



If Not Now, When? Learning From One Organization's Effort to Hire for Diversity and Excellence

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If Not Now, When?
Learning from One Organization's Effort to Hire for Diversity and Excellence

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submitted to the Harvard Graduate School of Education, in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education Leadership

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my grandparents, Max and Selma Berry, who valued education very deeply and taught me to see myself as a writer.

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Abstract

Many education organizations are committed to diversity, but few achieve it in their staffing. Organizations typically recruit from the professional networks of their existing staff. Selection processes can be influenced by evaluation bias, and interview experiences can be impacted by stereotype threat. Without focused attention to hiring practices, predominantly white organizations often maintain a predominantly white demographic profile despite a desire to diversify.

TeachingWorks, an organization at the University of Michigan (U-M) dedicated to improving teacher education, engaged in an effort to try out a set of practices for hiring for diversity and excellence. This effort intersected with an ongoing conversation about how to make explicit the ways in which our mission to advance justice through teacher education shape our work. Guided by recommendations from the U-M's Committee on Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence, the team implemented practices designed to reduce evaluation bias and stereotype threat. During my residency at TeachingWorks, I coordinated our team's effort to implement and learn from these practices.

While we worked hard to implement the recommended practices, we also struggled to navigate tensions between the work the recommendations demanded and the timeline and design of the grant for which we were hiring. While our initial implementation did not change our organization's demographic profile, it did lay a foundation of knowledge, practices, and tools that will better position us to hire for diversity and excellence in the future.

In this paper, I will document our implementation, and suggest five areas of work that emerged as having been underdeveloped in this hiring process and may be opportunities for growth in the future. These areas of work include: developing a shared definition of and rationale for diversity; continuously developing the applicant pool; monitoring the diversity of the applicant pool; refining the way we use shared criteria to evaluate candidates; and interviewing candidates who decline our offers to identify ways to make our offers more attractive, especially to candidates of color. Our experience may be useful for other predominantly white organizations seeking to define diversity and achieve it through hiring.

Introduction

Founded in 2012 at the University of Michigan (U-M), TeachingWorks focuses on improving teachers' preparation and creating a professional threshold for entry to teaching. TeachingWorks' motto is "great teachers aren't born—they're taught." The work of the organization is about breaking down the work of teaching into practices that teacher candidates can learn through thoughtfully designed coursework and student teaching experiences during their preservice preparation. This approach, called practice-based teacher education, is what drew me to TeachingWorks. During my own pre-service teacher preparation the prior year, I felt a dissonance between the theories we discussed in my courses and the total immersion experience of student teaching. When I learned about practice-based teacher education, and found an opportunity to join the TeachingWorks team, I jumped at the chance, eager to help teacher educators around the country to ground their teacher preparation in the practices that are most critical for novices to master.

I joined the TeachingWorks team in January 2016 as a doctoral resident and co-director of a new project. The project, called the Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers Initiative (referred to as the "Centers Project" at TeachingWorks) was TeachingWorks' part of a \$34 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop and scale effective practices in teacher education. In our first stage of work on the project, we focused externally on learning about our partners in the grant, and internally on building the TeachingWorks team's capacity to support those partners as they learn about

and begin to use practice-based approaches to teacher education. I coordinated a process to hire and onboard eight staff to support the Centers Project, and this hiring process became a central focus of my work.

As my colleagues and I engaged in the work of the hiring process, we also hoped to reflect on and learn from it. In particular, we sought to explore the kinds of hiring tools, practices, protocols, and strategies that might help us to build a team with the kinds of strengths and different areas of experience and expertise that our work demands. We also sought to explore what we might learn from trying out some of these strategies; how the people who designed and engaged in the hiring process perceived and experienced it; what worked well, and what might we revise for next time.

My colleagues share a commitment to exploring these questions, because being a diverse team is part of our conception of excellence. As a team, we share a belief that the work we are doing with diverse partners requires that we bring diverse identities and experiences, alongside with skill as facilitators of adult learning and expertise in our content areas.

In this capstone paper, I will describe the strategies and practices that our team used during the spring 2016 hiring process. I will set those strategies and practices in the context of a framework for hiring diverse and excellent teams developed by the U-M's Committee on Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE). I will describe the results of our hiring process – the ways in which our practice was and was not consistent with STRIDE guidelines, and the racial/ethnic demographics of our candidates and

hires. Finally, I will explore the perceptions and experiences of my colleagues who participated in the hiring process as interviewers and as candidates, and suggest implications for future work.

Why I Chose This Topic

The TeachingWorks team's shared commitment to diversity as central to our conception of excellence resonates with me. I believe that meaningfully improving teaching and learning for all students—especially students from historically underserved, marginalized, and economically disadvantaged communities—requires actual partnership and power sharing between white educators and educators of color. One important way to build these partnerships is inside the staffing of organizations leading change efforts; learning how to define diversity and achieve it through a hiring process is an important step in that direction and important area of learning for predominantly white education organizations.

I came to this focus through personal experience. When I worked at the New York City Department of Education, I thought of myself as the “arms and legs” and of my boss as the brain of our organization. My goal was to perfectly execute someone else's vision. This was not because I did not have my own thoughts or feelings; instead, it was because I was afraid that my thoughts and feelings were irrelevant to the work at hand. I was afraid that my whiteness, my experiences growing up in the suburbs attending Jewish and private schools, and all the money my father earned in his career on Wall Street, separated me too much from the students and families in New York City schools. I was afraid of

imposing an idea that might be wrong or harmful. And I was afraid of being recognized as insufficiently qualified for my job, out of touch, even racist.

In some ways, I was right—I was missing some important areas of experience and expertise that are important to the work of reforming a school district. And reforms should not be driven by people with no understanding of the communities they are designed to benefit. But my response — limiting my focus to execution and staying on the sidelines of the more substantive conversations about our core work and its instructional implications — was abdicating an important responsibility to bring my whole self to my work. I missed opportunities to work for the kind of justice I believe in, and I risked becoming a means to an end in which I do not really believe.

As I have reflected on this experience and come to understand some of the ways in which my whiteness and privilege impacted my behavior in my last job, I have also made some commitments. In my future work, I want to take an alternate perspective. Rather than allowing my privilege and inexperience to disqualify me from having vision and setting direction, I now believe that they give me the responsibility to experience what I have not experienced, learn new content and skills, and partner with colleagues who have experiences and identities—including racial identities—that are different from my own. By exploring strategies and practices for hiring diverse colleagues at TeachingWorks, I hope to learn how to make education sector leadership more diverse and more representative of the communities we serve.

Review of Knowledge for Action

To support our learning from the spring 2016 hiring process, I identified several areas of research literature that are relevant to the issues that emerged in our work. In this section, I introduce these areas of research; in upcoming sections I will use them to describe and analyze our practice.

The first area is diversity and group performance. I find that while organizations have many different motivations for having diverse teams, only on teams in which individuals' unique skills, experiences, and insights are seen as valuable resources does diversity yield actual benefits in terms of improved group performance (Ely & Thomas, 2001). The second area is implicit bias and stereotype threat, and the ways they impact hiring. I find that there is a set of hiring practices that can mitigate implicit bias and stereotype threat, and support organizations to hire diverse and excellent teams. The third area is organizational learning. I find that there are three features associated with being a learning organization: a supportive environment; concrete practices; and leadership that models and supports learning (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008).

Diversity and Group Performance

My colleagues at TeachingWorks share a commitment to hiring a diverse team, but different team members have different definitions of diversity and different theories about how our diversity might benefit our work. The range of ideas about diversity among TeachingWorks team members is paralleled by a large body of research exploring the relationship between groups' diversity and performance. In their review, Williams and O'Reilly find no clear relationship: in

some studies, diverse groups seem to perform better than homogenous ones do, and in others, the reverse is true (1998).

Although there is no consensus in the research about the relationship between diversity and group performance, some scholars argue have identified particular conditions under which diversity does improve group performance. Page (2007) finds that groups of randomly selected people are better at solving problems than groups of people selected for being good at problem solving. This “diversity trumps ability” theorem holds true when the randomly selected groups are drawn from a large initial population; when the problems they are solving have a range of possible solutions; when the problem solvers are smart; and when the problems they are working on are difficult.

Ely and Thomas (2001) argue that the way members of a team view diversity impacts whether diversity improves or impairs performance. Ely and Thomas define three perspectives on diversity. Diverse teams that take an “integration and learning” perspective see the insights, skills and experiences of its members as valuable resources they can draw on to support and enhance their work. Diverse teams that take an “access and legitimacy” perspective believe that their staff should match the cultural diversity of the markets they serve. Diverse teams that take a “discrimination and fairness” perspective believe that organizations are morally obligated to diversify. Ely & Thomas find that while all three perspectives motivate organizations to become more diverse, only the “integration and learning” perspective on diversity yields actual improvement in group performance.

It may be that the “integration and learning” perspective on diversity yields actual improvement in group performance because organizations that take it do not just diversify; they are open to changing the way that they work based on what they learn from their diverse staff. Ely & Thomas write that in organizations that take this perspective, “one measures progress in efforts to diversify by the degree to which newly represented groups have the power to change the organization and traditionally represented groups are willing to change” (2001, p.243). Where organizations that take an “access and legitimacy” or “discrimination and fairness” perspective might hire members of underrepresented groups but expect no changes to their work, organizations that take an “integration and learning” perspective devote time and put in place processes to explore the different perspectives that diverse team members bring, and consider the ways in which those perspectives inform the work of the organization.

Strategies and Practices for Hiring a Diverse and Excellent Team

My colleagues at TeachingWorks were committed to trying out practices and strategies and practices to help us hire a diverse and excellent team, but needed guidance about what those strategies might look like. We received that guidance from the ADVANCE program, a U-M project initiated in 2002 to support the hiring of women in science and engineering. The program has since expanded to promote different kinds of diversity across disciplines, and now supports departments across the university in equitable practices related to hiring, retention, climate, and leadership development. The STRIDE Committee

provides training, guidance, and resources on faculty recruitment, hiring, and retention.

One of STRIDE's core services is the Faculty Recruitment Workshop for Diversity and Excellence, a 90-minute session for faculty members participating in search committees, and the staff who support them (STRIDE, 2015). The session is designed to invest participants in the goal of hiring for diversity and excellence, ground them in the research base on these issues, and introduce them to strategies and practices they can use in their own departments. The session offers a framework of recommended practices, to which I will refer throughout this paper. While STRIDE's primary context is faculty recruitment, many of the strategies and practices it recommends are adaptable for staff hiring and for education organizations outside of universities.

The session begins by reviewing the research literature on implicit bias and stereotype threat, phenomena that, uninterrupted, can preclude hiring of people from non-dominant groups.

Implicit bias. Though explicit racial discrimination has decreased since the end of segregation, it continues to be common for people to make judgments about others based on their demographics (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Fiske, 2002). These judgments are often implicit, operating in a subconscious and unintentional way, and may conflict with conscious or explicit values or attitudes (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002). While training and protocols can reduce the influence of this kind of judgment on hiring decisions, hiring processes that don't explicitly attend to bias are likely to be influenced by it.

Psychologists explain that people have unconscious hypotheses, often called schemas or stereotypes, which help us to predict what we expect to see. These hypotheses allow us to process information quickly, especially in stressful situations—but often lead us to process information inaccurately, confirming our existing hypotheses regardless of the evidence. Hiring processes are one example of the type of situation in which schemas and stereotypes operate. Reviewing resumes requires processing a lot of information quickly, and our schemas allow us to do that task without getting overwhelmed. But researchers have demonstrated that resume reviews are particularly subject to implicit bias: a resume submitted with a white-sounding name like Greg or Emily was selected 50% more frequently than the same resume submitted with an African-American-sounding name like Jamal or Lakisha (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Similarly, even when standardized criteria are set, candidates from dominant groups are often scrutinized less than are candidates from non-dominant groups.

When we process information and make judgments quickly—what psychologist Daniel Kahneman calls “thinking fast”—our judgments are more subject to bias than when we slow down and consider information more deliberately. Kahneman (2011) calls this more deliberate consideration “thinking slow.” Especially when we are engaged in tasks that require processing of a lot of information quickly, using strategies that slow down our thinking may reduce the influence of implicit bias.

Counterintuitively, evaluation bias can be even more damaging to candidates of color who apply to jobs in organizations whose job descriptions

feature a statement of commitment to diversity. Such employers may actually be less likely to hire candidates of color. This is because candidates of color applying to such jobs are less likely to “whiten” their resumes, while the employers reviewing those resumes are just as likely to evaluate them more negatively based on cues associating the resume with a person of color (Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik, & Jun, 2016).

Stereotype threat. Researchers have also documented the ways in which schemas or stereotypes can impact the performance of the subjects of those stereotypes. An interviewer’s expectations for the behavior of a job candidate may impact the way the interview treats the candidate, sometimes leading the candidate to confirm the initial expectations of the interviewer. This dynamic is sometimes called a self-fulfilling prophecy, and has also been demonstrated to operate in other relationships, including between teachers and students (Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). Language or cues in the environment that suggest that some groups belong more or perform better than others can also trigger this kind of stereotype threat (Steele, 2010). When job candidates are worried about being judged according to stereotypes, their performance is influenced by that worry, and may not be a good indicator of their ability.

For example, Asian-American females who are reminded of their female identity before taking a math test perform worse than those who are not, because being female is associated with a stereotype of lower math ability. At the same time, Asian-American females who are reminded of their Asian-American identity perform better than those who are not, because being Asian-American is

associated with a stereotype of higher math ability (Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). Attending to the way candidates are treated and the cues they experience in the environment can reduce stereotype threat and engender a more accurate picture of candidates' abilities.

While instances of bias can produce benefits or damages that are small, it is important to note that these benefits or damages can accumulate, leading to meaningful expansion or restriction of opportunity for job candidates. In her study of how gender schemas impact women's professional advancement, Valian (1998) describes this dynamic: "Mountains are molehills piled on top of one another" (as cited in STRIDE, p.19). This accumulation of advantage and disadvantage make it particularly important to structure hiring processes in ways that reduce bias and stereotype threat, giving candidates opportunities to demonstrate their true abilities.

Recommended hiring practices and strategies. STRIDE organizes its recommendation into four stages. The first is "Getting great applications from the best applicants." Here, the committee recommends actively developing the candidate pool over time. This means working to cultivate possible candidates continuously, engaging in recruiting activities even when there is not yet an open position. Possible strategies include inviting potential candidates, including those not specifically looking for a position, to give talks as a way of building relationships and making connections. Other strategies include developing strategic recruitment partnerships, including with minority professional organizations and universities, and attending affinity group conferences. These

practices can help organizations avoid a “self-fulfilling cycle”: a predominantly white organization recruiting primarily through the social and professional networks of its current staff (Austin Virgil, et. al, 2007, p.15). STRIDE also recommends defining positions as broadly as possible; the less specific the job description, the more diverse the applicant pool turns out to be. Finally, the committee recommends very clearly communicating the application components. When expectations are implicit, candidates who come from similar institutions or who have mentors from similar institutions are privileged; when expectations are explicit, all candidates have the opportunity to put forward the strongest application possible.

The second stage is “Achieving Excellence and Diversity in the Applicant Short List.” In this stage, which includes paper review of applications and may also include preliminary interviews, STRIDE emphasizes the importance of the composition and setup of the search committee. The search committee should include people who are visibly committed to diversity and excellence, and should itself be diverse. Search committee members should know the literature on implicit bias, and should be aware of the ways that bias could have benefited or disadvantaged candidates in the past. A study of education organizations found that these tactics are not common practice: just 21% offer anti-bias training, and just 12% offer diversity-specific interview training (Austin Virgil et. al, 2014). Also, search committee members should be prepared to devote time to the search process, and should have the administrative support they need to enable them to use their time most effectively. Additionally, STRIDE also emphasizes the

importance of defining clear, specific, and job-relevant evaluation criteria in advance, and making those criteria central to discussions about candidate selection. By using well-defined and relevant criteria, search committee members can avoid the kind of holistic judgments that are more subject to implicit bias. It is particularly important that criteria used for initial selection are standardized, and that committee members have opportunities to come to a shared agreement on what characteristics they are selecting for (Austin Virgil et. al, 2014). To support this work, STRIDE offers a sample Candidate Evaluation Tool for search committee members to use. Taking the time to rate each applicant on each criterion, search committee members will, in Kahneman's language, "slow" down their thinking—grounding their evaluations more in evidence and less in intuition, which are more influenced by bias (Kahneman, 2011).

