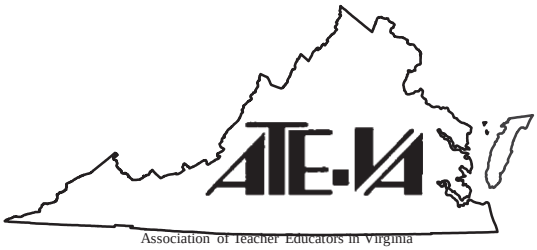
The Teacher Educators' Journal



A Journal of the Association of Teacher Educators - Virginia

Spring 2022
Volume 15
Issue 1

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Editors' Welcome

From frustration to innovation: Considering new practices and approaches for teacher education as post-pandemic pedagogy

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As we, the new editorial team for *The Teacher Educators' Journal*, began writing the introduction to this Spring 2022 issue, the world was ending its second year of the global COVID-19 pandemic and bracing for what direction the pandemic would take in its third year. For the past two years, so much of what we think and know about education has undergone changes due to the pandemic. Key terms and words have emerged to describe these new conditions of teaching and schooling: uncertainty, normality, disruption. Mindful of these changing conditions, we are focusing on a different keyword for this Spring 2022 issue and our forthcoming Summer 2022 issue not always associated with these pandemic-related conditions: innovation. Our call asked for manuscripts that considered some form of innovation in teacher education, and in response, we received a surprising number of submissions from authors throughout Virginia, the United States, and the world. The editorial work of evaluating the submissions, assigning them for peer review, assessing the reviewer feedback, and accepting a number of manuscripts for revision and publication was so prodigious that we concluded two issues for this volume would be necessary to showcase the compelling and exciting innovations

occurring in teacher education that were described in these articles. While we present these articles with enthusiasm and optimism for their potential to shape teacher education, we acknowledge that much of this innovative work resulted from the necessity of responding to the rapid changes and uncertainties the pandemic has wrought. We assume no educator wants to hear the word 'pivot' mentioned any time soon. Nonetheless, the articles in this issue and the following summer issue point to the work teacher educators have been doing throughout two years of crisis and change.

How does the idea of innovation sustain the necessary work of teacher education? A focus on innovations in teacher education may strike some as out of place or out of touch with the realities educators and teacher educators have faced since March 2020. Many teacher educators have not had the time, capacity, or resources to innovate. Instead, these educators had to focus on survival and adaptation and might not have seen these unprecedented times as the time to innovate. However, the etymology of the word 'innovation' suggests more than an innovation as a mere curiosity or shiny new idea. Innovation is derived from the Latin verb innovare: to renew. When we think of an innovation, we think of an idea, a practice, a product, or an outlook aimed at improving something or replacing an existing thing with something newly invented. If we think of the word innovation as a renewal, however, the terms of what an innovation is and what an innovation can do begin to change somewhat. Each of the innovations presented in this issue, and in our Summer 2022 issue, attempts to improve or perfect something wrong, missing, or defective in teacher education and renew what is most important, vital, and crucial to sustaining our values in teaching and teacher education. To be sure, there is no shortage of things to improve, replace, and revise in teacher education programs and in the practices of preparing teachers. We offer these innovations not merely as immediate fixes to

deeply broken and wounded aspects of teacher education we have seen inflamed during the pandemic. Instead, we offer these innovations as an opportunity to consider how we may begin the task of renewing our work as teacher educators, renewing the hopes and dreams of the teacher candidates with whom we work, and renewing our commitments to the core values and beliefs we hold as teacher educators—values and beliefs that too many of us may feel have been neglected, diminished, or are under attack.

We debated using this introduction to call attention once more to the various attacks affecting teachers, their teaching, and teacher education. These attacks range from attempts to silence the voices and hide the lives of queer and trans people, attempts to ban books and reading as windows into the world, and attempts to censor and ignore hard histories of racism and violence all societies must continually confront and address. Sadly, these attacks are now painfully known all too well by teachers and teacher educators, librarians and youth workers, and the young people and their families and communities racing to support them. We do not need to document every instance, for, most worrisome of all, new attacks appear almost daily, popping up like wildfires across the country.

Some of the articles in this volume's two issues address directly and fully such serious issues. For example, in their article "Interrupting Microaggressions, Bias, and Injustice in Social Studies Pre-Service Teachers' Field Experiences," Emma Thacker, Ashley Taylor Jaffee, Aaron Bodle, Mira Williams, and Kara Kavanagh discuss approaches to increasing the capacities of preservice teachers in recognizing and interrupting microaggressions as they occur in schools. This innovative approach applies equity literacy, microaggression theory, and microinterventions to discussions around critical cases. Schools are complex systems where students and educators come together to explore, question, and enact learning. However, they are not bias- or

discrimination-free institutions. The purpose of these case study discussions is to support preservice teachers in understanding how they might challenge and interrupt microaggressions, both witnessed and experienced, in social studies classrooms and the school community.

