

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LEAD TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM LEARNING COMMUNITY

YEAR 2 SESSION 3 NEWSLETTER



What's Inside?



General Overview

A high-level summary of content discussed during the learning sessions, as well as connections made among participants



Session Highlights

Challenges, strategies and questions to consider that were shared during small group discussions



Office Hours

Additional ideas and support for individual teams offered by our guest lecturers, specifically related to project goals with a focus on equity





GENERAL OVERVIEW

During the final session of the Year 2 Learning Community, we focused on strategies for building coalition and collaboration in early childhood change efforts. This session included a live Q&A from our featured guest experts and scaffolded conversation considering the current challenges and opportunities grantees experience in supporting students while professionalizing the early childhood field.

LEARNING GOAL

Expand and deepen the shared understanding of equitable and effective strategies that institutions of higher education (IHEs) can implement to support pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as the field of early childhood education, as it moves toward professionalization.



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Q&A

For Session 3, we welcomed two guest experts: Anne Douglass, PhD, and Calvin Moore, PhD.

DR. ANNE DOUGLASS is a professor of early care and education policy, director of the graduate certificate program in early education leadership, and founding executive director of the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The Institute cultivates the entrepreneurial leadership of early educators and childcare business owners and produces cutting-edge research on leadership, innovation, and change in early education. She has been designing and leading innovative academic and leadership development programs for early educators at UMass Boston since 2009. She launched an innovative BA degree program designed for the early care and education workforce and led it for a decade. She grew the BA program from an annual enrollment of 15 students to more than 300 students, and the program graduates more racially and linguistically diverse BA-degreed early educators



DR. ANNE DOUGLASS

Founding Executive Director of the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation

each year than any other higher education institution in Massachusetts. She also led the development of new post-master's certificate and PhD programs in early care and education, preparing the next generation of leaders and scholars.

Dr. Douglass is also a leading national expert on early education leadership, quality improvement, and equity. She designs, implements, and studies practices, policies, and systems that increase the capacity of the racially and linguistically diverse early care and education (ECE) workforce to lead change, improvement, and innovation. Her research is conducted in partnership with professional, community, government, and philanthropic entities with a vision to dramatically transform professional development and quality improvement in ECE.

She is the author of the 2017 book *Leading for Change in Early Care and Education: Cultivating Leadership from Within*, and she has been published in a wide range of academic journals, books, and news media and presents nationally and internationally to academic, policy, and professional audiences. All of Dr. Douglass's academic research, writing, speaking, and teaching is informed by a prior twenty-year career in urban ECE as a teacher, administrator, family child care owner and educator, and quality improvement coach and mentor to programs serving children and families in Boston's most under-resourced neighborhoods. There, she saw firsthand that quality improvement in ECE cannot be imposed from the outside but must be built, designed, and nurtured by those closest to the work, all in the context of supportive systems and policies. Dr. Douglass is a Pahara-Aspen Institute Leadership Fellow. She earned a PhD in social policy at the Heller School at Brandeis University, a master's degree at Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a bachelor's degree in political science from Wellesley College.

DR. CALVIN E. MOORE JR. is an accomplished leader in early childhood education and the CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition. He is the Council's first CEO to hold its early education credential, the Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential, and a former Council governing board member. Dr. Moore holds a BS degree in early childhood education, an MS in education, and a PhD in early childhood education. Dr. Moore learned the value of early care and education when he participated in Head Start as a child. He also has vast professional Head Start experience, having served in large and small, urban and rural, center-based and family childcare programs, as well as programs focused mainly on Hispanic families.



DR. CALVIN E. MOORE JR.
CEO of the Council for
Professional Recognition

Throughout his career, Dr. Moore has held senior roles directing complex federal and state departments that improve outcomes for underserved children and families. Most recently, Dr. Moore was the regional program manager in Atlanta for the Office of Head Start within the Administration for Children and Families or the US Department of Health and Human Services. His responsibilities included oversight, monitoring, training, and technical assistance to more than 350 Head Start and Early Head Start grantees with a portfolio of over \$1.6 billion. He's the author of *The Thinking Book Curriculum: For Early Childhood Professionals*, *Men Do Stay: Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Male Early Childhood Teachers*, and many other books. Dr. Moore has received a literary award from AIM and New Light Ministries for his book *Agape Declarations*, the Maria Otto Award for Leadership from the National Family Child Care Association, and the Billy McCain Sr. Memorial Award from the Alabama Head Start Association

In their recorded fireside chat, Calvin and Anne shared their experiences and beliefs about professionalizing the early childhood field, how equity shows up, and how 2- and 4-year institutions can work together. During the live question and answer session, participants asked questions about the challenges and opportunities they are experiencing related to developing the workforce at this moment in time.