There is an apparent tension between STRIDE's guidance to make the job description as general and the selection criteria specific. A concern might be that search committees would successfully recruit a diverse applicant pool, only to use too-specific criteria reduce that diversity at the stage of selection. To avoid this, search committees should make sure to craft criteria that are specific enough to enable evidence-based judgment, but broad enough to capture the qualifications of the broadest range of competent candidates. For example, a criterion like "has experience working in practice-based teacher education" is specific enough to enable evidence-based judgment, but may not actually be a critical qualification for the job. "Practice-based teacher education" is a term that refers to professional training that focuses on opportunities for teacher

candidates to learn to perform the core work of teaching, often through assignments to perform a teaching task in a classroom, or through extended apprenticeships (Forzani, 2014). Though experience working in practice-based teacher education is one way candidates could be qualified, there is a broader range of types of teacher education experience which are also relevant. A criterion like “has experience developing novice teachers’ practice, skills, and content knowledge” is both specific enough to enable evidence-based judgment and broad enough to encompass a wider range of experiences.

A critical step in making the right short list is checking whether the demographics of the short list reflect the demographics of potential candidates in the field. While search committee members cannot know or ask for demographic information about individual candidates, the HR department or online application system can ask demographic questions that are optional for candidates, and can use this information to generate demographic counts of the whole applicant pool, and the short list, which can be compared to benchmark data on the demographics of potential candidates in the field (Austin Virgil et.al, 2014). If the applicant pool as a whole, or the short list, is less diverse than the benchmark data suggest, it is recommended that the search committee continue recruiting candidates until their short list of qualified candidates is as diverse as the benchmark data suggest it could be. At the interview stage, a search committee that has maximized the diversity of the short list can focus less on demographics and more on which of the candidates on the short list would be the best fit for the position.

The third stage of the hiring process is the in-person interview. The STRIDE faculty workshop uses a metaphor of athletic performance to describe its guidance for this stage: “World records are not set in pools full of ice cold water nor on tracks filled with potholes. We should create an environment which elicits the best performance from all candidates” (2015). This means providing clear and complete information about the schedule and expectations for the day in advance, creating a welcoming environment, and treating candidates as experts in their fields rather than representatives of their demographic group. Further, it means taking steps to reduce stereotype threat by helping the candidate to meet a diverse group of people during the visit, introducing the candidate in a way that highlights her expertise and strengths, and ensuring that the physical environment does not trigger stereotype threat—for example, a hallway with pictures of a faculty that is all white and male might suggest to female candidates or candidates of color that they are not likely to be hired. STRIDE encourages search committees to “show off your department as it is or as you would like it to be, not as it once was” (2015). Finally, search committees should focus on job-relevant questions, avoiding personal questions that can signal to the applicant that she is being evaluated based on her identity or family life.

The final stage of the hiring process is making the decision. STRIDE guides search committees to share feedback and evidence quickly after the visit. As time passes, evidence-based judgments become less prominent and holistic judgments remain. By filling out and discussing the candidate evaluation tool

shortly after each in-person interview—not only after all interviews have been completed—search committees can ground their discussions and evaluations in the evidence from the visit. STRIDE also guides search committees to delay ranking candidates; instead, search committees should begin by making another short list of all candidates who seem like a good fit for the position following the in-person interview. These short list decisions should be based on evidence rather than rubric scores. In this process, search committees should acknowledge places where more information is needed about a candidate, rather than excluding a candidate because information is missing.

Organizational Learning

My colleagues at TeachingWorks were open to trying out and learning from some of the strategies and practices that STRIDE recommended. While we agreed that we would learn from our experience and that I would play a role in facilitating that learning through my work on this capstone project, we did not begin this process with specific learning practices defined. To understand what such practices might look like, I looked to the research on organizational learning.

Double loop learning. Argyris (1977) defines organizational learning as “a process of detecting and correcting error” and error as “any feature of knowledge or knowing that inhibits learning.” Organizations that do single loop learning can take in information and take a corrective action based on that information, like a thermostat that can measure the temperature and increase or decrease heating in response. But organizations need to do a deeper kind of

learning in order to identify and address the problems that inhibit their growth and development. Double loop learning is when organizations learn to not only take in information and make corrections, but also to question their core policies and practices, like a thermostat that could reflect on whether the temperature to which it is set is the right temperature for it to be set to that day. Learning to do double loop learning requires opening up core assumptions and norms for questioning, and inviting staff to identify disparities between stated objectives and regular practice.

The “delusion of learning from experience”. Senge (2006) describes the “delusion of learning from experience”: though we learn best from experience, many of our actions have results that we don’t experience directly. This is because our “learning horizon” – the “breadth of vision in time and space within which we assess our effectiveness” – is limited (p.37). When our actions have consequences beyond that horizon, we can’t learn from our own direct experience. Considering Senge’s delusion in light of the literature on bias, we might add that our learning horizon is also limited by the biases we bring to our work. As long as we don’t have practices and protocols that challenge us to recognize and mitigate that bias, we will struggle to learn from our experience. Learning from experience does not happen automatically; it is only by attending to the features of organizations that enable learning that organizations can make learning happen.

The building blocks of a learning organization. Building on the work of Senge and others, Garvin, Edmondson, and Gino (2008) describe three building

blocks of a learning organization. By attending to these features, organizations can set themselves up to learn from their experiences. The first building block is a supportive learning environment, which has four key features. First, employees experience psychological safety. They are comfortable expressing thoughts, admitting errors, and disagreeing with colleagues or supervisors without fear of colleagues' or supervisors' reactions. Second, the organization surfaces disagreements and engages in conflict. Third, it encourages employees to take risks and explore new approaches. Finally, it schedules work in a way that creates time for reflection.

The second building block of a learning organization is concrete learning processes and practices for knowledge sharing, including use of data, ways of developing new work, problem-solving, and staff training. Garvin et al. cite the United States Army's After Action Review process as an example of such practices. In the After Action Review, staff debrief each project by asking four questions: What did we set out to do? What actually happened? Why did it happen? What do we do next time? Lessons are discussed, written down, and codified for sharing across the organization.

The third building block of a learning organization is leadership that reinforces learning. Leaders who model learning behaviors, like listening to alternative and spending time reflecting on work, tend to inspire staff to engage in similar behaviors. Garvin et al. note that though leadership can play an important role in inspiring such behaviors, a leader's modeling alone is insufficient; the supportive climate and concrete processes for learning are necessary too.

Garvin et al. offer a diagnostic tool for assessing the depth of learning in their organizations (see Appendix A). This set of 56 self-assessment items generates a score for each of the three building blocks, and subscores for subcategories within the environment and process domains. Scores can fall within percentiles according to available benchmark data. The scores, or the statements themselves, could be a valuable resource for an organization's reflection on the extent to which it is set up to learn.

Safety and discomfort in learning about race. In applying Garvin et al.'s framework for organizational learning about race, a tension emerges. Garvin et al. find that psychological safety is an essential component of a work environment that facilitates learning. But participants in conversations about race often say that such conversations do not always feel safe. Singleton and Linton say that fear of feeling unsafe is often what stops people from engaging in conversations about race, or makes people emphasize what they have in common rather than exploring areas of difference (2006). White educators often say they feel unsafe when they fear expressing a biased or racist view and offending people of color, or fear being blamed for racism. Educators of color often feel uncomfortable because they fear "expressing intense anger and being misunderstood, ignored, or even punished by their White colleagues" (p.64). If experiencing discomfort is a necessary condition for real growth and learning about race, is it possible to create a psychologically safe environment for organizational learning about race?

Singleton and Linton make a distinction between discomfort and safety in conversations about race (2006). While honest conversations about race require discomfort, there are steps that facilitators of such conversations – and perhaps leaders in organizations – can take to maximize the safety of those conversations. Singleton and Linton offer a framework for Courageous Conversations, including attention to timing, norms for participation, conditions for conversations, and a tool for navigating conversations. Singleton and Linton suggest that leaders give participants advance notice when possible, and choose a time that is not rushed. They offer a set of four agreements which all participants must make: stay engaged; experience discomfort; speak your truth; and expect and accept non-closure. They also define six conditions for such conversations: making conversations personal, local, and immediate; keeping the spotlight on race; engaging multiple racial perspectives; keeping everyone at the table; defining race; and talking about whiteness. They also offer a tool to help participants understand the ways in which people process racial information. Participants can use this tool, called the Courageous Conversation Compass, to understand how they are processing conversations about race – through the lens of belief, emotion, thought, or action – and to understand that others may be processing conversations through a different lens. If psychological safety is necessary for organizational learning but discomfort is necessary for learning about issues related to race, then it is possible that frameworks and tools like those offered by Singleton and Linton are necessary for organizations to learn through discomfort from practice related to issues of race.

While these tools may offer a helpful starting point, the tension between the discomfort that is necessary in conversations about race and the safety that is needed for organizational learning warrants deeper examination.

Theory of Action

Based on my review of knowledge and my initial conversations with my TeachingWorks colleagues, I developed this theory of action:

| If we: | Then we will: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Include diversity as part of our conception of excellence, and- Make a shared commitment to trying out and learning from recommended practices for hiring diverse and excellent teams, and working through challenges that come up during the process, | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Learn lessons about hiring and organizational learning, and- Increase the diversity of our team. |

In the following sections of this paper, I will describe the hiring practices we used and their outcomes, offer a set of observations about our team's learning from that work, analyze why we got the results that we did, and suggest implications for future work.

Description

Organizational Context

How TeachingWorks fits into the U-M and School of Education.

TeachingWorks grew out of the Teacher Education Initiative at the U-M School of Education. This initiative focused on improving teacher education programs by redesigning curricula to focus on high-leverage teaching practices, which are a

set of teaching practices that are critical for novices to master before beginning work as teachers. These high-leverage practices and teacher education pedagogies are part of an approach to teacher education called “practice-based teacher education” or “core practices-focused teacher education” (Forzani, 2014). U-M faculty reorganized the program of study, so that opportunities to learn each teaching practice are intentionally sequenced throughout course modules and field experiences. This reform initiative was the foundation for TeachingWorks, which aims to support teacher educators engaging in similar efforts.

Now, TeachingWorks is a center within the U-M School of Education. TeachingWorks staff are U-M employees, and TeachingWorks’ office space is located inside the School of Education building. While most of TeachingWorks’ budget comes from foundation grants and private donors, TeachingWorks also currently receives some funding from the U-M Office of the Provost. Most TeachingWorks employees are staff, not faculty, but some faculty are funded to work on TeachingWorks projects.

My project and role. My role at TeachingWorks was co-director of the Centers Project, a new project that was central to TeachingWorks’ partnerships strategy. The mission of TeachingWorks is to ensure that all students have skillful teachers who are committed to and able to support their growth. The strategy has two main components: first, developing practice-based, on-demand assessments for initial licensure, and second, partnering with programs engaged in preparing and supporting novice teachers. The Centers Project falls in the

second component, in which TeachingWorks collaborates with partners to support teacher educators' learning and produce curriculum materials for the teaching of teaching. TeachingWorks seeks to engage with a broad and diverse range of partners, so that we can learn from colleagues working in different contexts—especially those serving children of color and children living in poverty—how best to prepare novice teachers.

TeachingWorks is currently engaged in two major partnerships. In addition to the Centers Project, TeachingWorks created a state-based network called the Michigan Program Network in 2015. In this network, teacher educators from six Michigan universities come together to study high-leverage teaching practices and the pedagogies that can be used to teach novice teachers those practices.

In both the state-based Program Network and the Centers Project, TeachingWorks staff with expertise in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics collaborate with teacher educators in partner programs. TeachingWorks' ELA and mathematics specialists develop instructional activities, assessments, and other curriculum materials for teacher education, and also design and facilitate sessions at which teacher educators come together to learn about practice-based teacher education.

As co-director of the Centers Project, my role offered a set of opportunities for leadership. The project I was working on was new, so we were not limited by design constraints of prior work. Our budget was large, so we faced no funding constraints. This wide-open space offered significant opportunity for leadership in project design. But my role as a leader also featured some constraints. Some of

my colleagues were nervous and skeptical about the Centers Project, and therefore about me as its co-director. Pathways for communication and decision-making within TeachingWorks were somewhat unclear, and it was not entirely clear to me where my role fit into the organizational chart. I knew that I was not part of the ELA or math teams, but also knew that those teams were the heart of the organization – where all of the core work really happened. Also, while my co-director and I were very collaborative, the division of labor between our roles was unclear, and exacerbated by the fact that we worked from different time zones.

Pressure to begin hiring. When I started at TeachingWorks in January 2016, I quickly learned that hiring and onboarding new staff was an important priority for our team. We had been awarded the Gates Foundation grant in October, and knew that we would be expected to begin actively supporting our grant partners during the coming summer. The current staff were already stretched thin on current projects, including development work on a teacher licensure examination, and supporting teacher educators in the Michigan Program Network. The team knew that we would soon be expected to travel around the country to lead professional learning and collaboratively develop curriculum materials with teacher educators as part of the Centers Project, and was beginning to feel pressure to bring new colleagues on board.

A factor that intensified that pressure was that though we had a big picture sense of what the Centers Project would require, the details had not yet been decided. The grant was designed to begin with a six-month planning period, during which TeachingWorks would visit our new partners and learn about their

goals and way of working, and identify areas for collaboration and support. This design would enable us to prepare ourselves to do work that is tailored to our partners' context, and a good fit for their needs. But it meant that as we approached hiring, we only had a general sense of what the work would look like. For some of the staff working on the hiring process, this lack of clarity made the hiring process feel daunting.

Another factor that added pressure to the hiring process was its scale. The grant was to work with four networks of teacher preparation providers located around the country, with a seven-million-dollar budget. Before this grant, TeachingWorks team included 14 full time staff and 10 doctoral students. With the grant, the full-time staff increased to 23, which is significant growth for a small organization in a short period of time. The size of the grant, and of the hiring process—eight positions at once, a bigger hiring process than the organization had engaged in before—meant that we needed to structure the hiring process differently than in prior instances.

A factor that made the already pressured hiring process feel even more daunting was that TeachingWorks' previous director of budget and operations had left the organization several months before the hiring process began, and the position remained vacant for the duration of the hiring process. This meant that as I coordinated the hiring process, I also needed to play the role that this position would have—figuring out protocols and past practice for hiring, supporting the content teams who were doing much of the interviewing, and coordinating with the School of Education's human resources office. Without the

support of a stable professional who was already familiar with the work of human resources, even the most basic and technical parts of the hiring process felt unknown.

For all of these reasons, I felt my colleagues' sense of pressure to get the hiring process underway. With my co-director, I quickly developed a timeline and workplan for the hiring process that built on previous TeachingWorks hiring processes and fit within the timeline required by our grant. This process is summarized in Table 1 and described below.

Table 1
Hiring Process Summary

| Month | Milestone |
|------------------|---|
| January-February | <p><u>Develop draft job descriptions</u>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review approved grant submission, including number of positions, summary of position descriptions, and available funding - Develop workplan and hiring process timeline - Review job descriptions previously used for similar positions, and discuss adjustments for this position - Revise draft job descriptions based on feedback from the U-M School of Education Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee |
| February-March | <p><u>Finalized and posted job descriptions</u> on U-M School of Education website and TeachingWorks website.</p> <p><u>Advertised job descriptions</u> on websites including the Chronicle of Higher Education, Higher Ed Jobs, Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators, and the American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group on Research in Mathematics Education. Also invited TeachingWorks staff and doctoral students to circulate job descriptions to their networks, and refer possible candidates, and announced the position at a meeting of the Core Practice Consortium, a network of faculty engaged in work very closely aligned with that of TeachingWorks.</p> |
| March-April | <p><u>Conducted initial interviews</u> with selected applicants via video chat. All teams made an effort to conduct an initial interview with all applicants who met minimum qualifications for the position.</p> |

| Month | Milestone |
|----------|--|
| | <p>Interviews were scheduled and conducted on a rolling basis. Ultimately, we conducted 66 initial interviews.</p> <p><u>Attended STRIDE Workshop</u>, a session led by the U-M's STRIDE committee which focused on issues of bias in hiring and suggested strategies and practices for hiring excellent and diverse staff.</p> <p><u>Developed candidate data collection tool</u>, including shared criteria for evaluating candidates' on-campus interviews.</p> |
| May | <p><u>Hosted on-campus interviews</u> with selected applicants. Ultimately, we conducted 23 on-campus interviews. During and following the on-campus interviews, candidates were asked to perform two tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lead a simulated professional development session on a topic of their choice - Watch and analyze a video of K-12 classroom instruction <p>As a follow up to the on-campus interview, candidates were asked to perform a final task: responding to an email from a colleague raising criticisms of TeachingWorks' approach and questions about how issues of equity intersect with our work</p> |
| May-June | <p><u>Made offers</u> to selected candidates. Across the Mathematics, Elementary ELA, and Secondary ELA teams, we made 12 offers and 9 were accepted.</p> |
| July | <p><u>Held three-day project launch</u> for existing and new TeachingWorks staff and doctoral students. This launch also served as an initial onboarding session for new staff.</p> |

Stage 1: Getting Great Applications from the Best Applicants

The first stage of the hiring process, called “Getting great applications from the best applicants” in the STRIDE Committee framework, includes developing the job description and recruiting candidates to apply. Some of the work of this stage had been completed before I arrived. During the development of the grant proposal, it had been decided that TeachingWorks would hire four English Language Arts (ELA) and four mathematics specialists. This position was

not new to TeachingWorks; we already had four ELA and two math specialists in similar positions.