Similarly, Leslie La Croix, Sehyun Yun, Marion Taousakis, Bweikia Steen, and Julie Kidd show us another model of critical support in their article "'I Wished I Could Have Higher Scores': Guided Study Groups to Prepare Prospective Teacher Candidates for High-Stakes Teacher Licensure Exams." Their innovation stems from concerns about how teacher candidates' underperformance on teacher licensure exams can serve as a gatekeeper for keeping students with exceptionalities, multilingual learners, and those from historically minoritized and marginalized communities out of the teaching profession. Teachers from historically minoritized and marginalized populations have long been underrepresented in classrooms, and the field of teacher education as a whole recognizes the need to recruit and retain a diverse body of educators who more accurately reflect a more increasingly diverse American classroom. Though there are many reasons for this underrepresentation, one facet of this issue is the underperformance of preservice teachers on exams required for state licensure. La Croix et al. discuss an innovation they developed to explicitly confront this issue for students who had exceptionalities, were multilingual learners, and/or identified as being from a historically minoritized or marginalized community within an early childhood education program. Guided study groups as a form of professional learning were used to increase students' self-efficacy and use of meaningful test-taking strategies on a high-stakes licensure exam.

Self-efficacy is also at the heart of Felice Atesgolu Russle's article "Becoming a Teacher of English Learners: A Case Study." Enrollment of multilingual learners in US schools has steadily increased over the last several decades, necessitating changes in teacher education

standards and certification requirements to ensure all preservice teachers are prepared to meet their needs. In this article, Russell describes a study in which course-embedded learning opportunities were leveraged to help preservice teachers develop a better sense of their roles and responsibilities in teaching multilingual learners. One example of this innovation was the use of "Studio Days," in which students both observed and participated in small group instruction within a linguistically diverse classroom to inspire discussion and facilitate meaning-making around the content related to multilingual learners being taught in a literacy methods course. Data for the study was collected both during the course and into the first year of teaching for two of the preservice teachers - noting not only the short-term but also the longer-term impacts of this innovation on teachers' mindsets and pedagogies in becoming teachers of multilingual learners.

Issues to consider for multilingual learners also appears in "Examining the Role of Self-Reflection as an Impetus for Cultivating Equitable Practices for Multilingual Learners" by Ekaterina Koubek and Stephanie Wasta. To best meet the needs of today's students, educators must utilize culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies in their classrooms. However, connecting theory to practice can be a challenge, especially as we seek to move beyond conceptualization and toward the enactment of such pedagogies. Koubek and Wasta explore how community-based learning experiences can foster deeper reflection and understanding of teaching multilingual learners in graduate-level preservice teachers. Their students developed asset-based perspectives and fostered more authentic partnerships with families through this innovation. Their engagement in self-reflection enabled them to apply what they had learned about culturally responsive pedagogy to their work with multilingual learners.

The challenges of the pandemic have significantly heightened the need to think about how teachers communicate with the families and caregivers of their students. In "Preparing

Teacher Candidates for Successful Communication with Diverse Families Using Simulations," Julie J. Henry, Corrine Kindzierski, Shannon Budin, Anne Marie Tryjankowski, and Alyssa R. Henry call our attention to this critical need by thinking through this issue with the Association of Teacher Educators' standards of Cultural Competence (Standard 2) and Collaboration (Standard 6). The authors ask teacher educators to consider the value of more realistic methods to prepare teacher candidates for enacting best practices for collaborating with families and building cultural competence to communicate with families. However, teaching, modeling, and practicing such skills with teacher candidates seemed nearly impossible in the first few months of the pandemic. Within a few months, teacher educators searched for technology-based solutions to achieve these ends. This article teaches about one such technology: the TeachLivETM simulation. This virtual simulator is designed to provide a fully immersive environment where the teacher candidates engage with avatars that appear as and perform as an actually existing parent and caregiver who can see, talk, and respond with teacher candidates in real-time. The promising findings from this study may help other teacher educators consider and implement virtual simulations with their teacher candidates in the future.

Nevertheless, technological innovations are not always virtual and simulated. In "Teacher Education in Novel Times: Designing Comic Strips to Explore Elementary Learners' Experiences during COVID-19," Aaron R. Gierhart shares findings from a case study of two preservice elementary education teacher candidates. Through the teacher candidates' design of comic strip narrative artwork and engaging in productive dialogue, the two preservice teacher candidates, Maureen and Sydney, learn to reflect on the experiences of their students during the pandemic. The struggles of teaching students online become vividly clear as we read about the two preservice teachers' development of empathy and contextual understanding. Gierhart's

article takes a time-honored, and cherished art form, the comic strip, and innovatively uses it to highlight the benefits of engaging in arts-based teaching, learning, and research practices.

