

Supporting Preservice Teachers', Mental Health & Wellbeing

Teacher educators' exploration within preparation programs
and as a community of practice across four programs



Texas A&M College Station | Texas A&M Special Education | Texas A&M International | Trinity University

PDSA Participants



Texas A&M University -
SPED

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Teacher Burnout

- Texas teacher retention as an area of need
- Initial years have the biggest influence on retention (*Bartanen & Kwok, 2023; Tompkins, 2023*)
- Burnout a major reason for attrition (*Charles Butt Foundation, 2023, 2024*)
 - Emotional demand
 - Excessive workload
 - Long hours

The Value of the Texas Teaching Profession



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Resources

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Change Ideas

EPP Problem Statements

General areas to explore, assess, and improve.

Identify change ideas to test in each area.

Statement 1: EPPs do not have a consistent and effective support structure for mentor teachers.

Statement 2: There is a lack of consistency in the way mentor teachers support/coach teacher.

Statement 3: Teacher Candidates are struggling with TExES exams.

Statement 4: EPPs need more effective data collection systems in order to promote continuous improvement within programs.

Statement 5: Teacher Preparation Program's curriculum is not aligned and/or relevant to the current K-12 teacher needs.

Statement 6: Students need more support in addressing their challenges and overall mental health.

UT Austin
SMU
University of Houston
TAMU Corpus Christi
University of the Incarnate Word
University of Texas at Dallas
Rice

Texas State
TAMU Commerce
UTRGV
UTSA

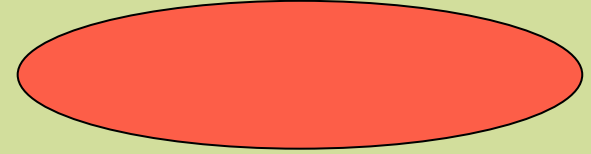
Texas Tech University
TAMU Central Texas
PVAMU
UNT Dallas

UTEP
Tarleton
TAMU Texarkana
West Texas

UTeach
Sam Houston State University
OLLU

Trinity University
TAMU SPED
TAMU College Station
TAMUI

Trinity University



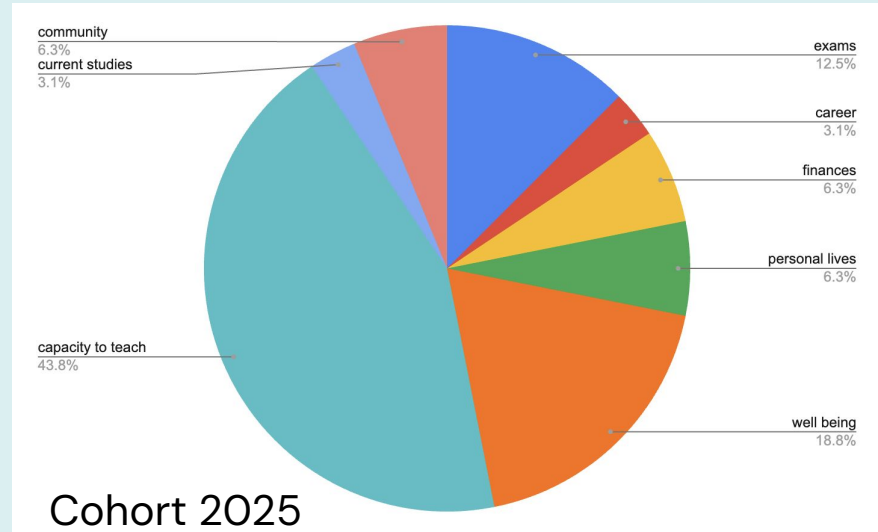
Started conversation about stressors & life/work balance

Noticed delay in teacher candidates completing testing requirements

Conducted collaborative test prep sessions between elementary & secondary cohorts

Identified stressor data – 87.5% not from test itself

- Current studies/graduate work
- Career logistics
- Finances
- Personal lives
- Community
- Exams
- Well being
- Capacity to teach