To develop the job description for the position for which we were hiring, I started by reviewing the grant proposal to better understand the proposed project design. I then identified the job description that had been used to hire our current ELA and math specialists, and adapted it slightly to reflect the project design (see Appendix B). First, we added to the job description the option to work remotely and the need for 30-50% travel to partners' locations. Second, we increased the emphasis in the job description on facilitation skills and experience leading adult learning, in addition to content expertise. Third, we made adjustments to the language of the job description based on feedback from the School of Education's Education Diversity Advisory Committee. Specifically, we added as a required qualification that applicants bring experience "adjusting curriculum and pedagogy to the specific assets and demands of demographically and culturally distinct contexts," and shifted from the "desired" to "required" qualification section the statement that we were particularly seeking "candidates who bring experience and expertise promoting diversity and equity, and whose experience with teaching and/or with teacher education has involved demographically diverse or underserved populations and/or communities." Finally, we posted the same job description under two titles. We hoped that the ELA and mathematics "Specialist" titles would appeal to colleagues with experience as teacher leaders, instructional coaches, or school district staff, while the ELA and mathematics

“Postdoctoral Fellowship” titles might appeal to graduating doctoral students aspiring for a more academic pathway.

Though STRIDE offers recommendations for writing job descriptions, including the suggestion to use language that is as general as possible to avoid excluding potentially qualified candidates from non-dominant groups, at the point when we were developing our job descriptions (in January and February) we had not yet attended the STRIDE workshop (we attended in March), so these recommendations did not influence our process at this stage.

To recruit candidates for the position, we relied on the mechanisms that had worked for TeachingWorks in the past: using the professional networks of existing staff, and posting the position on job boards frequently used in the ELA and math professional communities. While there was some discussion of the need to reach out to broader networks to attract a more diverse candidate pool, during the time the position was posted most of the outreach and posting fell primarily within the channels that had been used previously. This was partly because identifying new channels required building new relationships; we used the networks that already existed because building new relationships, especially across lines of difference, would take more time than we had during the two months during which our position was open. This groundwork had not yet been laid, and our thinking was short-term – rather than initiating relationships that could serve us in future hiring processes but might not yield new candidates in the short term, we focused on the work we knew we could do in the short term.

Also, because the positions were associated with a two-year grant, they were posted as grant-funded and limited to the two-year term, with the possibility of extension. We anticipated that some positions would be extended beyond the initial term of the grant, but did not yet know whether this would be the case and if so, how many positions would be extended. Because some candidates may be unlikely to leave a stable position for a short-term one, there was some concern that the short-term nature of the job description might deter potential applicants.

There was also some concern that the funding source itself might deter potential applicants. In some circles, the Gates Foundation and other major education reform funders are associated with efforts to replace public schools with charter schools and privatize public education. Some TeachingWorks staff expressed concerns that by publicly associating ourselves with the Gates Foundation we would alienate potential job applicants, especially from communities of color. To mitigate this concern and for other reasons, we committed to integrating our conception of justice throughout the application process as much as we could – but some TeachingWorks colleagues worried that some applicants would be so alienated by the fact of the Gates funding that they would not apply for the position at all.

Stage 2: Achieving Excellence and Diversity on the Short List

By the application deadline, we had received 224 applications, and began transitioning to the second stage of the hiring process, called “Achieving excellence and diversity on the short list” in the STRIDE framework. During this stage, we made two rounds of cuts. First, we identified 67 applicants out of 224

applicants for phone interviews. To make decisions about candidates to whom we might offer phone interviews, we reviewed applicants' resumes. At TeachingWorks, our content teams are divided—elementary ELA, secondary ELA, and mathematics—and each conducted its resume reviews and made decisions about phone interview offers separately. At this stage, the teams conferred in weekly meetings and decided on a shared approach informally, but did not document shared criteria. The shared approach we decided on was to offer phone interviews to all candidates whose resumes and cover letters showed evidence of content knowledge and experience leading adult learning. The teams also sought to cast a wide net, which meant offering phone interviews in cases in which we thought there might be a chance the candidate would be a fit, even if we were unsure based on resumes. One team in particular cast an even wider net, in some cases offering phone interviews when they doubted that the candidate would be a fit for this position but thought that the candidate might have a different set of skills or experiences that could contribute to our team in another way in the future.

Some teams were particularly interested in recruiting candidates from non-dominant groups, or candidates whose resumes and cover letters indicated a strong commitment to social justice.

While phone interviews were underway, a colleague and I attended the STRIDE training session. STRIDE began as part of an effort to create the institutional changes needed to support the careers of female science and engineering faculty at the university, and now focuses on the institutional

changes needed to recruit and sustain excellent and diverse faculty across the university. The committee functions as an internal support to U-M departments by providing workshops and resources about equitable practices for recruitment, retention, and promotion. The workshop presented an overview of research on the benefits of diversity, the impact of implicit bias on hiring processes, and the role of stereotype threat in interview contexts, and offered a set of guidelines about how to approach hiring for diversity and excellence at each stage of the hiring process. After my colleague and I attended the workshop, we shared our notes with our colleagues at a weekly planning meeting. Group members expressed interest in using STRIDE guidelines and resources to inform our hiring process, so we quickly tweaked plans for the upcoming stages of our process according to the research and guidance we learned about at the workshop.

A key takeaway from the workshop was the importance of using explicit criteria and evidence-based decision-making to reduce the impact of implicit bias on hiring decisions. STRIDE recommends the use of a Candidate Evaluation Tool to ground hiring committee members' assessments in shared criteria and evidence. I created a draft tool based on the STRIDE template and our job description, and modified it based on group discussion at our weekly planning meeting over several weeks (see Appendix C). On a few of the criteria, we reached consensus quickly: ability to lead adult learning, content knowledge, and experience working in pre-service teacher education. On others, more discussion was needed. For example, two of the criteria on our list seemed to be in tension with each other: "experience with practice-based teacher education" and "brings

a complementary but different skill set/experiences from current team members.” While we wanted to find candidates with experience with the approach to teacher education that we use and teach others, we also wanted to hire candidates who bring different skill sets and experiences. We discussed that “different skill sets and experiences” might refer to the settings in which candidates worked, but did not specify exactly what we meant by “different” – leaving this criterion open to different interpretations by different interviewers. We also struggled at first to set a criterion that captured the attributes we were looking for regarding candidates’ beliefs about equity and justice. Some team members felt strongly that candidates should be able to speak explicitly about their beliefs about equity and justice, and explain how those values are embedded in their work. Others felt that candidates’ work should be driven by those values, and that the work itself is more important than the ability to talk about the values that inform it. We ended up agreeing to language that reflects both: “Orientation towards equity and diversity is well-articulated and integrated into the candidate’s work.”

Because the workshop happened after phone interviews were already underway, we did not use the tool at that stage; instead, we used it during the third stage, the in-person interview. However, because our group discussions about shared criteria were happening during the phone interview stage, they may have informed team members’ thinking about phone interviews while they were going on.

Stage 3: In-Person Interview

The result of the phone interviews was a list of 23 finalists who were selected for the third stage of STRIDE's framework for the hiring process, the in-person interview. During this stage, each candidate traveled to our office in Ann Arbor for a half-day interview visit. Based on STRIDE guidance about how to reduce stereotype threat in interview contexts, we designed the interview schedule to maximize our team's learning about candidates, while also providing enough informal and break time to make candidates comfortable and able to show us their best work (see Appendix D).

The visit began with 15 minutes of informal conversation to welcome candidates, give a tour of our offices, and review the agenda for the day. Then, candidates engaged in the first of three performance tasks: delivering a 30-minute professional development session on a topic of their choice. The purpose of this performance task was to assess candidates' skill as facilitators of adult learning. This task also gave us an opportunity to learn about candidates' areas of content expertise. Based on STRIDE guidance to communicate interview expectations very clearly and well in advance as a way to mitigate stereotype threat, we explained that the interview would include this task when we first invited candidates to do in-person interviews, and then we followed up with detailed guidelines for the session one week before the interview itself. As part of these guidelines, candidates were asked to consider how they might use their topic to surface questions of equity, diversity, power, and justice. Candidates were also asked to consider how adults learn, and how they might attend to the

needs and perspectives of a diverse audience of teacher educators. All TeachingWorks staff and doctoral students were invited to attend candidates' professional development sessions, and to give feedback on the performance via an online form version of the candidate evaluation tool. Most candidates' sessions were attended by 3-6 members of the TeachingWorks team.

TeachingWorks team members' attendance of these sessions varied by content team and was based on who happened to be available at the scheduled times; we did not attend specifically to the demographic diversity of the people in the room during each interview. Following the 30-minute session, the candidate debriefed the experience with the TeachingWorks team members, who asked follow up questions about how the candidate chose the content and instructional design of the session, what prior knowledge was assumed, what the next learning steps might be, and how he/she integrated questions of equity and justice in the session, and how he/she might handle members of the audience who are critical of the session content.

Following the professional development session, candidates had a short break, and then engaged in the second of three performance tasks: watching a video of a teacher leading a group discussion, and analyzing it in conversation with the TeachingWorks team. The purpose of this performance task was to assess candidates' content expertise and to learn more about their approach to instruction. Candidates were asked a set of broad questions about the teacher's practice, students' engagement, and the ways in which the lesson engages

students with important content. Candidates were also asked what activities they might do as teacher educator with the teacher in the video.

Following the conversation about the video, candidates had a 30-minute informal interview conversation with TeachingWorks staff members. The interview provided an opportunity for TeachingWorks staff to ask questions about any areas in which they needed additional evidence to assess the candidate, and for the candidate to ask questions to the TeachingWorks team. During this period, the TeachingWorks staff members also introduced the final performance task: writing an email to a colleague. For this task, candidates received a mock email from a participant in a professional development session they had led. In the email, the participant asked critical questions about TeachingWorks' framework of high-leverage teaching practices, suggesting that they reduce the human work of teaching to a series of technical moves, and that they are silent about questions of equity and justice. As a follow-up activity after the interview, our candidates were asked to draft an email response to the participant, drawing on their knowledge of TeachingWorks' approach including language on our website. Candidates were asked to complete this final task within a few days of their interview visit.

Stage 4: Making the Decision

As candidates completed their follow up tasks, we transitioned to the fourth and final stage of the hiring process: making the decision. Following each interview or couple of interviews, TeachingWorks teams debriefed candidates' performance. The elementary ELA, secondary ELA, and mathematics teams

each did this task in a slightly different way, according to their team norms and the preferences of the individuals on the team. The mathematics team met as a whole group with all staff and doctoral students and discussed candidates' performance, using the data from the candidate evaluation tool as a basis for conversation. Staff within the elementary and secondary ELA teams met and discussed candidates' performance, using written notes and the criteria from the candidate evaluation tool as a reference. Each team eventually made decisions about the candidates to whom they wanted to offer positions.

There was some confusion about the process for finalizing decisions about offers and making offers to candidates. There were questions about whether we needed to wait until all interviews were complete before making an offer. There were also questions about who would be involved in the decision to make candidates an offer: just the members of the team the candidate would be joining? Members of other teams? The director of TeachingWorks? There was also some confusion about how to consider our goals about hiring a diverse team at this stage of the process. Had we done enough in our recruitment and interview process to generate a diverse applicant pool and mitigate stereotype threat for our candidates? What data could we use to understand the identities of our applicants? Where these considerations even appropriate or legal at this stage of the process? Given the process we had already been through, and the time constraints we were under to train staff and begin implementation work in just a few months, what options did we really have?

I also felt some confusion about my role at this stage. Previously, I had been coordinating the process among teams, playing a mostly facilitative role. Now that it was time to make decisions, I wanted to find a way to bring teams together to reflect on our process and consider the finalists as a group. Looking across all three teams, would our proposed hires bring the expertise and diversity we had set out to add to our team? We had some of these conversations informally and in small groups. But we ran out of time at our weekly team meeting, and did not meaningfully explore these questions together. I wondered if I should do more to bring my colleagues together to discuss these questions, but hesitated to take up too much of their time. I also worried that they would perceive me as inserting myself beyond my authority or as questioning their commitment to diversity.

Though I did not bring my colleagues together to have this conversation, the director of TeachingWorks did. When the first team was ready to make an offer, she asked me if the teams had come together to review our process and discuss the diversity of our candidate pool and of the candidates to whom we were prepared to make offers. I said that we had not, and together we decided that it would be helpful if she could convene such a conversation. This was in part because the work of our hiring process was mostly located within teams, rather than centrally; there was some cross-team coordination during weekly project meetings, but time there was limited and leadership resided mostly within teams.

For this conversation, the human resources office provided data from the online application system regarding the race and gender of our applicants, and the race and gender of applicants for similar positions more broadly. We compared these and found them to be similar, within 1-2 percentage points of each other—which indicated that, according to the U-M benchmark, we had attracted a candidate pool that was sufficiently diverse. Because of time constraints, at this point we ran these analyses just at the level of the candidate pool as a whole—everyone who submitted applicants—and not at the level of the smaller pools we generated, either at the phone interview stage or the in-person interview stage. On the phone call, we discussed these data, reviewed our recruiting and interviewing process we had gone through, and each team described the candidates it was hoping to hire. After the call, each team developed and extended offers to their chosen candidates. In total, we extended 12 offers and 9 were accepted.¹

Results

In this section, I will report the results of our efforts to hire for diversity and excellence. First, I will report the percentage of candidates who reported being racial/ethnic minorities at each stage of the hiring process. Second, I will compare our hiring practices to those recommended by STRIDE. This comparison to STRIDE recommendations is a kind of single loop learning – identifying areas in which our practice was and was not consistent with a set of

¹ We had initially planned to hire for eight positions, but ended up hiring for seven full-time and two part-time positions. This enabled us to hire two staff members who were a good fit for the position but unavailable to work full-time.

explicit guidelines. In the following section, I will offer a set of observations that emerged from my interviews with my TeachingWorks colleagues. This analysis is meant to be a kind of double loop learning – complicating and complementing the set of guidelines with which we started working (Argyris, 1977).

Candidates' Race/Ethnicity

Because my project focused on the practices of our hiring process, not the candidates and their performance, a detailed reporting of the demographics, identities, and areas of experience and expertise of the new hires and existing TeachingWorks staff is beyond its scope. However, I did gather a limited set of quantitative data from the U-M School of Education Office of Human Resources regarding the percentage of our applicants who identified as racial/ethnic minorities at various stages of the hiring process. Analyzing candidates' race/ethnicity provides only a partial picture of the kinds of diversity that are pertinent to TeachingWorks' hiring. For a more complete analysis, we would need information about candidates' gender identities, sexual orientation, religion, experiences with language, experiences working with different student populations, experiences working in higher education and K-12 contexts, and area of content expertise. But because limited data were available, and because racial/ethnic diversity was an important (if implicit) focus in this hiring process, I am focusing here on the racial/ethnic diversity of our candidates. These data are described below and reported in Table 2.