Innovation also appears in moments when we attempt to think differently about traditional methods of teaching, learning, and assessment. For example, most teacher education programs routinely and continuously tweak the assessments they use with their teacher candidates and the various instruments used with teacher candidates, especially in site-based clinical experiences. The pandemic provided an opportunity to question what we assess and measure in our teacher education programs. In “Examining the Validity of a Student Teaching Evaluation Instrument,” we see such questioning and examination at work. In their article, Sarah P. Hylton, Jacob D. Joseph, Thomas J. Ward, and Christopher R. Gareis report on their study of an instrument used to evaluate teacher candidates during their student teaching experience. Using exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, the authors examined responses from cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and student teachers to better determine this instrument’s validity. The authors’ findings from studying this instrument underscore how high the stakes are for teacher educators emerging from this pressure cooker pandemic environment to be ready at the call for engaging in policy conversations regarding teacher education programs' curricula, goals, and aims.

One of the many devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was its exacerbation of the already-tense and troubled relationships between racial and ethnic groups within the United States that played out in disturbing rises of antisemitism, anti-Asian violence, white supremacy, and other forms of hateful discrimination. Teachers, teacher educators, and their respective schools were not immune from any of these disastrous developments, and teacher education programs, in concert with many colleges' and universities' diversity, equity,

and inclusion initiatives, have in the wake of national protests in 2020 taken on vital work to disrupt and confront racism and bias in our work. In their article "Exploring the Nature of Teacher Educator Attitudes and Engagement Within an Anti-Bias Community of Practice," Charlotte D. Blain, Ariel Cornett, and Judy Paulick discuss the experiences, perceptions, and outcomes of studying a two-day workshop on anti-bias teacher education. Focusing on the engagement with and expression of (dis)comfort during a two-day workshop on anti-bias teacher education, the authors attend to the diverse ranges of engagement teacher educators expressed in this workshop, included in this issue for its rich analysis of communities of practice (CoPs) as an innovation in teacher education. Through their research findings, Blain et al. carefully point out the need to balance innovative aspirations with realities that do not always uphold the intended aims. In the case of this study, the participants in the workshop most open to changing their practice toward anti-bias work were the ones most likely to have already been ready and open to such changes in their practices, whereas the participants who entered this workshop with some hesitation ended up displaying some resistance to the aims and goals of the workshop. Nonetheless, the authors encourage teacher educators to continue such work to provide preservice teachers with realistic and responsive learning environments that could help foster and support the needed introspection teacher candidates must develop to confront bias and use their teaching to oppose opposition to bias.

We hope readers find this collection of articles inspiring, engaging, and thought-provoking. Reading them together, our sense of hope and optimism for teacher education's future feels replenished and reinvigorated. While we are still weary and worn out from our work, we are ready and determined to keep doing this good work. The 'doing' of teacher education is what sustains us, and it is exemplified in the myriad ways the teacher educators in these articles

‘do’ innovative teacher education: through exploring, designing, preparing, examining, preparing, becoming, and interrupting the practices, problems, and possibilities of teacher education.

The Teacher Educators' Journal

Published by the Association of Teacher Educators –Virginia

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Exploring the Nature of Teacher Educator Attitudes and Engagement Within an Anti-Bias Community of Practice

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Abstract

This study explored how members of a community of practice of teacher educators from a diversity of institutions across one state engaged in and expressed (dis)comfort during a two-day workshop on anti-bias teacher education. Using a qualitative, single-case embedded design, we found that there was a range of engagement with the workshop content that is consistent with how most people engage with anti-bias content: Participants who came into the workshop eager to reflect and adapt their practice were apt to do so, while those with initial hesitations tended to display some resistance. We also observed a shared desire to find common ground, support each other, and collaborate in service of professional improvement. This work has implications for the development of teacher educators who are prepared to teach anti-bias content to future teachers.

*Keywords***:** anti-bias, teacher education, community of practice

Recent events such as the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the widespread misconstrual of Critical Race Theory have underscored the need for anti-racist teaching and learning. Anti-racism necessitates “persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination" (Kendi, 2019). Bias is at the heart of the kinds of discrimination that can damage teaching and learning, negatively influencing students’ opportunities and achievement (Kumar et al., 2015). In opposition to this, anti-bias education serves as an “underpinning perspective” (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2019, p. 6) in which teachers continually reflect about the impact of their instruction and work to combat bias in themselves and the interactions that take place in their classrooms (Derman-Sparks, 2016). By providing anti-bias teacher education

to pre-service teachers (PSTs), teacher preparation institutions (TPIs) have the opportunity to prepare teachers to enter the field better equipped to support all students and ready to grow into anti-racist educators.

Anti-bias teacher education is broadly defined as education for PSTs that builds "inclusion, positive self-esteem for all, empathy, and activism in the face of injustice" (Lin et al., 2008, p. 189). TPIs serve as a space where PSTs can develop beliefs, attitudes, and practices related to anti-bias education (Lin et al., 2008). Furthermore, PSTs tend to benefit from scaffolded, hands-on experiences facilitated by TEs in their TPI coursework that focus on anti-bias education (Devine et al., 2012). Nevertheless, there are often logistical, ideological, and cultural constraints in TPIs that deter TEs from teaching this content, including a reluctance to engage with topics that are uncomfortable (Ladson-Billings, 2015) or for which TEs lack training (Genor & Schulte, 2002). A promising first step to having a workforce of anti-bias educators is to prepare TEs to effectively train PSTs (i.e., through their TPI coursework). Previous studies have shown that communities of practice (CoPs) can be impactful sites in which TEs can do such reflective and innovative work (Anthony et al., 2018; Curcio & Schroeder, 2017).