Life work balance workshop

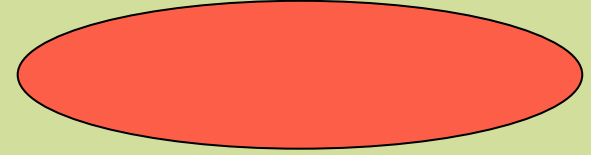
- Being strategic about session timing, creating a timeline/curriculum/flow
- Emphasizing available university and community resources
- Making a plan for self-care
- Connecting to PD
 - Buckingham's *Love and Work*
 - Dweck's *Mindset*

Continuing into the spring & after

- Leadership course curriculum including teacher leadership vision
- Elena Aguilera's *Onward* as a commencement gift

Rate your ability to articulate your core values:	Rate your ability to articulate clear boundaries:	Rate your knowledge and skills on being able to prioritize during high levels of stress.	Rate your knowledge and skills on breathwork.	During high levels of stress, rate your knowledge and skills to self-regulate in order to navigate through the stress.
66% improved by 1 point or more	25% improved by 1 point or more	25% improved by 1 point or more	60% improved by 1 point or more	60% improved by 1 point or more
25% had the same ratings before and after	66% had the same ratings before and after	66% had the same ratings before and after	40% had the same ratings before and after	9% had the same ratings before and after
9% lower score after workshop	9% lower score after workshop	9% lower score after workshop		30% lower score after workshop

Trinity University

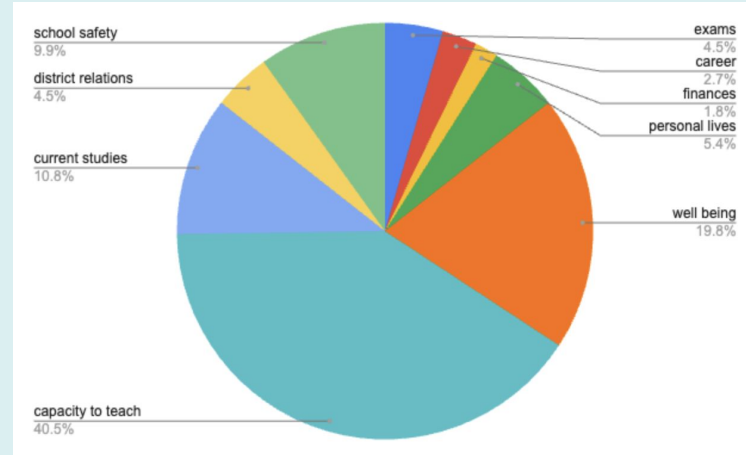


Shared sense of overwhelmness

Continued collaborative test prep sessions between elementary & secondary cohorts

Identified stressor data – 95.5% not from test itself

- Finances
- Career logistics
- Exams
- District relations
- Personal lives
- School safety
- Current studies/graduate work
- Well being
- Capacity to teach



Cohort 2026

Texas A&M University

Noticed conversation in classes about experiences in field-based practica, concerns about students

Surveyed students to solicit input on factors they perceived impacted their stress and mental health (related to field placement)

- What influences your levels of stress?
- What resources are you aware of?
- What resources do you use?

Planned cohort-specific lunches during portion of class time, based on survey results; food, community, and reminders / use of campus resources