In TeachingWorks' initial applicant pool, 25% of candidates reported being racial/ethnic minorities, which closely mirrors the percentage of candidates who

reported being racial/ethnic minorities in the field more broadly (26%). At the stage of invitation for in-person interview, the percentage of candidates in TeachingWorks' pool who reported being racial/ethnic minorities increased to 35%, nine points higher than in the comparison data. At the stage of job offers, the percentage of candidates in TeachingWorks' pool who reported being racial/ethnic minorities decreased to 25%, similar to the demographics of the broader field. But at the stage of accepting the position, just 11% of TeachingWorks' applicants reported being racial/ethnic minorities, 14 points lower than the field.

It is important to note that, especially at the end of the process, the total number of candidates in the pool and the number of candidates of color was very small, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions. However, the pattern in the data suggests that throughout most of the hiring process, our pool of candidates had as many or more candidates of color than did the field more broadly. However, several candidates of color to whom we offered positions declined, so the final group of candidates who accepted offers had a smaller percentage of people of color than the field more broadly.

Table 2
Race/Ethnicity of Candidates

| Hiring Process Stage | Candidates Who Identify as a Racial/Ethnic Minority | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| | In TeachingWorks' 2016 Hiring Process | In Comparison Data ^c |
| Submitted application ^a | 25% | 26% |
| Invited for in-person interview ^b | 35% | NA |
| Offered position ^b | 25% | NA |
| Accepted position ^b | 11% | NA |

^a U-M School of Education Office of Human Resources, May 17, 2016.

^b U-M School of Education Office of Human Resources, December 20, 2016.

^c U-M School of Education Office of Human Resources, May 17, 2016. Compiled from Affirmative Action Availability information published by the by the U-M Office for Institutional Equity.

Comparing Our Process to Recommended Practice

Following the hiring process, I interviewed 18 of my TeachingWorks colleagues, 10 of whom had participated in the hiring process as interviewers, and 8 of whom had participated as candidates.² During interviews, I asked my colleagues questions about how they experienced the hiring process, what areas they thought worked well, and what aspects we might want to revise for similar processes in the future. Based on these interviews, I compared our practice to the practices recommended by STRIDE, and identified areas for growth in our hiring practices in the future. This comparison is in Table 3.

Error! Reference source not found. While there were some areas in which our practice was consistent with recommended practice (in green), there were others in we were in the early stages of integrating recommended practice (in yellow) and others in which we did not integrate the practice at all (in red).

² I did not interview two TeachingWorks colleagues who participated in the hiring process as candidates. One was on leave at the time of my interviews, and the other had not yet started working at TeachingWorks.

Given that this hiring process was our team’s first effort to implement these practices, and that we did not attend the STRIDE training until a few months after we had begun our hiring process, it should not be surprising that our implementation was not yet fully consistent with STRIDE guidance. As we approach future hiring processes, the red and yellow areas may be promising areas of focus.

Table 3
Comparing Our Practice to STRIDE Recommendations

| Recommended practice ³ | Our process |
|--|---|
| <i>Stage 1: Getting the best applications from the best applicants</i> | |
| Continuously develop the applicant pool, even when you do not have a specific position posted. Develop strategic recruitment partnerships, including with minority professional organizations. | Respondents reported that we do not yet have this practice in place, but hope to integrate it in the future. |
| Define the job description as broadly as possible. | <p>In order to broaden the talent pool beyond candidates already focused on teacher education, we took two steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition to requiring strong content expertise, we emphasized facilitation skills and experience leading professional development. - We posted the same job description with two different titles: Postdoctoral Fellowship and Research Specialist. <p>Respondents on some teams emphasized the importance of setting clear and shared minimum criteria for interviews, and offering interview opportunities to all candidates who met that minimum bar. This “casting a wide net” strategy enabled respondents to talk with all candidates who might possibly be qualified, maximizing the diversity of the first-round phone interview pool. Some teams also followed this strategy for the second round in person interview, intentionally making connections with candidates who might not be an obvious fit for this position but show promise as candidates for this or future projects at TeachingWorks.</p> |

³ Practices recommended here are from STRIDE (2015), except where noted.

Stage 2: Achieving Excellence and Diversity on the Short List

Search committee should be visibly committed to diversity and should itself be diverse.

Respondents shared a strong commitment to diversity, but did not necessarily have a shared definition of diversity. Respondents also had different understandings about what elements of our core work can be learned, and what elements candidates must already know and be able to do.

Our performance tasks asked candidates to explicitly address how their work connects to issues of equity and justice, suggesting a strong organizational commitment to these issues.

There was some diversity among our search committee members, but most were white women.

Search committee should know the literature on implicit bias.

Two members of the team attended a university-wide training on this topic, and then shared what we learned with the broader group participating in the hiring process. Many members of our team had encountered this literature in other contexts, but reported the discussion we had as a group to be very helpful. In follow up interviews, many respondents mentioned this discussion as a highlight of what they learned during the hiring process.

Define clear, specific, and job-relevant criteria in advance, and make these criteria central to candidate selection.

We defined clear, specific, and job-relevant criteria in advance. Many respondents cited the discussions that led to the creation of these criteria as an important step in developing a shared vision for the position.

We struggled with the tension between making the criteria specific enough to enable evidence-based judgment and making them open enough to capture all qualified candidates. In particular, we debated whether and how to require experience in practice-based teacher education – a relevant but not absolutely necessary qualification that, if required, would significantly limit the diversity of our hires.

Respondents on all teams referenced the criteria, but used them in different ways throughout the process. Some evaluated all candidates on each criterion using an online tool, and then used the data to make decisions. Others used the list of criteria as a reference for more open discussions about candidates' strengths and weaknesses.

| | |
|---|---|
| Monitor whether the demographics of the short list mirror the demographics of the applicant pool more broadly. ⁴ | At first, we thought that information about the broader applicant pool was unavailable to us, so we did not take this step when making a first cut from applicant pool to phone interview. We later learned that the School of Education's Office of Human Resources office collects this information, so we did a brief review and group discussion of the data when teams had made initial decisions about the candidates to whom to offer positions. The discussion took place at a very late stage in the process, so respondents reported that it functioned as a check rather than actually influencing decisions about offers. |
|---|---|

Stage 3: In-person Interview

| | |
|--|--|
| Communicate schedule and expectations very clearly and in advance | <p>When we invited candidates to interview, we sent a general description of what the agenda would look like, along with logistical information about timing and travel.</p> <p>One week before each interview, we sent out a detailed schedule for the interview, along with guidelines for the first performance task, which was to deliver a simulated professional development session.</p> |
| Create a welcoming environment that does not trigger stereotype threat | We made efforts to make sure that someone was available to welcome candidates when they walked in the door, that TeachingWorks staff in the office were friendly, that candidates had access to water and coffee, and that the schedule had enough time for transitions and breaks. Respondents said that the environment felt welcoming, but some identified awkward interactions with TeachingWorks staff not involved in the interview process around the kitchen area. Also, we do not have feedback on this point from candidates who did not receive offers from TeachingWorks, who might have experienced the environment as unwelcoming or triggering stereotype threat. |
| Create an interview experience that enables all candidates to show their best work | <p>The range of performance tasks and interview activities we created gave candidates opportunities to display different kinds of skills and areas of expertise. Respondents generally reported having the time and information they needed to show their best work through the tasks we put forward.</p> <p>However, it would be useful to have feedback on this point from candidates who did not receive offers from TeachingWorks, who might have felt that the interview process did not allow them to show their best work.</p> |

Stage 4: Making the Decision

⁴ This practice was not recommended in the STRIDE training I attended, but it was referred to in the U-M Academic Affairs Faculty Hiring Manual (2014) and is standard practice in the U-M School of Education (D. Ball, personal communication, June 2, 2016).

| | |
|---|---|
| Conversations about interviews should happen quickly after the visit | Respondents reported that within teams, conversations about interviews happened on a rolling basis, quickly after each visit. But, opportunities for conversations across teams were limited and did not always closely follow visits. |
| Conversations about interviews should be grounded in evidence, not intuition | <p>Respondents reported making a strong effort to ground conversations about interviews in evidence, not intuition. This practice resonated with experiences observing classroom instruction and grounding conversations about those observations in evidence. However, some of the same issues that educators face in grounding classroom observations in evidence emerged here: despite efforts to report observations rather than inferences, some interviewers made inferences rather than restricting their comments to what they observed.</p> <p>Respondents reported that different teams operationalized this guideline in different ways. One team used the online form to capture ratings and comments for each criterion, while the two others used criteria as a reference point for more holistic discussion of candidates. Teams made efforts to use either written notes or ratings in the online tool, but sometimes did not have time to write down evidence; in these cases, some people had to rely more on memory and intuition.</p> |
| Start by making a short list of qualified candidates, and delay ranking candidates | Respondents on all teams said that they first had a conversation about which candidates seemed viable, and then discussed the pros and cons of the viable candidates. One team then created different permutations of a set of new hires, while another focused on ranking within the group of viable candidates. The first step – identifying candidates who seemed viable – may have been influenced by bias, because there was not a shared definition of the minimum standard for “viable.” |
| <p><i>Key: Do not yet have this practice in place. Early stages of integrating this practice. Strong initial steps towards integrating this practice.</i></p> | |

Analysis

In this section, I will use my colleagues’ reflections on the hiring process to explore the reasons why we got the results that we did, and identify opportunities for further work. First, I will describe three themes that stretched across my interviews with colleagues who participated in the hiring process as interviewers and as candidates. Then, I will then identify five areas of our implementation that

were underdeveloped in this implementation and could be strengthened in the future.

Themes

In this section, I will discuss three themes that emerged from interviews with my TeachingWorks colleagues: a broader conversation about equity and justice that paralleled the interview process at TeachingWorks; the ways in which TeachingWorks' expertise in assessment design may have enabled us to mitigate stereotype threat; and a debate over whether to work on hiring for diversity immediately, despite the limitations of our project, or to wait for a future opportunity.

1. A parallel and broader conversation about equity and justice. While the hiring process was going on, TeachingWorks was engaged in a broader conversation about how to make explicit the ways in which our commitment to equity and justice shows up in our work. The hiring process – in particular, the interview tasks – reflected that conversation, and gave us an opportunity to further develop it.

Several respondents said that the tasks they performed as part of the interview process helped them to understand TeachingWorks' commitment to equity and justice. One candidate said: "A lot of times people pay lip service and they'll say 'We really care about equity,' but it's not something that really gets talked about and done something about and worked on." After the candidate completed her professional development session during her interview, an interviewer reminded him/her that the performance task instructions asked that

candidates explicitly attend to issues of equity in their sessions, and asked the candidate to speak about how s/he did that. The candidate remembered thinking, “Oh, they really meant that when they said it—it wasn’t just something they were waving their hands at.” By including considerations about equity, diversity, and justice in the task itself, and by asking follow up questions about those considerations, interviewers conveyed that they really cared about how candidates use their content expertise to surface questions of equity, diversity, power and justice.

Other candidates mentioned the email task as an experience that helped them to communicate their own values related to equity. One felt like s/he hadn’t talked enough about his/her commitment to equity during her in person interview, but found that the email task “was a very realistic thought practice” and “allowed me to display a lot of my fundamental understandings about the work.” Another candidate said that the email task gave him/her an opportunity to figure out how equity and justice intersect with TeachingWorks’ framework of high-leverage practices: “This was a great task for me in that I would have had to answer that for my former colleagues who see that that’s the work I’ve done from the very beginning. Having to do so with the content that already exists from TeachingWorks was the challenge....” From the experience of writing the email task the candidate said recalled learning that “The equity components aren’t explicit in the HLPs, but in the core ideas. It’s a focus on equity in context.”

This candidate’s observation—that TeachingWorks’ commitment to equity underlies all of the high-leverage practices but isn’t called out specifically in any

of them—is something that had begun to come up frequently in discussions among TeachingWorks staff. In fact, the interview process came at a moment when TeachingWorks staff members were considering how to make explicit the ways in which our commitment to equity and justice is integrated throughout our work. This commitment to justice has always been central to our mission, which states that “making skillful teaching an expectation for all students is a commitment to equity and a lever for justice in education.” But issues emerging in our work with partners, especially in context of national conversations about police killings and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, pushed us to make that work more explicit. In work with partners, we found that some teacher educators seemed to perceive equity work in general, and racial equity work in particular, as something separate from work on teaching practice. This discrepancy made us realize that we needed to be more explicit about the ways in which we see a commitment to equity integrated throughout each teaching practice.

This tension between *doing* equity work and *naming* equity work showed up in conversations among TeachingWorks staff and in candidates’ performance tasks. One interviewer commented on the candidates’ performance on the criterion “Orientation towards equity and diversity is well-articulated and integrated into the candidate’s work.” The interviewer said that in candidates’ professional development sessions in mathematics, “we got ‘well-integrated’; we did not get ‘well-articulated.’” So, “we ended up asking them a question tying this explicitly back to issues of equity.” The interviewer wondered, “At what point do

you make a big deal about that? At what point do you name the idea?” In conversations about candidates’ performance, interviewers debated how important it was that candidates be able to talk about the ways in which their work was equity work—even if the work itself was implicitly equity work.

This tension parallels one that the TeachingWorks mathematics team engages with regularly. One respondent explained that there are different perspectives on what it looks like to integrate equity and justice into teaching. One is to situate mathematics content and skills in real world problems related to social issues, like learning quadratics in context of a unit on drug use and blood testing. In this approach, teachers explicitly state how using mathematical content and skills can help students to do social justice work. Another approach is to consider the act of teaching students to do the work of mathematics itself as an act of social justice. The interviewer said, “We want children to be able to learn mathematics in a way and to a level that will allow them to do what they want to do with their lives. We aren’t predetermining what they should want to do.” Interviewers debated whether the same is true at the level of teacher education. Is the goal of teacher education to support teacher educators in talking about the ways in which preparing novice teachers who are ready to teach is justice work? Or is it enough to prepare novice teachers who are ready to teach?⁵

⁵ We did not resolve this debate, but as I observed and engaged in it I grew stronger in my belief that though doing the work of preparing novices well is necessary to the work of justice in teacher education, it is not sufficient. Teacher educators who can prepare novices to be ready to teach, but who do not attend to which novices they are preparing, or for what classroom contexts, or what content, cannot interrupt the pattern that the least well-prepared teachers are often assigned to children in the most under-served communities. Teacher educators who do not talk about their work as interrupting the status quo cannot teach novices to talk about their own work that way. They are likely to prepare novices who also struggle to talk explicitly

2. Eliciting candidates' best performances through assessment

design. A central element of the STRIDE's guidance on mitigating stereotype threat is creating an environment and context in which candidates are set up to show their best work. Feedback from my colleagues who participated in our hiring process suggests that TeachingWorks' expertise in the area of assessment design enabled us to create an interview experience that was consistent with STRIDE's guidance to mitigate stereotype threat by "creat[ing] an environment which elicits the best performance from all candidates."

In interviews with my colleagues who participated in the hiring process as applicants, I asked in what ways our interview process enabled them to show us their best work, and in what ways the design of the tasks or features of the environment might have constrained their interview performance. Many respondents referred to the performance-based nature of our interview process, citing the opportunity to show rather than talk about their strengths. One, who experienced the interview process as a candidate, said that the "performance tasks really did allow me to show not just what I know, but what I can do." The participant continued: "This is different from a typical interview where you're just talking, especially in the academic world." Another, who experienced the process as an interviewer, said: "Our biggest success was showing that you can have an interview process be practice-based. We could have easily sat people down and interviewed them, but we would have been going on far more assumptions that would have privileged some and deprivileged others."

about issues of power and justice in their classroom. By naming the ways that teacher education contributes to our mission of equity and justice, we can support the teacher educators we work with to learn to be explicit about equity and justice with their own students.

Some respondents commented that the performance-based nature of the interview process increased their confidence that they would be a good fit for the position. One said: “You know what you’re getting into. They’ve seen what I can do and I have to trust that they see in what ways it’s a match with the team.” Another said that the performance task “showed so much intention on your part of really sharing the types of the activities that would be expected in the job.... It left me with the feeling ‘I could do this; it would be a good match.’”