Anti-Bias Teacher Education

Anti-bias teacher education often appears within multicultural education courses and includes a focus on recognizing and confronting one's own biases through connecting with students' diverse families and communities in order to instruct more equitably. However, very few multicultural education courses focus specifically on family engagement. Successful family engagement instruction includes, but is not limited to, growing PSTs' knowledge of diverse families (e.g., characteristics and historical context) and PSTs' skills for engaging them (e.g., collaboration and communication; Gerich et al., 2017) and providing opportunities for PSTs to

be immersed in students' diverse cultures through tasks such as home visiting and role-playing (García et al., 2009). In other words, family engagement is an underutilized space for developing anti-bias dispositions.

PSTs tend to show discomfort or resistance around certain areas of anti-bias instruction. These include topics such as race, family, religion, and culture (Smith & Glenn, 2016). Additionally, PSTs often express discomfort during discussions wherein their views could be interpreted as biased (Smith & Glenn, 2016). Extant research provides instructional strategies that may decrease PSTs' hesitation to self-reflect and speak about their own biases. Reflection is key (Gerich et al., 2017); PSTs may reflect more openly when TEs give them opportunities to process privately through writing, share in pairs, and then discuss as a whole class (Smith & Glenn, 2016). Also, exposing PSTs to an anonymous third party's biased views can allow PSTs to distance themselves from those views enough to critique them (Genor & Schulte, 2002). Conversely, by providing PSTs with first-hand accounts of people from marginalized identity groups, TEs can allow PSTs to empathize enough with those sharing so as to rescind their previously biased views (Genor & Schulte, 2002). Successful anti-bias instruction of PSTs may also include directly addressing PSTs' self-efficacy beliefs and fears regarding family engagement (Gerich et al., 2017).

Collaboration Among Teacher Educators

A limited number of studies have explored the ways in which TEs collaborate to reform practice. Occasionally, collaborative efforts involve intentionally-formed communities of practice (CoPs), which aim to reform practice in a group of participants (Wenger, 1998); however, many collaborations are not specifically CoPs and are instead formed more organically. Whether CoPs or not, these collaborative groups allow TEs to reflect on their practice (Curcio &

Schroeder, 2017), share ideas across fields or institutions (Kluth & Straut, 2003), and apply knowledge to practice (Au, 2002). Collaboration can have a strong positive impact on TEs' instructional and academic effectiveness (Anthony et al., 2018; Curcio & Schroeder, 2017).

CoPs and other forms of TE collaboration can increase instructional rigor (Anthony et al., 2018), lower isolation among TEs and PSTs (Curcio & Schroeder, 2017), and bridge practice across divergent fields (Kluth & Straut, 2003). Collaboration can also allow members at various stages of their careers to engage in continuous learning. Within collaborative TE groups, studies show that conflicts may not detract from the group's cohesion – in fact, dissension can be productive and help all of the members to grow stronger and more reflective (Curcio & Schroeder, 2017). However, some research also shows that strong group cohesion can result in "downward leveling norms," where the majority discourages individuals from pursuing divergent perspectives (Portes, 1998, p. 17). Therefore, group awareness and intentionality are crucial: members need to be mindful of the potential for individuals to compromise the group's goals and must consciously uphold their collective standards.