With all the attention on early childhood, now seems to be the time to work on workforce issues. What more can we do to advocate?

C: “Those of us who have been in the field a while feel somewhat fragile in advocacy around the politicization of developmentally appropriate practice. We’ve been here before and can hopefully learn from our past. To arm our associations and groups around the country to say what’s best for children.”

A: “We want this moment to catalyze transformative change. So the question is, ‘How do I maximize the support of my institution for the work of early childhood?’ At UMass Boston we created internal messaging across the university, elevating anything that ECE did. We drew attention to early childhood and created visibility around what is often invisible and opened doors to accessing resources.”



With the new national workforce center, how can states access those services, like technical assistance?

C: “This is a new group that will focus on the kinds of resources they can bring to bear within IHEs, and the council is adjacent. We are supportive of a partnership that leverages some systems and data from the CDA, to support the ECE community as a field practice. Forty thousand practitioners a year get a CDA.”

A: “The workforce center will engage with states and IHEs—UMass Boston is one of the core partners. We are excited to be thinking about how this moment and a new resource and investment can catalyze some transformative change. Higher education innovators need to be visible. Higher education could be one of the largest infrastructures to transform, but not if it is perceived as not being flexible or able to collaborate with others. Yes, there are parts that are not ready to change, but so many people and programs are ready to redesign to meet the needs of the workforce.”

The political assault in higher education has trickled down to teacher education. For example, every reference to diversity has been taken out of our professional standards. Developmentally appropriate practice means teachers could lose their certification. How can we be strategic as an institution and safeguard our students?

C: “Quick shout out to Georgia State who is here, for being diverse and welcoming men. We do need to pivot so that students know the professional commitment and student teachers make this commitment. We go through waves of attacks, and this current wave of divisive concepts is not dissimilar from anti-anti-bias. It is also important for those of us engaged with student teachers, that they know where we stand with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Florida at the end of their legislative cycle has taken equity and inclusivity out of the hands of teachers. We will go through additional waves, and see lightning rods in conservative spaces. The more that we can do the better.”

A: “It is important to pivot and think about how we frame what we are doing. In reality, it is hard. There are some individual schools and districts where this is happening in Massachusetts. There are contexts where folks will lose their jobs, so we must think about how to shift and find language to talk about the work and equip educators with the context, skills, and knowledge to understand this as a cycle. This isn’t the first time it’s happened, so how do we prepare? What are the ways in systems we support early educators who want to run for political office? How can we connect with local movements to support educators to think about strategy at every level?”

Beyond scholarships, what creative funding strategies do you see supporting equitable practices and education in early childhood and beyond?

C: “I do believe that the advent of public Pre-K has gone a long way to provide pay parity with K–12 systems as well as provide professional development funding for degree attainment. What I have appreciated about publicly funded Pre-K has been the quality standards and the infrastructure that it has provided in most cases. However, I do believe this funding often is not necessarily permanent but up to the legislature that further brings it into the political domain. I also believe that the Child Care and Development Fund is another funding stream that IHEs haven’t really benefited from in the recent past in most states. It is a stable federal source of funding that has also been used as a level for system building.”

“We are concerned about retaliation and teachers’ careers being stifled. We [as a teacher preparation program] are having to pivot to engage in a strategy that supports students while also ensuring there isn’t a harmful ripple effect related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

- Grantee

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

During each learning community session, participants are offered the opportunity to make direct connections to the challenges and successes experienced in their work related to this grant. Participants use a protocol to consider the session topic objectively, reflectively, and with an action-oriented lens. Participants uplifted connections and challenges, opportunities for change, and questions to consider from these conversations.