Some respondents also noticed aspects of the performance tasks that foreshadowed elements of the work of the position—suggesting that the tasks are an authentic assessment of candidates’ fit for the position. One said: “Sometimes you get a job but don’t have an idea of what you’ll actually do. This interview approximated the work pretty well.” One respondent recalled the performance task that asked candidates to respond to an email from a colleague that critiques TeachingWorks’ approach, and included the question “How does your response work to hear and value the perspectives of the partner?” The participant made a connection between that task and recent experiences at convenings with new partners. At one convening, some session participants seemed “so in opposition to us and what we were doing,” illustrating the importance of TeachingWorks’ staff members’ ability to hear and value critical perspectives, and bring those into the work of the convening. At another convening, the leader of the session opened by naming the common bond among participants—that they all care about children and want them to be successful and have all of the opportunities that they deserve, and that as

teacher educators their work is to specifically address the differential opportunities that some children have. This point created a sense of common purpose that opened space for participants to express different perspectives within a community of mutual respect. Making a connection between experiences at convenings and the performance task, the respondent said that the task was “such a good approximation of thinking about some of the things we’re going to have to be thinking about and responding to in the job.”⁶

Respondents’ comments about the ways in which the task enabled them to show their strengths and experience the kinds of challenges that are typical of the job suggest that the performance tasks are authentic assessments—providing interviewers with a real picture of candidates’ strengths and candidates with a chance to try out what the job would be like (Darling Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Given TeachingWorks’ expertise in this area—a central element of our work is designing assessments that measure candidates’ ability to do the core work of teaching—it should not be surprising that the performance tasks we asked candidates to do were authentic and enabled candidates to show their strengths.

Most candidates reported that the conditions under which they performed the tasks felt supportive and enabled them to show their best work, consistent with STRIDE guidance that providing clear information well in advance and creating an optimal environment can mitigate stereotype threat. In interviews,

⁶ Within the field of practice-based teacher education, “approximation” is a technical term that means opportunities for novice teachers to engage in deliberate practice. These opportunities fall along a continuum, from “less complete and authentic to more complete and authentic.” (Grossman et. al, 2009). This respondent may have been using the word approximation to refer to the interview task as an opportunity for interview candidates (novices at doing the work of the TeachingWorks position) to practice the work of the position for which they were interviewing.

candidates generally said that interview conditions were positive, citing as examples the welcoming environment, having clear instructions a week in advance for the professional development task, having open-ended time at home to write the email task response, and having time to individually watch the video for the analysis of instruction task.

However, some respondents did mention aspects of the interview circumstances that were confusing or distracting, and might have prevented candidates from showing their best work. Several candidates mentioned that having remote interviewers participate via video chat without advance warning was stressful, that the 30-minute time constraint for the professional development task was inauthentic and difficult to manage, and that not knowing the names or roles of some of the TeachingWorks staff and doctoral students in attendance at their professional development session was awkward. One respondent said that she had not understood from reading the professional development task that its audience was supposed to be teacher educators, and wished that had been clearer. Another respondent said that she had thought that the analysis of a video task would be more of a conversation than an interview or performance, and was surprised when the interviewers did not offer any of their own thoughts on the video. These comments—mostly minor and technical issues that we could adjust for next time—suggest that though the circumstances and environment of the in-person interview were generally conducive to candidates' best performances, some of the logistics and instructions could be improved. A summary of these areas for improvement is in Appendix E.

One important limitation of this discussion is that it is based on reflections of candidates who were so successful at the in-person interviews that they were offered positions at TeachingWorks. If we had interviewed candidates who interviewed but were not offered positions, we might learn more useful information about aspects of the circumstances or environments that might have been suboptimal and hindered these candidates' performances. We do have limited feedback from these candidates, in the form of a feedback survey that 18 of 23 (78%) of candidates completed after their interview and before they learned whether they would be offered a position. On this survey, all candidates indicated that they felt welcome at TeachingWorks, and all but one indicated that they clearly understood the expectations for their in-person interviews and that the tasks allowed them to show their best work. While these data may be positively biased by candidates' inclination to give positive feedback because they believed that their feedback might influence whether they would be offered a position, the results suggest that even the candidates who were not offered positions generally found the interview experience conducive to sharing their best work. However, offering these candidates a stipend to participate in an interview process might have yielded more or more nuanced information than the survey could provide.

3. If not now, when? Trying new approaches to hiring adds time to the hiring process. Time and other constraints of our project made us unsure about whether this project was the appropriate opportunity to try a new approach. But, we wondered: if not now, when?

When I asked my colleagues if there were constraints that limited our ability to achieve our goals in the hiring process, many cited factors of the project for which we were hiring, including its short timeline, its accountability to external partners, and the decision to allow staff to work remotely.

One respondent said: “The nature of what we’re doing is that it’s being developed. It’s not already in place; there’s no template. We’re doing something new from the ground up. That didn’t allow us to have the time we needed to have someone come in new; we needed them to have the skills [already].” Another said that we were looking for people who “wouldn’t need a long upstart and onboarding process,” which means people with “existing knowledge of what we do in practice-based teacher education.” Because we were hiring people to do work for a time-limited grant, our team felt pressure to have staff trained and ready to represent TeachingWorks by the start of our work serving partners in the late summer. If we had been hiring staff for a project with a more open-ended timeline, we might have felt more comfortable hiring candidates who were new to the field of practice-based teacher education; because we were not, we felt pressure to hire staff who bring that experience with them.

One respondent said that people who work in practice-based teacher education bring a similar perspective and background to that of our current staff, who were trained at similar universities and worked in similar contexts. The respondent recalled worrying that if we focus on hiring people who bring a practice-based teacher education perspective, we might miss opportunities to

hire people who are openly critical of that approach, or who bring a different approach that could enrich our work.

The respondent added that most people trained in practice-based teacher education are white. Given the similar backgrounds of candidates trained in practice-based teacher education and current TeachingWorks staff, there was a tension between our goal of hiring staff who did not need much time to learn our approach and our goal of hiring a diverse team. The respondent wondered if our commitment to hiring people who bring experience with practice-based teacher education might threaten our ability to hire people who are not white.

Another respondent added that the decision to hire remote staff exacerbated the need to hire people who do not need much support or training in learning TeachingWorks' approach. The respondent perceived that it would be less feasible to train a staff person working remotely than a staff person based at our offices in Ann Arbor. For this reason, we needed to hire "people who can basically function on their own or without support." This response may indicate an assumption that working at TeachingWorks requires conforming to a particular set of beliefs and way of operating. Hiring people who do not subscribe to that set of beliefs and way of operating may be part of our goal in hiring for diversity, but may also create a need for close interaction to navigate areas of dissonance, especially at the beginning.

When I heard my colleagues' assumptions—that the requirements of our grant dictated our timeline and meant that we could not take additional time to train new staff who would bring great strengths to our team but need extra time to

learn about practice-based teacher education, and that it was necessary to allow remote hires—I was surprised. My understanding of the grant and program design was a little more flexible: one purpose of the grant was to serve our partners in the Gates Foundation’s Centers Project, and another purpose of the grant was to build TeachingWorks’ capacity, expanding our team and deepening our impact. Hiring a more diverse team seemed to me to fall in the second category, which I see as an appropriate use of grant funding and time. I wondered why this issue had not been surfaced earlier, and why we did not have a more explicit conversation about whether we could use any flexibility in the project timeline to allow for some flexibility in training new colleagues. I had a similar reaction to my colleague’s perception about the decision to hire employees who would work remotely; my understanding was that we had made this decision as a team because it would give us access to a national talent pool, but that we could have restricted our hiring to local candidates if we had chosen to do so. One colleague said that the “hiring teams were not part of any of the program design. Decisions had already been made. We did not know that having to hire fast would impact who we would hire, so we tried within the limited role to think what we could do.” This respondent may have been referring to the decisions made during the writing of the grant, which had been done by a small group, months prior. While this respondent perceived the decisions made in the writing of the grant to have been binding, the design of the grant and the expectations of the funder may actually have been more flexible than the respondent realized.

Another colleague had a different perspective, saying that the time and other constraints we experienced in this hiring process were typical of the kinds of constraints organizations typically face. Time is always an issue, and if hiring more diverse colleagues is a priority, then we should allot more time to it. Borrowing from the Jewish sage Rabbi Hillel, the respondent's comments suggested: "If not now, when?"

I share the view that the constraints we faced are typical. Though it is true that the grant-funded and term-limited nature of the positions we were hiring for created constraints, the constraints it created are typical ones for an organization that relies heavily on grant funding. My experience of our organization has been that when we define something as an important priority we are able to align our resources against it, and our funders are generally understanding and flexible. I raised some questions about the flexibility of the timeline early on, but wonder if I might have found other ways to elevate or push that conversation further to create more room to prioritize diversity in hiring.

Areas of work

In this section, I will discuss five areas of work that were underdeveloped in this first implementation and may offer promise as areas of focus for future efforts: developing a shared definition of and rationale for diversity; continuously developing the applicant pool; monitoring the diversity of the applicant pool; refining the way we use shared criteria to evaluate candidates; and interviewing candidates who decline our offers to identify ways to make our offers more attractive, especially to candidates of color.

1. Developing a shared definition of and rationale for diversity. When I asked my colleagues about the goals for our hiring process, many cited diversity as an important goal. But they offered different views on what kinds of diversity are important, and different reasons why hiring for diversity might help us to advance our mission. Many said that the absence of a common definition of and rationale for diversity made it difficult to navigate areas of tension that emerged during the process. Some posed the beginnings of a shared vision of diversity, and made connections between our efforts to diversify our staff and our mission to advance justice through teacher education.

Asked what kinds of diversity are necessary for us to do our work well, many colleagues mentioned racial and ethnic diversity. One expressed a concern that our team appears to be mostly white, and that this appearance may limit the way we communicate and partner with communities of color. Especially as we work to connect with new colleagues and partners with whom we do not already have relationships, or as we seek to communicate ideas or provide resources to the sector more broadly, being perceived as a mostly white team may make educators think that our work may be elitist or out of touch with the needs and practice of educators working in communities of color.

While most colleagues mentioned racial/ethnic diversity as a priority of our team, other kinds of diversity were also mentioned. Some emphasized that our current team has significant experience in higher education and academia, and that hiring new staff with direct and recent experience in the K-12 classroom would ground our work in a different way. Some mentioned gender, emphasizing

that our current staff is mostly female, while others mentioned geography and experience working in bilingual education contexts or with English learners.

While all respondents mentioned diversity as an important goal for our hiring process, respondents did not consistently know whether their colleagues shared their view on what kinds of diversity are important, and why. One said that when one person talks about diversity, everybody nods their heads, but that does not mean we are all in agreement. The participant also said that it seems like diverse is becoming synonymous with race in our conversations, and that it is not clear where everybody agrees that race is the most important kind of diversity for us to consider. Hearing this question about colleagues' views on diversity made me realize that, as we approached the hiring process, our definitions and rationales for diversity remained mostly implicit.

Many respondents talked about having a goal to hire new staff who would “complement” our existing team—bringing areas of experience, expertise, and identity that are different than those of our current staff. This view is consistent with Ely & Thomas' “integration and learning” approach to diversity, in which the unique skills, experiences, and insights that team members bring are seen as valuable resources for the team's work (2001). Many respondents also talked about wanting to have a team that is “well-rounded.” One emphasized that it is not that we value both excellence and diversity, but that being a diverse team is central to our conception of excellence, and is necessary for us to do our work well. This view may be consistent with Page's finding that, given certain conditions, diversity trumps ability in solving difficult problems (2007). Ability –

specifically, content expertise – highly valued within TeachingWorks and within our hiring process, and we never considered lowering our bar for ability in the hiring process. But the understanding of diversity as part of our shared conception of what it means for our team to do excellent work is consistent with Page’s notion that diverse groups of smart people can perform better than homogenous groups selected for their ability do.

One respondent said that identity, place, and experience impact the ways in which we understand and teach children. While we believe that novice teachers of all backgrounds can learn to teach children of all backgrounds, we also know that our identities shape the way we perceive, assess, and hear children. For example, an important part of learning to elicit and interpret student thinking – one of the high-leverage practices, the set of practices most critical for beginning teachers to master, that TeachingWorks teaches to teacher educators – is learning to listen very carefully and really hear what students are saying. To this well, novices need to learn to be aware enough of their own identities to identify moments when their own identities may be getting in the way of hearing what students are saying. Developing an awareness of our own identities and the way they shape our listening and teaching is important for novice teachers, and it is important for TeachingWorks staff as we work to teach diverse teacher educators.

The respondent also said that if our team shares common identities and experiences, we will be limited in who and what we could teach and support. But if we bring different identities and experiences, we will know and teach teaching

in ways that support the learning of a broader range of educators and communities. And if our team members share identities and experiences with the children, teachers, and communities we serve, we will be better able to understand the contexts we are working in. In this way, the respondent is perceiving the identities and experiences of team members as valuable resources for our shared work, as in Ely & Thomas' "integration and learning" perspective (2001).

Another colleague said that our identities impact what we think it means to do work well, and that we are more ready to see strengths in people who are like us than unlike us. So, the more identities are represented on our team, the more strengths we will collectively be able to see. This explanation of why our team's diversity is so central to our work reflects an important value that drives much of our work: learning to see and value the strengths that children bring. The practice of eliciting and interpreting students' thinking is in part about learning to respect children as thinkers who are making sense of the world around them. Teaching novices this practice is in part about how helping novices to see children's strengths. The same is true for novice teachers, and for teacher educators; at every level, seeing the strengths that learners bring is important to building on what they know and can do.

This rationale for diversity may also feel somewhat problematic. If we are more likely to see strengths in people like us, does that also mean that we are less likely to see strengths in people unlike us? This implication may be uncomfortable but is consistent with research on evaluation bias (Bertrand &

Mullainathan, 2004; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Fiske, 2002; Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002). This does not mean that we cannot learn to see strengths in people who are unlike us, but suggests that this pattern is important for us to watch for and work on.

The rationale for diversity that emerged during these conversations – that being a more diverse team will contribute to our mission by enabling us to see more strengths in the teacher educators, novices, and children we teach – offers the beginnings of a shared vision that our whole team might explore, adjust, and adopt before we begin our next hiring process.

2. Continuously developing the applicant pool. Because we did not implement STRIDE’S first recommendation – continuously developing the applicant pool by forming strategic recruitment partnerships – we missed an important opportunity to break the “self-fulfilling cycle” of predominantly white organizations (Austin Virgil et. al, 2007).

Table 3 indicates that one practice which TeachingWorks does not yet have in place is continuously developing the applicant pool by forming strategic recruitment partnerships, especially with minority professional organizations. This practice had was not in place when we began the spring 2016 hiring process, so we did not have a set of relationships to draw on for recruitment. Instead, we relied primarily on the professional networks of current staff and the professional network of practice-based teacher education organizations, which are demographically similar to TeachingWorks – missing an opportunity to break what Austin Virgil et. al call the “self-fulfilling cycle” (2007).

The timing of our decision to use STRIDE recommendations partly explains this missed opportunity. We began drafting the job descriptions in January, they were posted in February, and we did not attend the STRIDE training until March. With an application deadline in April, we did not have time to do the kind of relationship building entailed by the strategic recruitment work STRIDE recommends. This relationship-building and strategic recruitment partnership work needs to happen on a longer-term timeline, outside the context and timeline demands of hiring for a particular position.

As we consider ways to develop a more diverse applicant pool in the future, a possible area of inquiry is the language we use to describe our work. Some respondents expressed concerns that the language we use to describe our work may resonate more with white candidates than candidates of color. Exploring this further by sharing our language with colleagues from different demographic groups and asking for their reactions, or by experimenting with new ways of framing our work, may help us to attract a more diverse candidate pool in the future.

This missed opportunity right at the beginning process limited our effort to hire for diversity in a significant way. While our initial applicant pool met the comparison benchmark for racial/ethnic diversity in the field, as indicated in Table 2, if it was our goal to exceed that benchmark in our hiring, we would have needed to recruit a more diverse initial applicant pool.

3. Monitoring the diversity of the applicant pool. Because we did not monitor the diversity of our applicant pool throughout the hiring process, we

missed opportunities to collectively consider the progress of our hiring process against our initial goals.