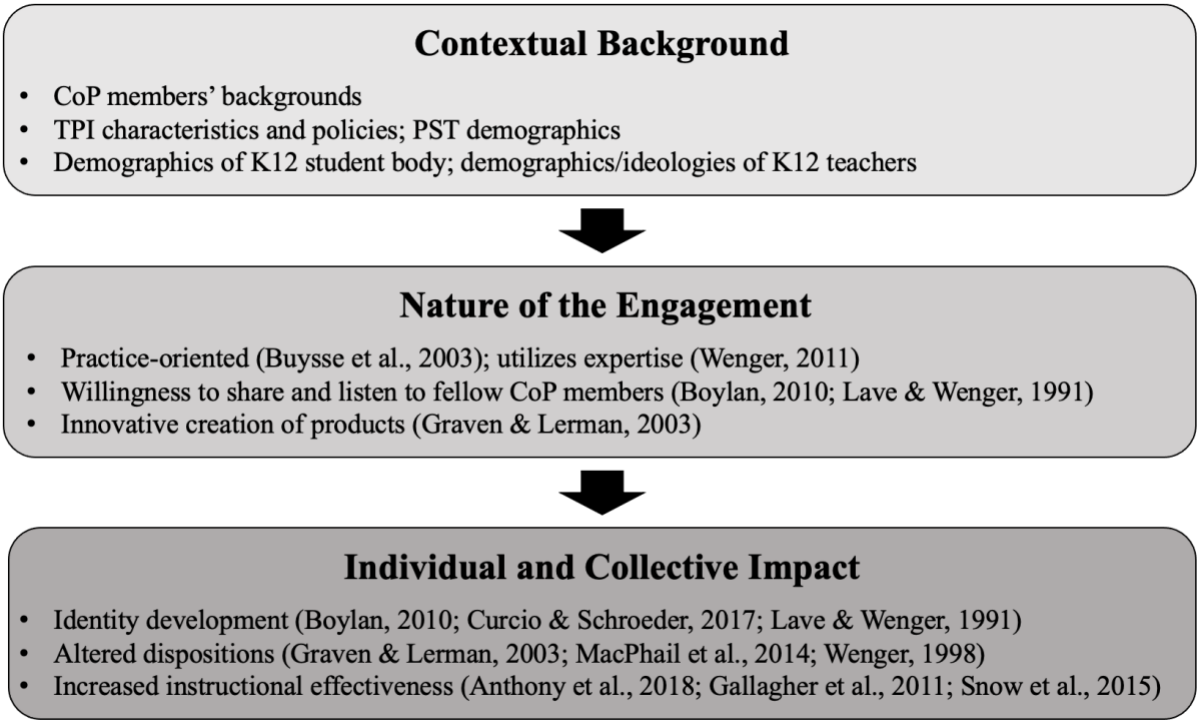
Conceptual Framework: Communities of Practice

A CoP is a group of individuals who convene around a topic of interest to reflect on and collectively reform their practice. Members from varying backgrounds "share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 1998, p. 1). In CoPs, members draw upon their individual expertise to inform their mutual engagement through "joint activities and discussions, help[ing] each other, and shar[ing] information" (Wenger, 2011, p. 2). CoP members openly share their personal knowledge and experiences while also listening to that of their fellow CoP members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This authentic communication allows for innovation (Buysse et al, 2003; Graven & Lerman,

2003) and for vulnerability in the face of new learning (Anthony et al., 2018). Scholars note that increased trust and support within a CoP can enhance the conditions for creativity as well (Graven & Lerman, 2003). As our framework shows (see Figure 1), the characteristics of participating TEs and their TPIs merge to influence the nature of engagement that occurs in the CoP, and this then impacts the individual members and the field at large.

Figure 1

Teacher Educator Communities of Practice



Methods

We employed a qualitative, single-case embedded design (Yin, 2017) to explore how participants engaged and expressed (dis)comfort in a two-day workshop on anti-bias teacher education in the summer of 2019. The 'case' for this study was the anti-bias education TE CoP, where the embedded units of analysis were the individual TEs from different TPIs. The goal of the workshop was to iterate an anti-bias module with CoP members that each TE would then

implement with PSTs in their Elementary Teaching Seminar ("Seminar") courses. The module itself was intended to provide PSTs with opportunities to: a) explore their own cultural identities and articulate an expansive definition of culture (Hammond, 2014); b) understand implicit bias and reflect on their own biases (Milner, 2003); c) identify cultural assets in families and resources in communities (López, 2007); and d) engage in productive and positive relationship-building home visits with students' families (Parent Teacher Home Visit Project, 2007) as well as conduct community resource visits. The workshop began with the TEs participating in the module as learners, themselves. We hired an external facilitator -- a Black woman who was an equity specialist, administrator, and former classroom teacher in a local school district -- to lead the majority of the workshop sessions with researcher support so that the researchers could participate as CoP members.

We explored the following research questions:

1. How do TEs' background experiences with and expectations about module content (i.e., anti-bias education and family engagement) shape their engagement within an anti-bias TE CoP?
2. What module content provokes comfort and discomfort for TEs?

Researcher Positionality

The three authors are white, middle-class women who have attended or served as a professor at a TPI in the same state as the other CoP participants. The first author is pursuing her Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. She serves as a teaching assistant in a Seminar with the third author. The second author served as a teaching intern in the Seminar course with the third author while she pursued her Ph.D. The third author is an assistant professor and teaches a Seminar course.

Participants

In this study, we utilized purposive sampling to recruit four TE participants into the CoP (see Table 1). They work at four different TPIs: Red, Blue, Purple, and Yellow Universities. The following participant descriptions provide context for the interactions described in the findings.

May Ordibehesht

May is a Middle Eastern woman who completed her Bachelor of Science (B.S.) and Master of Arts (M.A.) degrees in school counseling in Iran. She obtained a Ph.D. in early childhood education. For a total of 13 years, May was a school counselor and pK teacher. She has been a tenure-track assistant professor at Red University since 2017. May was interested in participating in the workshop to add "new lenses and more comprehensive aspects" to her courses (Survey, 4/5/20).

Lucy Evans

Lucy is a white woman who received a B.A. in elementary education and religion as well as a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in reading. For a total of eight years, she was an elementary teacher. She has been at Blue University for six years and is currently an assistant professor and coordinator for the Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.Ed.) program. Lucy was interested in participating in the workshop to collaborate with "colleagues at other institutions" (Survey, 7/27/19) because she wanted to learn "how other universities prepare students throughout their program."