Connections and Challenges

- Early childhood programs are working hard to support their students, and this has often meant moving beyond the classroom to source and sometimes provide additional wrap-around supports. For many campuses where students take classes in a language other than English, access to resources can be a particular challenge. Additionally, the existing on-campus resources often do not match the needs of ECE students (in terms of hours, location, and so on).
- The continued challenges of housing and gentrification in communities mean that even when higher education can help defray some costs for students, workforce numbers in local communities are still down.
- The increasingly high cost of living means many more early childhood students across the country are taking hybrid classes, and professors are adapting to students working while logged into class.



Opportunities for change

- Attending the national apprenticeship conference with Early Care & Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS) provided the opportunity for some to see how this model can be used to provide additional supports to students. Adequately supporting students takes significant resources, and apprenticeships are one way to bring partners to the table, including those from outside higher education, such as the Department of Labor and community-based organizations. Through these partnerships, higher education leaders can elevate the needs of the care economy.
- Salish Kootenai College is hosting a [Native Language Summit](#) for tribes across the state of Montana. Programming will include national speakers and opportunities to share successes, challenges, and hopes for language acquisition in Montana’s native communities. Events like this are significant because they not only address the historical trauma of native erasure but also support tribes to increase the numbers of Native language-speaking adults who enter classrooms.
- The Nebraska team shared that they are leveraging a “Grow Your Own” program focusing on junior and senior students who attend the Nebraska Indian Community College. Credits will be stackable so that students can gain their associate’s and then their bachelor’s degree. The initiative, set to launch in fall 2023, aims to decolonize higher education on the reservations.



OFFICE HOURS

Teams from Nebraska and Hawai'i each participated in office hours with Anne Douglass focused on program structure and sustainability.

Key Considerations

- Consider allowing students to design and implement their own lesson plans during the practicum, with guidance from the supervising teacher. This can provide them with a sense of ownership and creativity in their teaching approach. Encourage students to incorporate culturally relevant content and activities into their lesson plans. This can be done by integrating elements of the local community’s culture, language, and history into the curriculum.
- Collaborate with the supervising teachers and school staff to ensure readiness and support for culturally relevant practicum experiences. It’s essential to have a supportive environment where cultural diversity is valued and celebrated.
- Explore the possibility of using standardized curricula if available in the placement sites. This can provide a structured framework for teaching while still allowing room for cultural adaptations and personalized touches.
- Foster partnerships with a diverse range of placement sites, including those that prioritize cultural relevance in their educational approach. This can provide students with opportunities to work in environments where cultural diversity is already embraced.



- Provide guidance and support for students who may need to navigate changes in their job assignments or age group focus during the practicum. Advising students to select a concentration aligned with their current work can help minimize potential conflicts and ensure a smoother practicum experience.
- Encourage reflection and self-assessment among students to evaluate the cultural relevance of their practicum experiences. This can include regular discussions, journaling, or group reflections where students can share their insights, challenges, and successes in incorporating cultural elements into their teaching practice.
- Seek external funding or grants to support stipends for students during the practicum, especially for those who are unable to complete their placement at their workplace. Financial assistance can alleviate some of the challenges students face when balancing work, practicum hours, and additional coursework.
- Consider the long-term sustainability of funding sources to ensure continued support for students pursuing their bachelor's degrees. Seek sustainable funding streams that can provide financial assistance for practicum experiences, enabling students to focus on their studies and successfully complete their degrees.

Depending on the circumstances, teams may want to consider creating an institute that may provide additional flexibility and autonomy. For those exploring this option, consider the desired leadership structure and the reporting lines and impact on the level of independence desired from the college. From there, suggestions include the following:

- Develop a detailed proposal outlining the structure, leadership, and financial arrangements of the institute.
- Consult with individuals who have experience in establishing centers or institutes for guidance and lessons learned.
- Investigate potential grants, contracts, and partnerships with state education departments, private philanthropy, and local organizations.
- Assess the distinction between centers and institutes at your university and align your proposal accordingly.
- Explore collaboration opportunities with existing centers or institutes to leverage their expertise and funding opportunities.
- Establish a dedicated grants management position to handle pre-award, post-award, and financial management tasks.
- Consider involving multiple partners, including universities, school districts, childcare organizations, and nonprofit entities.
- Determine the best approach for implementing the academic component, whether through partnerships or within the university.
- Seek guidance from national early care and education workforce centers for accessing technical assistance and building an apprenticeship model.
- Stay informed about national developments, such as commissions or initiatives, related to early care and education to align your work strategically.