Table 3 indicates that we did not implement one of the important practices recommended by STRIDE: monitoring the demographics of the applicant pool. If we had implemented this practice, we might have identified differences in the demographics of our candidates at various stages of the process. Though monitoring is common practice in School of Education faculty hiring, the practice had not been in place at TeachingWorks and we did not set it up as a routine during this hiring process. Late in our process we did go back and identify that about one quarter of applicants identified as racial/ethnic minorities, which is similar to the available benchmarking data for similar positions. Because our overall candidate pool, finalist pool, and group of candidates to whom we made offers were all a higher percentage of people of color than the benchmarking group, this monitoring practice might not have changed our decisions about the candidates to whom we offered interviews and positions. However, it might have pushed us to make different choices about secondary offers – the offers we made to candidates after several candidates of color declined our initial offers. One option that was available to us, which we did not consider, was reopening the position and recruiting additional candidates at that stage. We did not consider that option in part because we regarded the project timeline as fixed and requiring all positions to be filled immediately. While we shared a commitment to hiring for diversity and excellence, we did not find a way to work through, or even surface explicitly, the tension between the project timeline and

the time we needed to recruit a diverse applicant pool at each stage of the process.

A monitoring process would have created moments for collective consideration the demographics of our pool against our intentions for the process. While we started out with a shared intention to hire a diverse team, we did not set a specific definition of diversity or any specific demographic goals or targets. So, while we would not have been able to measure the demographics of our candidate pool against an initial goal or target, we might have pushed ourselves to check the outcomes of our process against that initial vision – forcing more explicit discussion of what we mean by diversity and how we might measure it. For example, if we had moments to reflect on the diversity of our pool built into our process, we might have considered our goal to hire candidates of color against our goal to begin implementation in August. If there had been a tension among these goals, we could have surfaced that tension and explicitly discussed which to prioritize. Instead, our assumptions that we were trying our hardest to hire diverse candidates and that work needed to begin in August remained unexamined.

Perhaps because the STRIDE workshop is designed for primarily for hiring academic faculty, whose work proceeds mostly along individually-determined and academic timelines rather than collectively-determined and project-based ones, the workshop does not address how to handle tensions between the time needed to recruit a diverse pool and the demands of scheduled project work. Developing strategies for elevating such tensions for discussion, and integrating

these strategies into guidance for hiring for diversity and excellence, may be a promising area of future work.

A possible reason why we did not set up such a monitoring process is that most of the decisions of the hiring process took place within the ELA and mathematics teams – the central units of TeachingWorks. In TeachingWorks, decisions are typically made within teams, based on the norms and expertise of the members of those teams. Especially in our work on teacher education curriculum, which is so heavily grounded in the content and norms of each discipline, this way of organizing makes sense. But in this case, this way of operating may have been in tension with our overall goal to increase the diversity of our staff overall. While each content team was hiring for a small number of positions – two each for the elementary and secondary ELA teams, and four for the mathematics team – TeachingWorks overall was hiring for eight positions, a much bigger number. That bigger number afforded us flexibility to hire a group of candidates whose combined areas of experiences, expertise, and identity gave us the diversity we were looking for. By making hiring decisions at the content team level rather than as a whole group, we may have missed an opportunity to use that flexibility to select a more diverse group.

4. Refining the way we use shared criteria to evaluate candidates.

Developing shared evaluation criteria helped us to articulate our values and define who we want our team to be. And according to STRIDE, using those criteria to make evidence-based judgments reduces the role of intuition, which can be influenced by implicit bias. But some respondents felt that rating

candidates according to standard criteria makes our judgments too mechanistic, and did not use the criteria in their decision-making. Is there a way to use the criteria to ground judgments in evidence without erasing important nuances about the strengths candidates bring?

Many respondents cited the group conversation that led to the building of shared criteria as one of the most valuable parts of the interview process. One respondent said this conversation was critical to keeping the group focused. The respondent said: “I’m a real believer in having collaboratively generated protocols, and that’s what we did. I saw that having those things is crucial for keeping the group honest and focused on the things they’re interested in finding, and growing in the hiring process.” The process of working together to define shared criteria helped to surface areas in which group members assume they already share a vision but actually are bringing different ideas. The respondent continued: “It’s really important to make explicit what you’re looking for and what that looks like. Often we assume we’re seeing or talking about the same thing and we’re not. The process of creating a protocol helps tighten that.” This respondent added that the way the TeachingWorks team is organized, with three content teams each doing their own interview process in coordination with each other, makes the shared vision setting particularly important: “We agreed upon a set of criteria for who we would hire and why, and then took those into the separate teams. Because of the hub and spoke arrangements it’s important to have those protocols.”

Some respondents said that though the conversation we had to develop a shared vision and protocol was valuable, we needed more time to define the criteria and what indicate the evidence that might help us to assess them. One respondent recalled one good and meaningful conversation but said: “It was a rushed process. We had to develop it in a hurry.” Another said: “Developing shared understandings of what sorts of characteristics and qualities you’d be looking for takes time and effort.... It takes a lot of time. That’s a tremendous resource.”

Different teams used the criteria (see Appendix C) in different ways. On one team, all team members were expected to fill out an online version of the candidate evaluation tool following each interview. When they came together at their weekly meeting, they looked at the data from the online tool. They noticed that for many candidates, team members’ ratings were similar. For others, there were differences among candidates’ ratings. They paused to discuss these differences, and in some cases, to pose follow up questions for candidates. They found the data to be a helpful way to ground conversation among a large team about many different candidates. However, they found that the data would have been more helpful if they had spent more time talking about the meanings of the criteria and calibrating on the different rating options.

Another team referred to the criteria as a broad framework for discussion, rather than actually rating the candidates on each criterion. One said that referring to the criteria in team debriefs after interviews “disciplined our conversations.” Another recalled using the criteria to “scaffold our conversations

during debrief” but not seeing it “as a checklist during an interview, or at all.”

Another said that his/her team did not operationalize the criteria or rate candidates on them. This was in part because the interview team was very small - in conversations among just two people, they did not need the formal structure of criteria or data. Additionally, the rating tool felt limiting: “I’m not oriented toward rigid tools in this way.... it won’t tell you anything about the texture of the person. I’m naturally resistant toward rating.” Partially in response to this concern, we renamed our criteria. While STRIDE referred to their criteria template as a “Candidate Evaluation Tool,” we named ours a “Candidate Data Collection Tool.” This change reflects some interviewers’ resistance to rating, which also made it difficult for interviewers to use the tool.

This respondent worried: What if a candidate had important strengths that weren’t captured among the criteria? What if a candidate was very strong in one area, but didn’t have strengths in every area? That person might be a great hire, but would look in the data like she had weaknesses. Another interviewer worried about what would happen to the data if it got entered into the tool. Who would see it? Would interviewers have to explain and defend their ratings? Would the data be used for research in this capstone paper, without the consent of the interviewers and candidates?

Some respondents reported finding some criteria easier to evaluate than others. For some criteria, respondents reported having a clear understanding of the meaning of criteria, and sufficient evidence to rate candidates. This was generally the case for the criterion “ability to engage adults in content in a PD

session,” for which interviewers drew evidence from the mock PD session that candidates conducted as their first performance task. This was also the case for the criterion “knowledge of and experience with preservice teacher education,” for which interviewers drew evidence from candidates’ resumes and phone interviews.

However, there were criteria for which interviewers found the meaning confusing and the evidence insufficient. For example, for the criterion “knowledge of/ability to adapt to practice-based teacher education,” interviewers could assess candidates who brought knowledge of practice-based teacher education, but struggled to know, for candidates who did not, whether and how they would be able to adapt to working within that approach. That confusion was particularly problematic in context of our effort to hire for diversity, because the institutions that work on practice-based teacher education are predominantly white, and the candidates who brought with them that prior knowledge were predominantly white. Most candidates of color, then, were difficult to assess on this criterion.

There were also criteria about which interviewers brought different interpretations. For example, interviewers disagreed about the meaning of the criterion “orientation towards equity and diversity is well-articulated and integrated into the candidates’ work.” As discussed earlier in this paper, there was a parallel conversation going on within TeachingWorks about how important it was that teacher educators be able to articulate the ways in which equity and justice are integrated into our work. Some interviewers believed that this ability to articulate was important, and others believed that doing the work of teacher

education well was good enough. This debate made it difficult for interviewers to norm on ratings of this criterion.

Respondents' comments suggest that deeper work defining and refining the criteria, indicating the evidence that would be appropriate to assess each, and norming on the rating scale are important steps that we need to take to fully develop our use of criteria in future hiring processes. But respondents' concerns about rating candidates according to shared criteria made me wonder if we need to further unpack those concerns. To fully develop our practice in this area, we might need to revisit and explore the purpose of the shared criteria: to reduce the impact of implicit bias by grounding judgments in evidence. Do team members believe that we each have implicit biases and need ways to limit their influence on our judgments of candidates' performance? If so, do team members agree with the approach of using shared criteria to limit our biases' influence? If yes, is it necessary to rate candidates on the criteria, or is using them as a framework to discipline conversations rooted in qualitative evidence such as interview notes enough?

5. Interviewing candidates who decline our offers to identify ways to make our offers more attractive, especially to candidates of color. Table 2 indicates that though the percentage of candidates who identify as a racial/ethnic minority was at or above the benchmark throughout the hiring process, it dropped far below that benchmark at the final stage, accepting offers. While the total number of candidates in the pool at that stage was very small, making it difficult to draw conclusions, a possible interpretation is that though we recruited and

assessed candidates of color in a way that is consistent with or more favorable to candidates of color than the field as a whole, our offers were less attractive to candidates of color than to white candidates. If true, this suggests that while we have room for improvement in our recruitment of applicants of color in the initial stage (if our goal is to recruit a higher percentage of candidates of color than the field as a whole), our most urgent need is to make our offers attractive to candidates of color.

One way to explore this would be to interview the candidates, especially candidates of color, who decline our offers about the reasons why they declined.⁷ Offering candidates who decline a small stipend to participate in interviews about their experience of the process and their reasons for declining could yield information that could be very important to a critical part of our efforts to hire for diversity. Partnering with external consultants or even the Office of Human Resources in the U-M School of Education to conduct these interviews could mitigate concerns about having TeachingWorks staff engage in these sensitive conversations with applicants with whom we might encounter in future work in the field of teacher education.

⁷ This is something I considered doing for my capstone project, but did not based on guidance from some of my colleagues, who did not want the candidates to feel like they were being studied for a research project.

Implications

Implications for Self

I have often thought of tension as an indicator that I am doing something wrong. In part through my experiences doing this capstone project, I have learned that tension can be productive.

One way in which this lesson surfaced for me came through feedback from the leader of TeachingWorks about the way I was positioning my project. At several points, she gave me the feedback that I was positioning myself and project as if I know less than I really do. She observed that by positioning myself this way, I was leading my colleagues to act as if they were experts and I was a novice. While this may be true in some particular areas of academic work, it was not true on the topic of this paper – so I was getting unreliable advice that I did not really need. She encouraged me to frame my questions to colleagues in a more focused way, inviting them to respond to particular questions on which they have something to contribute, rather than asking for open-ended feedback on how to approach the work.

This feedback surprised me, because I had seen my open-ended approach as a strength. I was new to working at TeachingWorks, in teacher education, and in higher education. I wanted to learn from my colleagues how to structure my project in a way that would be accepted in these new contexts. I thought I was approaching them with a kind of humility that would help them see me as open to feedback, a quick learning, someone who “gets” what TeachingWorks is about and how to operate within our organization. I thought my humility was strategic. I thought that by proposing my project in a very open-

ended way, I would be able to take any kind of feedback and tweak my approach so that everyone would agree with and feel good about the project – and so I would avoid creating tension in the group.

At the same time, the work I was introducing was creating tension. Talking about diversity, identity, and race creates anxiety. Introducing new hiring practices creates new work. Introducing practices designed to mitigate bias implies that there is bias to mitigate. Asking different teams to adopt common practices can bring a sense of loss of autonomy and control. Using a common rating scale can bring a sense of mechanization and loss of individuality. These tensions manifested, in part, in some disagreements with the work I was proposing and in some criticisms of the way I was setting up my capstone work.

Though I knew that the work I was introducing was challenging, I still expected consensus and was thrown – almost paralyzed – by the criticism and conflict. When several colleagues suggested that I submit my project for IRB review, and raised concerns that my use of my observations from staff meetings or interviews with candidates without explicit consent would violate my colleagues' and our candidates' rights as subjects, I got stuck. For weeks, even months, I did not know how to respond. I understood the concerns as implicit criticisms of my project and of me for proposing the project, and I saw the process of submitting my project for IRB review and asking for consent from colleagues as roadblocks. Though I eventually came up with an approach that made the project possible – deciding that though the project may not have met criteria for research requiring subjects' consent and IRB oversight, those

processes are the norm at TeachingWorks and the University of Michigan, and it would help my colleagues feel comfortable engaging in learning with me if the project were to follow those norms – it was only after weeks or months of almost-paralysis.

Reflecting on this paralysis, and on the advice to position my work more firmly and ask for feedback in a more focused way, I see some ways in which my behaviors fit a pattern I've exhibited before. On projects before graduate school, I've gravitated toward more facilitative roles that allow me to organize work according to feedback in a way that feels comfortable to a group, without having to offer much of a vision for the work as a whole, or having to defend the direction of the work from criticism. Then, when I experienced tension, I worked to diffuse it by listening to feedback, sharing it across the team, and integrating it into the project. I understood tension to be an indicator that something was going wrong, and I understood my job as to resolve it. A mentor in my job before graduate school once advised me in a performance review to engage in conflict with a particular colleague. While that advice was specific to that particular situation, it indicates a pattern: that learning to engage in and stop avoiding conflict has been a next developmental step for me for a long time.

In graduate school, I learned that tension is not only not necessarily an indicator that something has gone wrong, but is often a necessary part of adaptive change (Heifetz, 1994). But though I've learned intellectually and from experience that this is true, both from reading Heifetz' adaptive leadership framework and from being part of efforts to use disequilibrium to create adaptive

change, my instincts have not fully caught up. When I arrived at TeachingWorks and began to set up my capstone work, I gravitated toward a facilitative role and took tension as a sign of something wrong. In some ways, this made sense – entering into a new organization, it was sensible for me to take some time to listen and learn. But, understood in the Immunity to Change framework, as I got into the work, I became paralyzed by a conflict between my commitment to avoid tension and my commitment to the project vision I was developing (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

For my capstone project, rather than helping my colleagues to see the value in what I was proposing by offering a strong vision up front, I led with a very open and flexible proposal and asked for any kind of reactions – taking a facilitative approach that minimized tension. Rather than helping my colleagues to understand my thinking about how to approach the capstone work by positioning it as a type of research project that is different but not less valuable than traditional academic research, I positioned the Ed.L.D. program and the capstone project as a less rigorous version of an academic doctoral program and a dissertation. In my mind, I was trying to be self-deprecating and humble in a way that shows awareness of and respect for the quality of my colleagues' academic work. I hoped to minimize tension by deprecating my project and showing respect for their way of working. But the result was that my colleagues actually perceived my project as misguided – something I needed to finish my degree, not a worthwhile if different opportunity for us to learn something about our practice.

Hearing the leader of TeachingWorks describe the capstone task in general, and my project in particular, as something that is different from but not less valuable than a traditional academic dissertation made me realize the ways in which my efforts to avoid tension actually undermined my project. She helped me to understand that, even setting aside any knowledge, skills, or experiences I might bring, the very fact that I have spent time learning and thinking about the ideas in the project qualifies me to offer a vision for that project. By virtue of the time I have spent researching and conceiving of the project, I have something to offer the group that is worth their listening to. And, it is possible for me to offer such a vision without abandoning the good parts of my prior approach – listening carefully and being responsive to feedback. As I move into a new, post-residency and long-term role at TeachingWorks, I am committed to offering a stronger vision for my work, including when doing so entails some disequilibrium.

Implications for Site

I joined TeachingWorks at a moment when it was transitioning from being a very small organization focused on conceptual work, to becoming a larger organization with accountability to provide services to other organizations. Many of the challenges that my colleagues and I experienced during my capstone project can be understood as growing pains associated with this transition. The following areas of work I outlined in the prior section can also be understood as natural steps for the organization to take as part of that transition. These include developing a shared definition of and rationale for diversity; continuously developing the applicant pool; monitoring the diversity of the applicant pool;

refining the way we use shared criteria to evaluate candidates; and interviewing candidates who decline our offers to identify ways to make our offers more attractive, especially to candidates of color. In this section, I will revisit some of those areas in a more forward-looking way. I will also discuss one more area of work, which is less about future hiring processes and more about TeachingWorks' growth as an organization: setting ourselves up to do the work of organizational learning.