Jane Davis

Jane is a white woman who received a B.A. and M.T. in elementary education as well as a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction. For a total of five years, she was an elementary teacher. Jane has been at Purple University for ten years serving as Assistant Director and then Director

of Education Studies; now, she is a tenured associate professor. Jane was interested in participating in the workshop in order to connect with colleagues and promote anti-bias work: "Ultimately, it is a benefit to myself, my institution, my students, and their future students" (Survey, 7/24/19).

Marian Lane

Marian is a white woman who has a B.S. in elementary education (i.e., pK-6) as well as an M.Ed. and Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in curriculum and instruction. She was an elementary teacher for 18 years and then served for seven years as Yellow University's assistive technology coordinator. She has been at Yellow University for the past 15 years and is currently a full professor and elementary education program leader. Marian was interested in participating in the workshop in order to learn "what others are doing and ways to improve [her] teaching and [Yellow University's] pre-service program" (Survey, 7/29/19).

Table 1

TE Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Demographics and Personal Background	Professional Background in Education (pK-12 or Higher Ed)	TPI Location
May	Female, Middle Eastern, Muslim, Iranian, middle class, Persian/Farsi, 34 years old	17 years: school counselor, pK teacher, tenure-track assistant professor	Small city within a rural area
Lucy	Female, white, Christian, U.S.-born, middle class, English, 46 years old	15 years: elementary teacher, assistant professor, and program coordinator	Mid-sized city within a suburban area
Jane	Female, white, non-religious, U.S-born, upper-middle class, English, 40 years old	16 years: elementary teacher, associate professor, assistant program director, and program director	Large city within an urban area

Marian	Female, white, Christian, U.S.-born, middle class, English, 61 years old	41 years: elementary teacher, university assistive technology coordinator, professor, and program leader	Small city within a rural area

Context and Data Collection

We collected a variety of data sources. First, TEs completed a pre-workshop survey including 11 open-response questions. Then, during the two-day workshop, we collected detailed observational field notes on the TEs' interactions with the workshop content as well as with one another. The TEs completed two mid-workshop reflections consisting of several open-ended questions. They also completed a post-workshop survey containing three open-response questions about their experiences with the anti-bias workshop and their intentions for future anti-bias work. We followed up with participants at a conference held eight months after the anti-bias workshop to reflect upon module implementation as well as to gather updated participant information.

Data Analysis

We analyzed the open-ended survey questions, observation field notes, and reflections with a grounded theory, iterative approach followed by open coding in order to develop categories and cluster topics (Merriam, 2009). We discussed areas of disagreement, refined the codebook, and re-coded in Dedoose until we reached 78% agreement. We used data triangulation (i.e., surveys, observation field notes, reflections) to develop larger themes and identify disconfirming evidence, which together informed our study's findings.

Findings

We found that among our range of TEs' personal and professional characteristics there was a variety of approaches to the anti-bias work and collaboration itself. These differences

included how often and how vociferously participants chose to speak up and reflect during the workshop, as well as how and when participants demonstrated discomfort and vulnerability. We also observed a shared desire to find common ground, support each other, and collaborate in service of being better TEs. In this section, we present these findings.

Speaking Up Versus Listening

The four TE participants engaged deeply throughout the workshop; however, the levels and types of engagement and the background experiences from which participants drew differed. Some TEs were more willing to share personal stories, whereas others only spoke about practical or theoretical facets of the work. For example, May shared about her experience both as a religious minority and a professor and stressed the importance of TEs "advocating for people without a voice" (Field Notes, 7/29/2019). Jane, who was once uncomfortable being a first-generation college student, shared that she had gradually developed self-acceptance. She tells her students, "Not only is it okay that these are your roots, but we *need* you in education" (Field Notes, 7/29/2019). These participants' personal experiences allowed them to connect with the content of the workshop.

Participants' ways of listening also differed throughout the workshop, perhaps related to their individual attitudes, experiences, and beliefs. At times, participants listened very receptively, eager to learn. During the workshop, May shared with Lucy about being Irani and Muslim and her experience living on the other side of the world from her family. Then, Lucy asked (with regard to the Trump-era travel bans), "Do you see your family?" Lucy listened intently to May's responses, potentially curious about May's first-hand experience of racism that differed from Lucy's experience. Lucy and May had very different cultural backgrounds, and the

bulk of this partner interaction was spent with May sharing and Lucy listening, exemplifying a learner stance.

Sharing Discomfort and Vulnerability

Across the workshop, participants shared varying accounts of discomfort and vulnerability. The external facilitator set the tone for the workshop on the first day with: "If it doesn't make you uncomfortable, I'm not doing my job" (Field Notes, 7/29/2019). The group agreed. Soon after, Marian suggested "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas" as a norm for the group; this indicated a desire for discretion. She explained that she was still learning and processing anti-bias content. May responded that Marian might receive some push-back from the group, but push-back is part of the process. The group agreed that both discretion and risk-taking (i.e., challenge) were important.