Goal: foster resilience and stress-management skills in future teachers

TAMU - SPED

Impact of Field

Lunch 1: Time Management

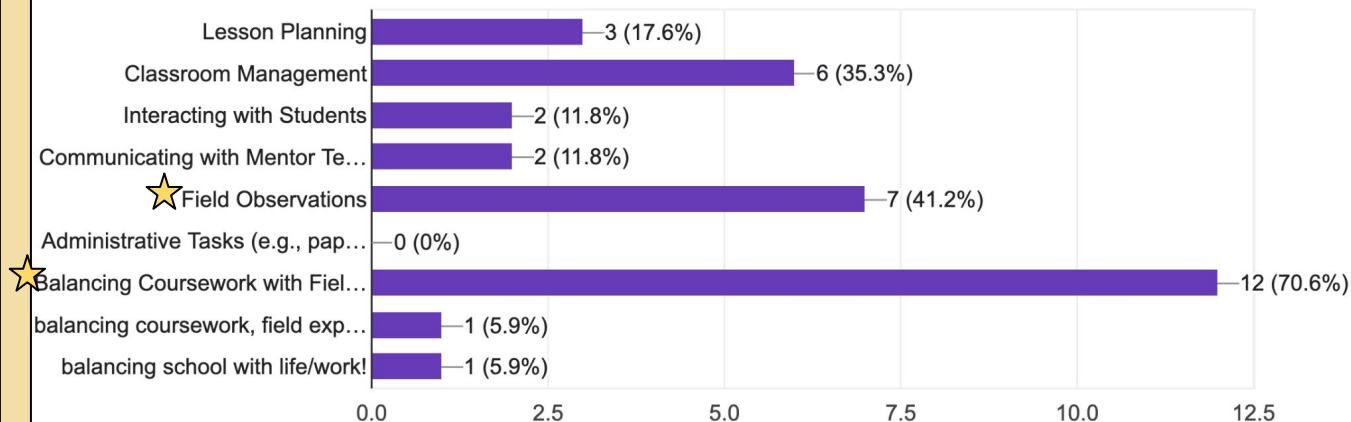
- Block time for class, homework, less prep, and personal time
- Identify "me" activities

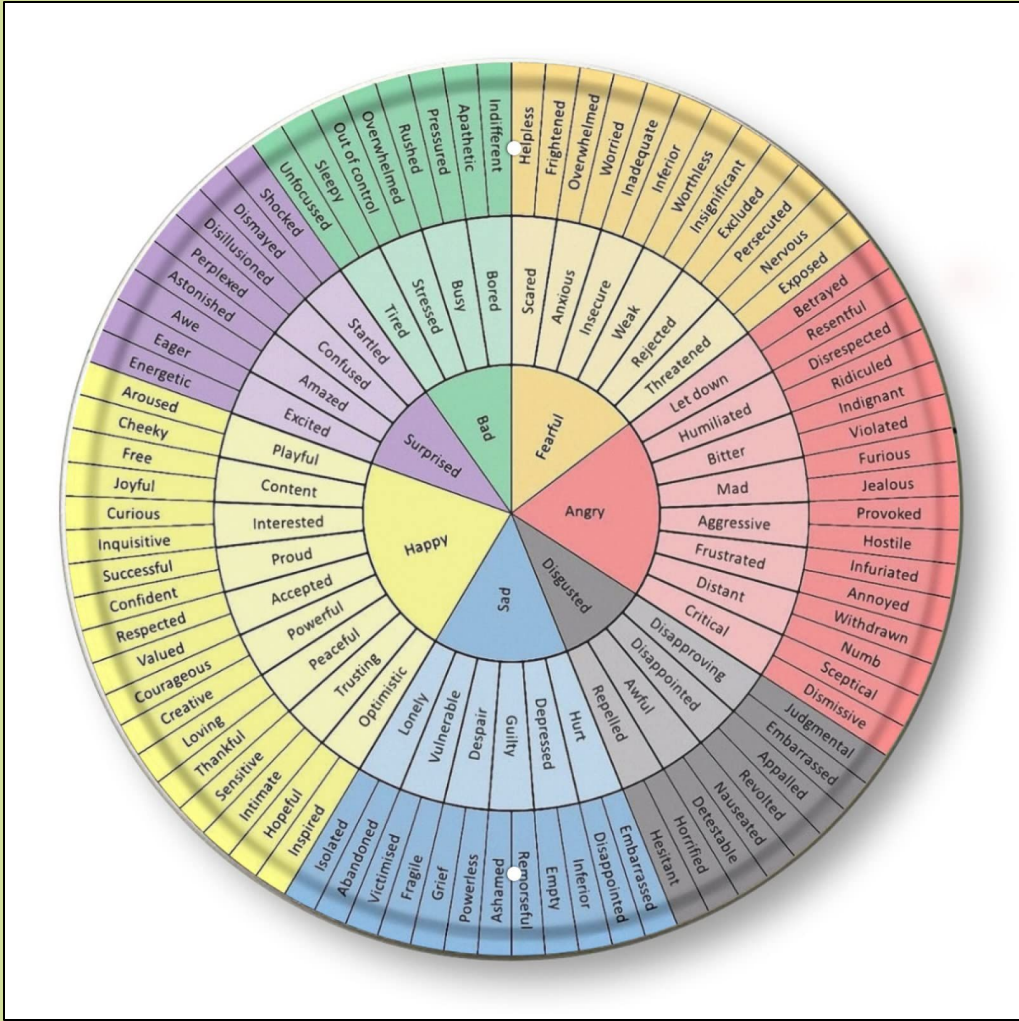
Lunch 2: Feelings and Actions

- Explored feeling wheel
- Identified feelings from placement
- Group discussion on actions to celebrate or work through different feelings