Taking a long-term approach to staffing. As we approached hiring for the Centers Project, we thought of it in a mostly short-term way: adding temporary capacity to do a set of work scheduled to begin in just a few months. Approaching future hiring with a longer-term lens, there are two primary things we might focus on doing differently. First, we might work on developing recruitment partnerships in advance of a particular hiring process. This might mean seeking out professional organizations or colleges of education that are home to the kinds of candidates we might hope to attract in the future, especially candidates of color. This might mean leveraging programs we already have in place, like the Elementary Mathematics Laboratory summer professional learning session, or the TeachingWorks Seminar Series, to build new relationships with educators or teacher educators who might become candidates, or might connect us to candidates in the future.

Second, as we approach hiring for specific positions in the future, we should devote time to creating a shared and explicit definition of and rationale for diversity. During the Centers Project hiring process, conceptions of diversity were

varied and implicit, making it difficult to create a sense of common mission.

Reasons for committing to hiring for diversity also varied. Devoting some time to developing a shared definition and purpose could help us build collective commitment to achieving that diversity in future hiring.

Finally, in future hiring processes we should ask ourselves “If not now, when?” On the Centers Project, we considered grant constraints to be a reason why this particular project might not be the right opportunity to commit ourselves to more diverse hiring. We missed opportunities to question those constraints, and took them as a given. Questioning them would have required more opportunities for vertical communication between project team members and organizational leadership – something that TeachingWorks is already working on.

Affirming the identities and leveraging the diversity of our current team members. In addition to thinking differently about hiring new staff, we also have opportunities to learn from our experience of this hiring process about how to invest in the team we already have. During a recent session in which my colleagues discussed implications of the hiring process for future work, a common theme was a need to know more about the identities we have in the room. My colleagues were reacting to the “integration and learning” perspective on diversity, which says that only organizations in which the unique skills, experiences, and insights that team members bring are seen as valuable resources for shared work does diversity improve group performance (Ely & Thomas, 2001). They observed that a first step towards seeing each other’s identities and experiences as valuable resources would be to learn more about

each other's identities and experiences. While learning about identities happens informally between colleagues who happen to work together particularly closely, there is not yet a culture or process for this kind of sharing across the team. Creating shared ways to affirm individuals' identity can be a powerful first step in building a shared sense of community, especially within a diverse group (Tatum, 2000).

In addition to affirming current team members' identities, there may be other strategies for leveraging the diversity of our current team that are worth exploring. While this was beyond the scope of my project, which focused on hiring processes, this seems like a promising area of future work for TeachingWorks.

Both of these projects – leveraging the diversity of our current team, and working on our learning environment and processes – require dedicated time. Within TeachingWorks, many staff currently feel pressured by the demands of current projects like upcoming professional learning sessions, travel schedules, or other deadlines. Learning to devote time to investing in each other and in our organization will require prioritization of this work, and dedicating sufficient time.

Setting ourselves up to do the work of organizational learning. My colleagues are thoughtful, reflective practitioners who approach each project we take on as a learning opportunity. Individually and in small groups, we all have our own approaches to learning from our work and improving our practice. As K-12 teachers, many of us had strong approaches to learning from our practice and improving as teachers. As academic researchers, many of my colleagues use

research protocols to investigate questions of teaching and teacher education. But as a group of staff devoted to supporting teacher educators' learning and teaching, we did not have shared systems or structures in place to learn from our practice as a team. These shared processes and practices are a critical building block of a learning organization (Garvin, Edmondson & Gino, 2008).

My experience trying to set up this capstone project may be a productive example for us to consider. As I talked with colleagues about this project, they expressed some concerns. My colleagues asked questions about what would constitute the data I would use to learn from our work together: meeting notes? emails? my observations? candidates' performances? They asked how I would approach requesting consent from the subjects of my study, and what kind of guidance I was getting from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). These considerations—questions that are typical for dissertation work and other traditional academic research projects—surprised me. They had not come up in my doctoral program, and was unsure about whether they were relevant to the kind of reflective learning project I understood the capstone to be. Ultimately, out of respect for my colleagues' concerns and my institutional context—U-M, a Research I university—I developed an application to U-M's IRB, and developed consent forms for that process. In the IRB application, I refined my project to focus on interviews with my colleagues, rather than a more open-ended data set. Shortly after submitting my application to the IRB, the project was determined to be exempt from IRB review.

After receiving the notice that the IRB determined my project to be exempt from review, I was relieved to be able to begin interviewing my colleagues, but unsure about whether subjecting the project to the traditional academic process had been the right thing to do. I believed that following the norms of my institution was a respectful and appropriate way to approach the work. But I also wondered if I had missed an opportunity to position my capstone as something qualitatively different from a traditional academic dissertation. I wondered: Are the constraints of traditional research processes consistent with the purpose of the capstone, to develop my skills as a reflective practitioner? Is organizational learning a subset of traditional academic research, or a separate category? What kinds of norms and processes might support organizational learning within an academic context? While I found an approach to combining academic research and organizational learning that enabled me to do this capstone project, we as a team have not yet developed the systems and structures we need to collectively do organizational learning work in the future.

I wonder if formalizing some of the systems and protocols we use for organizational learning might help us to develop more of a habit of learning from our practice as a team. Doing so might mitigate the kind of anxiety and tension I felt among my colleagues as I tried to set up this project, and might make it easier for more people to take on deeper and more complex questions of organizational learning, especially those more challenging questions entailed by double-loop learning (Argyris, 1977). While conversations about race and diversity necessarily involve some discomfort, building a set of norms and

processes for shared learning might situate those uncomfortable topics within a more familiar and manageable context.

One place to start might be the diagnostic tool offered by Garvin et al. (see Appendix A). Either by taking the survey and reflecting on the data, or by discussing the items on the survey as a framework, we might identify specific starting points for working on strengthening our environment as a climate for learning, and building protocols and processes for learning (2008). The items under the domain “Building a Supportive Learning Environment” might be a useful place to start, particularly in the area of “appreciation of differences” and “time for reflection.”

Doing this work will require openness to considering organizational learning as something distinct from traditional academic research – an approach that might be somewhat counter-cultural in the university context, and challenging to operationalize in the context of a young organization that has been functioning in a kind of startup mode. But engaging with these questions seems to be an important developmental step that might help TeachingWorks in its journey to becoming an organization that takes an “integration and learning” perspective on diversity.

Implications for Sector

Education organizations typically hire from within the professional networks of their existing staff (Austin Virgil, Wyatt, & Brennan, 2014). Efforts to increase the diversity of the leadership of education organizations require

organizations to engage in set of practices to define a vision of diversity, recruit diverse candidates, and mitigate evaluation bias and stereotype threat.

The U-M's STRIDE framework offers useful guidance for how to do this, but executing the framework requires a set of conditions not specified by the framework. To engage in hiring for diversity and excellence, it helps for organizations to develop a collective and explicit definition of diversity. Developing this definition may require talking about identity and race – a practice many organizations do not already do, and a practice many individuals have not had practice doing. To introduce new hiring practices, it helps for organizations to be set up to learn, with a supportive learning environment, protocols and practices for learning, and leadership that models learning (Garvin et al., 2008).

There are two areas which our project did not explore but which may be worth exploring in similar efforts in the future. First, I wonder if having codified examples of organizations that have evolved from being predominantly white to being more diverse might help organizations who are interested in making a similar shift to do that work. Codified examples might mean written profiles or case studies published in academic journals, or features in more practitioner-focused media. This might also mean a developmental continuum describing features of organizations at various stages in their evolution from predominantly white to more diverse. If we had had access to such tools, they might have helped us to locate ourselves as beginners in a development process, rather than feeling ashamed that we had not already evolved further.

Second, I wonder if a rotation system or exchange program within the field of education might help organizations to build the kind of long-term recruitment partnerships that STRIDE recommends. This might mean that at various points in an education career, educators might serve in a role in the sector that is different than the role they have played in the past. An experienced teacher might take a one-year leave of absence from her school to serve as a field instructor for a teacher education program. A university-based teacher educator might receive a fellowship to develop a new teacher induction program within a district. A teacher educator at a Historically Black College or University might engage in an exchange with a teacher educator at a teacher residency program. Such experiences could happen incidentally, but they are rare and difficult to arrange. In addition to building relationships that could be used for hiring, creating a more formal program of rotation, as in Singapore's school system, or of exchange, might serve to deepen understanding of across parts of our field, and contribute to coherence in the field.

Conclusion

Many education organizations are committed to diversity, but few achieve it in their staffing. TeachingWorks engaged in an effort to try out a set of practices for hiring for diversity and excellence. This effort did not yield a very different result from prior hiring efforts – while the percentage of candidates of color in our initial candidate pool was as high as or higher than in the field as a whole, our hires at the end of the process were predominantly white. This was in part because we did not change our approach to recruitment, and recruited primarily

from the professional networks of our existing staff. Differences in our conceptions of and rationales for diversity and limitations to the way we monitored the diversity of the application pool and the way we used criteria to assess candidates may also have contributed to this outcome. Further inquiry is needed to learn why several candidates of color declined offers, and what might make offers more attractive, especially to candidates of color.

But the effort did build TeachingWorks' capacity to engaging in hiring practices that can mitigate bias and stereotype threat. It also yielded a set of useful lessons about the work of hiring for diversity and excellence, including the importance of defining diversity and monitoring the candidate pool throughout the hiring process; the need for building relationships across the sector that can be used for recruitment; and the challenge of basing judgments of candidates in evidence, not intuition. As we engaged in an effort to learn from our practice, we discovered a way in which our core competency as assessment designers translated to a strength in designing authentic performance tasks for interviews; and a way in which our interview process reflected and contributed to our ongoing effort to learn how to articulate our commitment to equity and justice. We also identified an opportunity to get to know the identities of our current team members, which might enable us to better benefit from the diversity we already have. Finally, we learned about some steps we can take to better position ourselves to learn from practice in the future.

Coda: Proposed Action Plan for Communications Coordinator Search

This paper discussed TeachingWorks' first implementation of STRIDE guidelines, in spring 2016. This implementation was limited, in part because it was our first implementation, and in part because we learned about began using the STRIDE framework when the hiring process was already underway. Since that first effort, we have further developed our practices for hiring for diversity and excellence – and our organizational capacity to implement those practices – through hiring for three additional positions during summer 2016. Now, we have an opportunity to continue to strengthen our hiring practices as we engage in an upcoming hiring process for a communications coordinator.

TeachingWorks initially chose to use the STRIDE framework to guide our efforts to hire for diversity and excellence because it offers a set of practices that are designed to intervene in the routines of predominantly white organizations, which typically produce hires that are demographically similar to existing staff. Unlike other approaches, which focus developing hiring committee members' mindsets about diversity, STRIDE focuses on changing practice. The STRIDE approach works precisely because it does not rely on the mindsets of those engaged in the hiring process; instead, it offers a set of practices that support diversity in hiring even when used by committees that feature a range of mindsets about diversity.

In this sense, this practice-based approach to hiring for diversity parallels TeachingWorks' practice-based approach to teacher education, which is rooted in the premise that novices become quality teachers not – or, not only – by developing the mindset that all students can and deserve to learn at high levels, but by engaging in thoughtfully designed experiences that enable them to practice the skills that are most critical to beginning teaching (Ball & Forzani, 2009). Similarly, STRIDE mitigates stereotype threat and evaluation bias not – or, not only – by developing the hiring committee members' *mindsets* about diversity, but by engaging hiring committee members in *practices and routines* that reduce the influence of bias on committee members' judgments.

TeachingWorks is committed to this practice-based approach to hiring for diversity and excellence. At this stage of our work on hiring, we have learned the basics of the practices that STRIDE recommends. Learning those basics, through four hiring processes, has helped us to operate in a way that is less influenced by the biases we bring. Now, as we approach hiring for the communications coordinator position, we have an opportunity to become more effective in our implementation of those practices.

The following is a proposed action plan for the communications coordinator search that answers the question: *What steps can TeachingWorks take to make ourselves an organization that uses STRIDE processes more effectively?*

This action plan focuses on what the hiring committee does, not what its members believe, but it does identify an opportunity to strengthen our implementation by making connections between the work of the hiring process and the beliefs that its implementers bring.

Proposed Action Steps

1. Set the expectation that the candidate who is hired will experience a learning curve on some aspects of the job

In the ELA & mathematics specialist hiring process discussed in this paper, hiring committee members struggled to navigate a perceived problem that candidates who do not have experience in practice-based teacher education – a predominantly white field – will not be ready to do the work of the position on our timeline. This concern about time could arise in the hiring process for any position whose work is critical, and all positions especially in a small organization are critical, so as we approach the communications coordinator search it is important that we have a plan for how to manage that concern.

One way to manage this concern is for the leadership of TeachingWorks to set the expectation, from the beginning of the process, that any candidate who is hired will face a learning curve of about six to eight months. This position is unique and complex enough that there simply are not candidates out there who already have the specific mix of knowledge about the field of teacher education, skills in communications, marketing, and social media, and experiences with the range of audiences we aim to support and influence, that it requires. A candidate who brings one aspect will need to learn others – so a candidate who brings skills and experience working with media and developing social media strategy but not experience in practice-based teacher preparation will face a similar learning curve to one who brings deep experience working with teacher educators and education media, but limited experience with social media strategy.

The director of TeachingWorks can set this expectation in her directions to the hiring committee. She might ask the hiring committee to delineate which desired characteristics we believe that a candidate can learn, with coaching and support on the job in a six- to eight-month period, and which the candidate needs to bring with them.

2. Clearly and concretely define how the work of the communications coordinator position contributes to TeachingWorks' mission to advance equity and justice

TeachingWorks is committed not just to having a team with the diversity our work requires, but also with the capacity to articulate a commitment to

diversity, equity, and inclusion and integrate that commitment into our work. In the hiring process I studied and in subsequent ones, we developed performance tasks and asked interview questions to assess candidates' capacities in this area. One thing we have not systematically done is to develop a shared perspective, as a hiring committee, on how we see the work of the position as contributing to TeachingWorks mission related to diversity, equity, and justice.

By engaging in this practice can prepare each of us to be better assessors of candidates' skills in, and will help us as a committee to norm our expectations of candidates' performances in this area.

There are two tasks the hiring committee might perform in support of this goal:

- Make a list. As a hiring committee, make a list of the ways in which the work of the communications coordinator position bears on the work of diversity, equity, and justice at TeachingWorks. Include specific examples or scenarios.
- Perform the tasks. Each hiring committee member might individually do the performance tasks and answer the interview questions that we pose to candidates related to the ways in which they see the work of communications contributing to TeachingWorks' mission related to diversity, equity, and justice. Hiring committee members should then share their responses, and notice themes and differences among them. This sharing and debriefing can help the committee decide what evidence they are looking for to evaluate candidates' performances.

3. Strengthen our practices related to grounding assessments of candidates in evidence, not intuition

In the hiring process I studied, different teams used our candidate evaluation tool in different ways, and some did not rate candidates against it. There may have been problems in the way the tool was constructed or in the process we used to prepare ourselves to use it which explain this outcome. As we approach the communications coordinator hiring process, we have an opportunity to remedy these, enabling us to use the tool for its intended purpose: reducing the impact of intuition, which is particularly subject to bias, on hiring decisions.

There are several steps we might take in support of this goal:

- Create and enforce a norm about evidence. With all participants in the hiring process – not just those on the hiring committee, but all who will meet finalists – create and enforce a norm that we are expecting that judgments be grounded in evidence not intuition, and that we expect

participants who are giving feedback on candidates to offer evidence from candidates' performance for their judgments. Remind participants of the reason for this – that intuition is particularly influenced by implicit bias.

- Define criteria and norm on ratings. Devote hiring committee time to defining the criteria on the candidate evaluation tool, and norming on the rating scale. Ensure that hiring committee members agree with the criteria on the tool, and revise the language if not.
- Use the evaluation tool in hiring decisions. Use candidate evaluation tool ratings in making decisions about which candidate to offer positions to.

4. Create a leadership structure for monitoring hiring committee practices and keeping the focus on our goal to hire for diversity and excellence

A challenge that we encountered in the ELA and math specialist hiring process last spring was that we struggled to navigate perceived tensions that arose between our goal to hire for diversity and the demands of our regular project work. At some moments during the process, we took shortcuts on practices recommended by STRIDE because we felt we did not have the time to fully implement.

