should be equitably designed and implemented for in-person and online programs. The paper emphasizes the importance of developing online and in-person courses equitably. With the increasing prevalence of online learning, it is crucial to ensure that multispecialty courses are accessible to all learners, regardless of their geographic location or personal circumstances. By adopting inclusive instructional strategies, leveraging technology effectively, and providing ample support for online learners, these programs can create equitable learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of TCs.

The MSCS should be continually evaluated for relevance and fidelity. This paper recommends ongoing program assessment for content relevance and adherence to delivering multispecialty courses. Regular evaluation and feedback loops are necessary to ensure that the curriculum remains current, aligned with emerging trends and

best practices, and meets the needs of both EPPs and TCs. By continuously assessing the relevance and fidelity of the courses, EPPs can adapt and refine their offerings, ensuring the highest quality of education.

Conclusion

During the MSCS design and implementation journey, we identified gaps in course content, discovered authentic clinical experience opportunities, supported MSCS instructors' professional learning needs, and built strong collaborative relationships with stakeholders. The implementation of the MSCS demonstrates the potential of cooperative teacher education as exemplified by the stakeholders involved in creating the new specialized course sequence for multispecialty certification programs within a university-based teacher education program. This conceptual paper presents a holistic and forward-thinking approach to EPPs. By embracing collaboration, intentionally connecting coursework to clinical experiences, designing equitable online and in-person courses, and providing ongoing assessment for relevance and fidelity, EPPs can create transformative educational experiences that empower future educators with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the ever-evolving field of education.

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