One topic that seemed to elicit discomfort among TEs was whiteness and white privilege. In a discussion about aspects of identity associated with privilege, the facilitator noted that whiteness could increase access to educational opportunities. At this point, May slumped down in her chair, partially hid her face in her clothes, folded her arms, and looked away, showing physical signs of discomfort. Jane, on the other hand, shifted the conversation to the topic of socio-economic status rather than race as a lever for opportunity. She shared that, being a first-generation college student, she did not know she could ask colleges for additional financial aid. In these examples, it is clear that whiteness elicited discomfort and avoidance among participants.

Seeking Cohesiveness

Participants consistently sought cohesiveness among the group. When one or more TEs vocalized resistance to new techniques, other members of the group chimed in to seek consensus

and accommodate differing views. For example, when Jane conveyed apprehension about training PSTs to *celebrate* diversity, since some PSTs were "not even *tolerating* yet," May conceded, "Maybe you *do* have to get to 'tolerate' before you can get to 'celebrate'" (Field Notes, 7/29/2019). At other times, the group was even more forceful in seeking accord. When the group began discussing having PSTs conduct home visits during their teaching internships, Marian was wary, saying that having PSTs visit some neighborhoods would "probably be okay," but not other neighborhoods. In direct response to Marian's resistance, May shared a strategy she used to prepare her PSTs for multicultural encounters and then directly countered Marian with, "I definitely support (home visiting)" (Field Notes, 7/30/2019). Regarding TPI approval for home visiting, Jane shared how she planned to "ask forgiveness and not permission" and offered a compromise: "Lots of kids have activities, like dance practice. Could I go to something like that?" (i.e., conduct a home visit in a public setting). Marian agreed that this was also potentially a good strategy for meeting more than one family at a time.

Later, as the group prepared to sort through materials and discuss the module, participants collaborated to craft the essential questions. There was discomfort and disagreement as the team collectively honed the questions. The participants negotiated the questions that they were each going to work on. Within a few minutes, each individual had been able to uniquely contribute to the module and the group as a whole.

Committing to Collaboration

Prior to the workshop, Marian, Lucy, and Jane indicated that the collaboration itself was their main motivation for attending the workshop (Survey, 7/27/19). Marian expressed in her post-workshop survey that she appreciated being able to "learn [from colleagues] and wrestle with new ideas." Lucy agreed, describing the first day of the workshop as particularly important:

"I appreciated the opportunity to collaborate and learn from other people's experiences." Jane reflected on the comfort of doing this difficult work in an anti-bias TE CoP: "It was incredibly useful to spend two days with other [TEs] who struggle with how to help our [PSTs] understand issues of identity and bias. It is comforting to know that others face the same struggle." While these participants were enthusiastic about the product, it was the process they were particularly eager for. After the workshop, the same three participants were hopeful that the group could continue to collaborate. Although May's main priority in participating was to gather resources to use with her students, more than to reflectively collaborate, she did indicate that the work together had been useful: "It helped us to reflect on our biases and more about ourselves as a critical first step" (Survey, 7/29/19).

The collective desire to collaborate was notable given the variation across the contexts. The four TEs compared and contrasted the courses where the module would fit into, revealing stark contrasts in their contexts (e.g., levels of instructor autonomy and length and modality of courses). However, all TEs expressed challenges working at TPIs where the PSTs were largely homogeneous in regards to demographics (i.e., white and female) and had similar background experiences. Overall, the participants left the workshop eager to support each other in their work implementing the module and integrating home visiting, in particular, into their individual programs.

Discussion

Consistent with prior literature, we found that there was a range of TEs' personal and professional experiences and a range of engagement with the workshop content (Genor & Schulte, 2002); furthermore, CoP members sought cohesiveness and collaboration with one another when given the opportunity (Buysse et al., 2003; Curcio & Schroeder, 2017; Graven &

Lerman, 2003). In terms of TEs' expectations, participants who came into the workshop eager to reflect and adapt their practice were apt to do so, while those with initial hesitations tended to display some resistance and avoidance (e.g., with the topics of white privilege and home visiting; Snow et al., 2015). In other words, the TEs' interactions and engagement with anti-bias education and family engagement (i.e., module content) were consistent with those of PSTs. Therefore, professional development for TEs might benefit from similar goals as anti-bias work for PSTs, including considerations of the TEs' contexts, background experiences, and expectations.

Anti-Bias Teacher Education

While prior studies (O'Hara, 2007) addressed PSTs' experience with anti-bias topics, the present study explored TEs' engagement both as participants and as future facilitators of an anti-bias module. TEs' willingness to be vulnerable as participants in the module can build their capacity to empathetically navigate this process with PSTs. For example, Jane was able to reflect on her own experience as a first-generation college student, and she could articulate how she planned to leverage her own experience to encourage PSTs (Field Notes, 7/29/2019).