Though we knew that the director of TeachingWorks believes deeply in the importance of diversity and in the practices STRIDE recommends, because she did not participate as a hiring committee member, she was not able to redirect the hiring committee work when tensions led us to take shortcuts.

One way to mitigate this in our upcoming effort might be to involve the director as a member of the hiring committee who participates in each stage of the hiring process, and can help the committee to prioritize the recommendations of STRIDE framework against other issues that come up. But, setting aside the question of whether this would be feasible given the other demands on the director's time, this approach has a drawback: it locates the organization's commitment with its director personally, rather than with the organization and its leadership more broadly.

An alternative might be for the director of TeachingWorks to create a structure that represents our leaders' and our organizations' commitment to mitigating bias and stereotype threat in our hiring process. This might be a committee of 2-3 staff whose role is to check the practices of the hiring committee against the STRIDE framework, and surface any discrepancies for discussion at pre-identified milestones of the process, such as when decisions are made to identify candidates for in-person interviews, to reduce the pool to a small number of finalists, and to make offers to candidates. This committee might be comprised of some staff who participate on the hiring committee and some

who do not. The committee does not need to include the director of TeachingWorks, but should report directly to her, like a kind of ombudsman for the hiring process.

5. Initiate a reading/working group on defining the connection between diversity and excellence in supporting the work of teacher educators

There is a large research base about the importance of diversity in the teaching force, and the importance of increasing the number of teachers of color. This research base supports the view that diversity and excellence in the teaching force are inextricably linked; a teaching force that is not diverse cannot be excellent.

TeachingWorks has said that the same is true at the level of our core audience – teacher educators – and at our own level, as supporters of the learning of teacher educators. In interviews for this paper, my TeachingWorks colleagues offered a set of rationales about why diversity is important to our work, including that our identities shape the way that we teach, and that we are more likely to see strengths in others who share our identities. Though individual members of our team have ideas about why being a diverse team is necessary to our work, we have not developed a shared rationale for diversity or statement about what makes it critical to our conception of excellence.

At moments when we encountered tensions during the ELA and math specialist hiring process described in this paper, it would have been helpful to have a common definition of and rationale for diversity to ground our efforts. Though our approach relies more on practice than on beliefs, a collective statement about what makes diversity essential to our practice could help us make connections between our own beliefs and mindsets and the hiring practices we are asked to engage in.

One way to go about this might be to initiate a reading and working group charged with examining the research on diversity and group performance in general and in the fields of teaching and teacher education in particular, and with developing a statement about how diversity and excellence intersect in the work of TeachingWorks in particular. The reading and working group might be comprised of five to seven TeachingWorks staff who would engage in this effort intensively, and then design experiences for the whole TeachingWorks staff to engage with the research, examine and give feedback on the statement, and ultimately adopt it (or a revised version of it).

This work may demand that participants talk more directly about race than is typical in staff meetings at TeachingWorks. Participants in the group may find that they need support in learning how to talk about race. One set of norms and practices for learning how to do this can be found in *Courageous Conversations* (Singleton, 2006), but TeachingWorks might also consider

supporting this practice by engaging external facilitators like Pacific Educational Group or National Equity Project to support this learning.

This reading/working group effort would take place over a longer period than the communications coordinator search would, but initiating the effort at the same time as we initiate the search would send an important signal to all staff participating in the hiring process. And by initiating this effort now, we can prepare to have this research and statement ready when the communications coordinator begins her work – positioning her to be more successful in her work to communicate about diversity, equity, and justice.

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Appendix A: Learning Organization Survey

From learning.tools.hbr.org

Building Block 1: Supportive Learning Environment

Psychological Safety

In this unit, it is easy to speak up about what is on your mind.

If you make a mistake in this unit, it is often held against you.*

People in this unit are usually comfortable talking about problems and disagreements.

People in this unit are eager to share information about what does and doesn't work.

Keeping your cards close to your vest is the best way to get ahead in this unit.*

Appreciation of Differences

Differences in opinion are welcome in this unit.

Unless an opinion is consistent with what most people in this unit believe, it won't be valued.*

This unit tends to handle differences of opinion privately or off-line, rather than addressing them directly with the group.*

In this unit, people are open to alternative ways of getting work done.

Openness to New Ideas

In this unit, people value new ideas.

Unless an idea has been around for a long time, no one in this unit wants to hear it.*

In this unit, people are interested in better ways of doing things.

In this unit, people often resist untried approaches.*

Time for Reflection

People in this unit are overly stressed.*

Despite the workload, people in this unit find time to review how the work is going.

In this unit, schedule pressure gets in the way of doing a good job.*

In this unit, people are too busy to invest time in improvement.*

There is simply no time for reflection in this unit.*

Building Block 2: Concrete Learning Processes and Practices

Experimentation

This unit experiments frequently with new ways of working.

This unit experiments frequently with new product or service offerings.

This unit has a formal process for conducting and evaluating experiments or new ideas.

This unit frequently employs prototypes or simulations when trying out new ideas.

Information Collection

This unit systematically collects information on

- competitors
- customers
- economic and social trends
- technological trends

This unit frequently compares its performance with that of

- competitors
- best-in-class organizations

Analysis

This unit engages in productive conflict and debate during discussions.

This unit seeks out dissenting views during discussions.

This unit never revisits well-established perspectives during discussions.*

This unit frequently identifies and discusses underlying assumptions that might affect key decisions.

This unit never pays attention to different views during discussions.*

Education and Training

Newly hired employees in this unit receive adequate training.

Experienced employees in this unit receive

- periodic training and training updates
- training when switching to a new position
- training when new initiatives are launched

In this unit, training is valued.

In this unit, time is made available for education and training activities.

Information Transfer

This unit has forums for meeting with and learning from

- experts from other departments, teams, or divisions
- experts from outside the organization
- customers and clients
- suppliers

This unit regularly shares information with networks of experts within the organization.

This unit regularly shares information with networks of experts outside the organization.

This unit quickly and accurately communicates new knowledge to key decision makers.

This unit regularly conducts post-audits and after-action reviews.

Building Block 3: Leadership That Reinforces Learning

My managers invite input from others in discussions.

My managers acknowledge their own limitations with respect to knowledge, information, or expertise.

My managers ask probing questions.

My managers listen attentively.

My managers encourage multiple points of view.

My managers provide time, resources, and venues for identifying problems and organizational challenges.

My managers provide time, resources, and venues for reflecting and improving on past performance.

My managers criticize views different from their own.*

* Reverse-scored items

Visit learning.tools.hbr.org for a short version of this survey and for recommended lists of learning resources that are tailored to your results. For the complete interactive tool, including scoring, go to los.hbs.edu.

Appendix B: Job Description

Note: Versions of this job description were also posted under the titles ELA Postdoctoral Fellow, Mathematics Postdoctoral Fellow, and Mathematics Research Specialist

Posting Title: English Language Arts Research Specialist

Job Title: Research Area Specialist Intermediate

Full/Part Time: Full-Time

Salary Range: \$75,000-\$85,000

Job Summary

TeachingWorks seeks a subject-area specialist(s) in elementary/and or secondary English Language Arts (ELA) to provide expertise to a variety of projects and collaborate with other staff and faculty members at TeachingWorks in three general areas of work:

- Facilitating teacher educator learning and professional development, and building community among diverse groups of teacher educators
- Supporting teacher educators in redesigning coursework and clinical experiences based on the TeachingWorks high-leverage practices (19 instructional practices that new teachers should be able to do well by the time they start teaching), and on Content Knowledge for Teaching
- Designing resources for teacher educators to use in the initial preparation of teachers, including: video exemplars, curriculum materials, and performance assessments and scoring rubrics

The specialist(s) will support TeachingWorks' partnerships with teacher education programs across the country, including in programs participating in the Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers Initiative. The specialist(s) may be based at the TeachingWorks office in Ann Arbor, MI, or may work remotely. The specialist(s) will be expected to travel up to 30-50% of the time, including to partner sites and the TeachingWorks office (depending on the specialist(s)' home location).

The specialist(s) will contribute ELA expertise to the above projects, analyze existing research, and collaborate with others who represent a variety of disciplinary backgrounds and areas of teaching expertise. Although the work is likely to continue to fall into the categories named above, it will also evolve over time and may include opportunities to collaborate in the conduct of research. Qualified applicants will also have the opportunity to collaborate with others in the field to develop tools and research on teaching and teacher education.

Required Qualifications

Applicants must have at least 3 years of K-12 teaching experience, and a strong background in teacher education and/or professional development. Applicants should also have experience coaching teachers, and designing, developing, and/or implementing professional training programs for teachers. Applicants should have deep knowledge of Common Core State Standards (or College and Career Ready Standards) and content knowledge for teaching in ELA. Applicants should also have knowledge and experience in early reading instruction and language development, reading comprehension instruction and research, and/or writing instruction and research. Applicants should also have experience adjusting curriculum and pedagogy to the specific assets and demands of demographically and culturally distinct contexts.

Applicants should possess excellent organizational and interpersonal skills, personal initiative, and the ability to work in a fast-paced, energetic environment. Applicants should also be able to

interpret research data and findings and clearly and accurately communicate complex or technical information to a variety of audiences, both orally and in writing. Excellent writing and other communications skills and a strong orientation toward collaborative work are also essential. Applicants must also demonstrate an ability to attend to multiple projects simultaneously and meet deadlines.

TeachingWorks is particularly seeking candidates who bring experience and expertise in promoting diversity and equity, and whose experience with teaching and/or with teacher education has involved demographically diverse or underserved populations and/or communities.

Desired Qualifications

A doctorate in education or a related field is preferred but not required. Knowledge of the current education policy context, particularly as it relates to teacher education, is strongly preferred. Experience coaching teacher educators is strongly preferred.

Mission Statement

The mission of TeachingWorks is to transform how teachers are prepared for responsible entry-level practice so that all students receive skillful teaching. The organization designs and studies materials and approaches for preparing teachers, offers training for people who teach teachers, and maintains a broad agenda of public education and engagement.

Application Deadline

Job openings are posted for a minimum of seven calendar days. This job may be removed from posting boards and filled anytime after the minimum posting period has ended.

U-M EEO/AA Statement

TeachingWorks at the University of Michigan School of Education is an equal opportunity employer with a strong institutional commitment to the development of a climate that supports equality of opportunity and respect for diversity. The program is seeking candidates who bring experience and expertise in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The program seeks to be supportive of the needs of dual career families, and is interested in individuals who may have had non-traditional career and academic paths.

Appendix C: Candidate Data Collection Tool

This tool is based on the STRIDE template. The purpose is to think more deliberately by assessing subcriteria rather than making holistic judgments based on intuition, which is more influenced by bias. Note: we would not look for each candidate to be “excellent” in each area, but we would want to look for skills across multiple criteria.

Interviewer’s name: _____

Candidate’s name: _____

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

- ☐ Read candidate’s CV
- ☐ Read candidate’s cover letter
- ☐ Conducted phone interview with candidate
- ☐ Watched/reviewed candidate’s professional development task
- ☐ Watched/reviewed candidate’s video analysis task
- ☐ Read/reviewed candidate’s email task
- ☐ Participated in content team interview with candidate
- ☐ Spoke with candidate’s references
- ☐ Other (please explain):

Please rate the candidate on each of the following:

| Criteria | Excellent | Good | Neutral | Fair | Poor | Unable to judge |
|---|-----------|------|---------|------|------|-----------------|
| Ability to engage adults in content in a PD setting | | | | | | |
| Knowledge of and experience with preservice teacher education | | | | | | |
| Knowledge of / ability to adapt to practice-based teacher education | | | | | | |
| Content knowledge | | | | | | |
| Orientation towards equity and diversity is well-articulated and integrated into the candidate’s work | | | | | | |
| Has a growth learning stance, and recognizes opportunities to learn from others with different perspectives | | | | | | |
| Brings a complementary but different skill set/set of experiences from current team members | | | | | | |
| Communicates well and connects with people | | | | | | |
| Ability to give feedback | | | | | | |
| Can thrive in a space where things aren’t clearly defined | | | | | | |

Other comments:

Appendix D: Sample In-Person Interview Schedule

| Time | Event |
|-------|--|
| 9:00 | Welcome & introductions |
| 9:15 | Professional Development session Prep time (15 mins) Delivery (30 mins) Debrief (15 mins) |
| 10:15 | Break |
| 10:30 | Watching a video of Instruction Watch video and prepare to discuss (30 mins) Group discussion (20 mins) |
| 11:20 | Interview |
| 11:50 | Closing Discuss follow-up performance task |

Appendix E: Summary of Technical Feedback on In-Person Interview

| Interview Component | Constructive Feedback |
|--|---|
| Performance Task #1: Professional development session | <p><u>Inauthentic time constraint</u>: Candidates were given 30 minutes to deliver a mock professional development session. Interviewers acknowledged that length of time was inauthentic, but that acknowledgment was not enough to alleviate concerns about what to do with that amount of time. Both candidates and interviewers suggested extending the mock professional development session to 45 or 60 minutes. The preparation time could be reduced or eliminated; candidates did not know they would have this and did not necessarily need it.</p> <p><u>Video chat</u>: Some candidates reported that there were TeachingWorks staff watching their session over video chat. They were not notified in advance that there would be remote participants, and found it surprising and stressful to encounter this in the moment.</p> <p><u>Taking notes</u>: Some candidates noticed that interviewers were not taking notes during the session, and wondered whether the debriefs would be based in evidence.</p> <p><u>Introducing everyone in the room</u>: Some candidates observed that there were some observers who did not introduce themselves, or only introduced themselves with their name but not their role at TeachingWorks. This was confusing and it was unclear who was evaluating the candidates.</p> <p><u>Setting expectations about audience size</u>: One candidate reported being told that eight to ten people would be participating their session, but only two were actually there. This surprise was unsettling.</p> <p><u>Clarifying the audience</u>: One candidate reported being confused about whether the audience for the task was teacher educators or teachers.</p> <p><u>Consistency in follow up questions</u>: Some interviewers noticed that different follow up questions were asked of different candidates. In particular, some candidates were asked how their presentation reflected their commitment to equity and social justice, while others were not.</p> |
| Performance Task #2: Watching a video of instruction | <p><u>Clarity of expectations</u>: Several candidates reported finding this task very open-ended. They were unsure of what was expected from the video analysis, or what to focus on. One said that s/he thought that there would be a discussion of the video, but actually the interviewers just asked questions, and she just answered them. An interviewer wondered if the prompt should more explicitly ask candidates to identify strengths of the teacher in the video.</p> |
| Performance Task #3: Responding to an email from a colleague | <p><u>Email vs in-person response</u>: Some candidates and interviewers suggested that in a real-life scenario, they would respond to the email in the task in person or via phone, rather than in writing. Should we consider adjusting the task to allow for this? One interviewer noted that an email response does not assess how actively a candidate would fight for equity; an in-person scenario would assess this better.</p> <p><u>Deadline</u>: The deadline for this task was flexible. The intention was for candidates to have 24 hours to work on it after arriving home, but</p> |

| Interview Component | Constructive Feedback |
|---------------------|--|
| Other | <p data-bbox="581 289 1386 407">because of prior commitments and travel schedules, different candidates had different deadlines. One candidate reported having a flexible deadline stressful, and said she wished that the deadline had been more clearly set.</p> <p data-bbox="581 428 1425 514"><u>Guidance about bringing in personal values:</u> One respondent suggested that the prompt be more explicit that this task is an opportunity for candidates to share their own personal commitments and values.</p> <p data-bbox="581 552 1382 669"><u>Advance communication of expectations:</u> Candidates reported that advance communication about what would be expected during the interview day was clear and helpful, and reduced stress on interview day.</p> <p data-bbox="581 690 1419 808"><u>Time to learn about TeachingWorks staff:</u> Some candidates felt that while the interviewers learned a lot about them, they did not get enough opportunities to learn enough about current TeachingWorks staff and the work they do.</p> <p data-bbox="581 829 1425 974"><u>Timing of interviews:</u> Some interviewers expressed a concern that there may have been an inequity between candidates who were interviewed at the beginning vs the end of the process, because some had to wait longer than others for a decision. Could we condense the interviews into a shorter time range?</p> <p data-bbox="581 995 1425 1052"><u>Mitigating stress of travel:</u> Flight delays made travel stressful. Might it be better to fly in the day before to reduce this stress?</p> |