

Call for Manuscripts Spring 2027

Title/Theme:

Amplifying Youth Voice in Teacher Preparation: Generation Z and the Future of the Profession

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The Call:

The *Journal of Teacher Education (JTE)*, the flagship publication of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, is seeking proposals for a Special Issue for Volume 78, Issue 2. This Special Issue examines the intersection of Generation Z's distinctive characteristics and their emerging role as the next generation of teachers and teacher candidates, foregrounding youth voice and the lived experiences of Gen Z preservice and early-career teachers as central to redesigning teacher education for the years ahead.

Generation Z—broadly defined as those born between 1997 and 2012 (Twenge, 2017)—is already participating in grow-your-own early career programs at their high schools or entering teacher preparation programs, which marks the early years of their profession—bringing with them what Hughes and Bunney (2025) describe as a unique resilience, deep comfort with technology, a sense of empathy, and an activist mindset. Scholars such as Chandler (2023) have noted that Gen Z educators expect strong voice and autonomy in the workplace alongside meaningful feedback and support—orientations that have direct implications for how teacher education programs are designed and delivered. The Southern Regional Education Board's 2024 report, *The Next Generation of Teachers* (Booker et al., 2024), further documents that understanding Gen Z's interests, motivations, and expectations is essential to addressing the broader teacher workforce pipeline. Research from the Walton Family Foundation and Gallup's (2024) Voices of Gen Z study underscores that this generation's engagement and well-being are closely tied to relationships with mentors and a sense of belonging—themes that resonate deeply with the mission of *JTE*.

At the same time, scholarship has emphasized that authentic engagement with this generation requires more than accommodating their preferences; it calls for centering student and youth voice as a substantive design principle within teacher education itself. A growing body of work has demonstrated that integrating student voice into preservice preparation can reposition power relations in the classroom (Petrone et al., 2020), strengthen culturally responsive pedagogies (Faison, 2026; Richmond et al., 2024), and reshape how teachers conceive of their professional practice (Conner, 2022; Conner et al., 2024; Proffitt et al., 2025). For Gen Z teacher candidates—who themselves were recently students and who often expect to have a voice in their own education and workplaces—these student-voice traditions take on renewed urgency.

Despite the rapid growth of commentary about Gen Z, comparatively little empirical scholarship has examined how teacher education programs can purposefully draw on this generation's strengths—activism, digital fluency, empathy, and a strong sense of civic responsibility (Keegan & Vaughan, 2023; Parker & Igielnik, 2020)—while also responding to the very real challenges these candidates face, including systemic barriers and access to the profession, mental health pressures, financial insecurity, and concerns about workplace conditions (Stark et al., 2025). There remains a significant gap in scholarship examining how teacher education programs can amplify youth voice within their own design, center the experiences of Gen Z preservice and early-career teachers, and prepare candidates whose worldview, communication patterns, and professional expectations differ markedly from those of prior generations.

This Special Issue addresses that gap by inviting empirical, theoretical, and policy-oriented manuscripts that engage Gen Z as both a subject of study and a partner in shaping the future of teacher preparation. Contributions will examine how teacher education must evolve to meet this generation's strengths and needs across coursework, clinical experiences, mentoring relationships, induction supports, and institutional structures. Consistent with *JTE*'s commitment to rigorous scholarship and equity, submissions will be expected to engage with the increasingly complex issues facing teacher preparation at the national and global levels. Collectively, contributions to this Special Issue aim to:

- Advance conceptual clarity by theorizing generational identity and youth voice as core dimensions of teacher preparation design;
- Center the experiences, perspectives, and aspirations of Gen Z preservice and early-career teachers in scholarly inquiry;
- Examine how mentoring, induction, and institutional culture can foster belonging, retention, and well-being for Gen Z educators;
- Provide empirically grounded and conceptually robust models to inform the redesign of teacher education programs that recruit, prepare, and sustain the next generation of teachers.