Which of the following aspects of your field experience do you find most stressful? (Select all that apply):

17 responses





MY PLAN FOR THE WEEK OF _____.

[illegible]

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
6 am							
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							
10 pm							
11 pm							
MIDNIGHT							

What was most helpful
about these lunch and
chats?

"I felt **very seen and respected**. It's sometimes hard to feel poured into as a student when all we do is pour into our students. This was a great opportunity to feel valued and mentored."

"Sharing about field placements and realizing that we're all **experiencing similar things**."

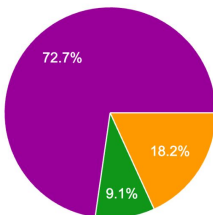
"Providing **food and guidance**"

"I **love** these lunches!"

Feedback

Which of the following statements is most true for you?

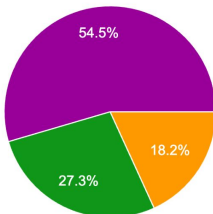
11 responses



- These monthly lunches had a negative impact on my resilience as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches had a somewhat negative impact on my resilience as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches did not have an impact on my resilience as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches had a somewhat positive impact on my resilience as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches had a positive impact on my resilience as it relates to...

Which of the following statements is most true for you?

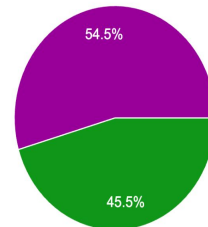
11 responses



- These monthly lunches had a negative impact on my coping skills as they relate to...
- These monthly lunches had a somewhat negative impact on my coping skills as they relate to...
- These monthly lunches did not have an impact on my coping skills as they relate to...
- These monthly lunches had a somewhat positive impact on my coping skills as they relate to...
- These monthly lunches had a positive impact on my coping skills as they relate to...

Which of the following statements is most true for you?

11 responses



- These monthly lunches had a negative impact on my mental health as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches had a somewhat negative impact on my mental health as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches did not have an impact on my mental health as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches had a somewhat positive impact on my mental health as it relates to...
- These monthly lunches had a positive impact on my mental health as it relates to...

Texas A&M University

Department of Teaching
Learning and Culture

Wondered about student perceptions of program challenges, stressors, and mental health.

What we did:

A student survey was created consisting of 7 questions.

Questions asked students about

- 1) Challenges faced in teacher preparation programs**
- 2) How often the challenges create stress**
- 3) Strategies students use to manage stress**
- 4) How students rate their mental health**
- 5) How students feel about discussing mental health**
- 6) Use of mental health resources at CEHD/TAMU**
- 7) Students also responded to an open ended question about what other supports they felt were needed.**

Surveys were distributed to C2 (three semesters from graduation) and C3 (2 semesters from graduation) students in November across TLAC EC-6 and 4-8 ELA/SS and Math/Science teacher preparation programs.

What We Learned

Texas A&M - TLAC

Survey Results Summary Student Challenges

Clinical 2 (n=53) and Clinical 3 (n=44) students reported feeling most concerned about the following challenges:

Time management: 32/53 25/44

Balancing Personal Life/Studies: 39/53 33/44

Financial Stress: 31/53 27/44

Students noted that the Clinical 2 semester was more challenging with completion of 240 Tutoring, Content Exam preparation, first full day of field experiences, TEA module requirements, plus course load.

Few students at both C2 and C3 were utilizing mental health resources available through the College of Education and Human Development and TAMU.

Actions taken in response to results: Byrne Student Success Center now open. Student orientation provided prior to the beginning of the C2 semester. Scheduled student check-ins during C2 semester.



Questions?

References

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