The Challenge:

By foregrounding Generation Z as both subjects and co-architects of teacher education, this Special Issue seeks to shape future research agendas and support more coherent, responsive, and equity-oriented approaches to preparing the next generation of teachers. Submissions may address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Gen Z teacher candidates' motivations, identities, civic and political commitments, and trajectories into the profession;
- Youth and student-voice methodologies—such as co-design, participatory action research, and pedagogical partnership—as approaches for engaging Gen Z teacher candidates in the design of their own preparation;

- Mentoring, induction, and early-career supports that respond to Gen Z's expectations for feedback, autonomy, belonging, and well-being;
- Curriculum, clinical experiences, and assessment practices that draw on Gen Z's digital fluency, activism, and orientation toward equity;
- Institutional, cultural, and policy conditions shaping how teacher education programs recruit, retain, and sustain Gen Z teachers, particularly those from historically underrepresented communities;
- Tensions, dilemmas, and intergenerational dynamics that emerge when Gen Z teacher candidates encounter veteran teachers, teacher educators, and school cultures shaped by earlier generational norms;
- Comparative, international, and design-based studies examining how teacher education systems are adapting—or failing to adapt—to the next generation of educators.

All submissions should engage explicitly with teacher preparation as the primary site of inquiry, with a focus on the professional knowledge, pedagogical practices, and program-level structures that shape preparation for and with Generation Z, rather than focusing solely on Gen Z as P–12 learners. This special issue also welcomes studies that examine how teacher candidates and practicing teachers learn from and respond to Gen Z K–12 students' voices, identities, communication styles, and expectations, particularly when such learning informs teacher preparation, field experiences, mentoring, and professional development.

The Approach:

In addition to an open call for manuscripts, we also intend to invite articles from scholars who have been leading voices on Generation Z, youth voice, and teacher preparation. A community of policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, with particular interest in grow-your-own teacher preparation programs, apprenticeships, induction, and workforce policy, will engage in this Special Issue, leading to transformative discussions about this timely topic. We will also propose a panel session at the 2027 AACTE Annual Meeting where some of these scholars will be presenters.

Manuscript Guidelines:

The Special Issue welcomes contributions from diverse international contexts and methodological traditions, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Authors are encouraged to submit manuscripts that meet the following criteria:

- All manuscripts must be fully blinded to ensure a reliable review process.
- All manuscripts must meet publishing guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual (7th edition, 2019).
- A manuscript, inclusive of references, tables, and figures, should not exceed 10,000 words.
- No more than one manuscript submission per author.

- We kindly ask authors to also serve as reviewers for other submissions. Given your expertise as a scholar in this particular topic, your peer review feedback is extremely valuable.
- For additional *JTE* guidelines for the manuscript, please go to:
<https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/jte>

Timeline for Submission:

A. August 31, 2026: Manuscripts must be ‘publication-ready’ quality to qualify for desk review. Authors should submit their manuscripts through Sage's ScholarOne Manuscripts portal at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jteachered>. During submission, please select "78.2 - Special Issue: Generation Z and Teacher Preparation" from the menu when prompted to identify the manuscript type. Manuscripts that do not select this designation may be routed to the general review queue and will not be considered for the Special Issue.

B. September 30, 2026: Authors are notified with a decision on their manuscript. As a condition of preliminary acceptance, authors are expected to serve as a peer reviewer for other manuscripts submitted to this Special Issue. This reciprocal commitment ensures the quality and timeliness of the review process and reflects the collaborative ethos of the scholarly community we hope to convene.

C. November 15, 2026: Peer reviews are completed.

D. Noon (CST) Monday, November 30th, 2026: All final manuscripts must be received in the Sage online system for consideration of publication in *JTE*'s Vol 78 Issue 2. The publication date is tentatively targeted for March 2027. Email your questions to jte.aacte@tamu.edu and the subject line should read: ‘JTE, Gen Z Special Issue’.

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