TEs' capability to relate to PSTs' experience with anti-bias teacher education may be nuanced by the extent to which TEs share demographic identities with PSTs. Research suggests that when white PSTs are taught by a TE of color, they temper their openness during anti-bias reflections (Smith & Glenn, 2016). In the present study, while not a TE-PST interaction, when Jane (a white TE) interacted with a Black facilitator on the topic of racism, she avoided the topic of white privilege and changed the subject to socioeconomic status (Field Notes, 7/29/2019). All but one of the present study's CoP members were white women, and multiple of these white members expressed discomfort with pushing their PSTs to celebrate diversity and visit the homes

of families with marginalized identities. While not overt, this implies an ongoing need to address TEs' own biases towards marginalized PSTs, K-12 students, and families. More research is needed to explore how TEs implement anti-bias modules with PSTs of demographics that differ from their own.

This anti-bias module was consistent with prior research on home visiting as a promising method of family engagement (García et al., 2009; Lin & Bates, 2010). During the workshop, some of the CoP members expressed willingness to implement home visiting with their PSTs; others demonstrated resistance, including concerns with the logistics and policies surrounding home visiting. This resistance aligned with the literature on PSTs' perceived barriers to implementing multicultural curricula in their future classrooms (Van Hook, 2002), as TEs expressed concern about TPI and school district policies. This reveals the need to adapt the anti-bias module to match the diverse characteristics of TEs' TPIs (and the TEs, themselves).

Communities of Practice

Overall, the aspects of a successful CoP that were productive within this group of TEs—professionals with a variety of experiences and diversity of contexts—were the space and time to share experiences and build resources. Our CoP members came from different institutional contexts across a single state, so they were able to compare and contrast their experiences and contexts and collectively strategize implementing parts of the anti-bias module. In particular, they discussed how to communicate with administrators within their TPIs and how they could work with largely homogenous (i.e., white, female) groups of PSTs. The differences between CoP members in their personal and professional backgrounds allowed for richer conversations among the group (Wenger, 1998).

The TEs also had differing levels of professional experience; newer TEs brought fresh ideas—like requiring relationship-building home visits—and more experienced TEs brought professional savvy from years of experience in teacher education (e.g., how to negotiate with administrators; Lave & Wenger, 1991). CoP members' different personal backgrounds enhanced individuals' experiences (e.g., Lucy learning from May's experience as an immigrant; Field Notes, 7/29/2019) and the CoP as a whole (e.g., agreeing on norms of discretion and risk-taking based on members' experience-based suggestions; Field Notes, 7/29/2019). CoP members were able to capitalize on the personal and professional differences they discovered because they shared a common goal of reforming their practice (Wenger, 2011), thus leveraging their differences to fuel their collective work (Buysse et al., 2003). Given this cohesiveness, even outright disagreement among CoP members provided an opportunity to deepen the group's thinking and strengthen the group's framing of certain parts of the anti-bias module (e.g., "tolerate" versus "celebrate;" Field Notes, 7/29/2019; MacPhail et al., 2014). However, while the desire to build consensus allowed for the group to continue the work, it is possible that cohesiveness also resulted in "downward leveling norms" (Portes, 1998, p. 17). The possible negative effects of group cohesion within anti-bias TE CoPs merit further study.

Based on this study's findings, a worthwhile next step would be to investigate the implementation of the anti-bias module in the Seminar courses of this study's participating TE CoP members. As this study found, TEs would need to adapt the content and logistics of the module to accommodate their individual TPI and PSTs' characteristics. Researchers could also explore how PSTs experienced the module, including in-depth interviews to gauge participants' nuanced understandings of and responses to the content. Additionally, future studies could explore TEs' use of anti-bias CoPs among PSTs in teacher preparation courses, perhaps

alongside implementation of the anti-bias module. TEs could set up small groups of PSTs who would meet regularly as a PST CoP to discuss the module's anti-bias concepts and their application. These in-class CoPs could provide PSTs with a candid, reflective environment within which to introspectively confront bias (both their own and institutional) and adapt their teaching practice accordingly (Gerich et al, 2017; Smith & Glenn, 2016).

Limitations

The scope of this study did not include data collection regarding TEs' PSTs in their Seminars, their coursework, or their reactions to or implementations of the module. Additionally, because we wanted to create a secure workshop space in which participants could share candidly, we relied on workshop field notes collected by one of the researchers rather than recordings, which limited the level of detail collected in the data. Future studies could utilize video recording to capture the nonverbal and verbal interactions and reactions of CoP members with the anti-bias workshop and each other.

Conclusion

The TE CoP in this study provided TEs with an opportunity to collaboratively expand upon their understanding of anti-bias topics (Wenger, 2011). This study's findings are an important starting point to explore how CoP members' expressed attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions carry through into their practice. The need for anti-bias work is increasingly crucial. Since the occurrence of this workshop, the U.S. has experienced a renewed call for the end of systemic racism and bias. Teachers must interrogate their own beliefs and attitudes to disrupt their own biases and move toward anti-racist teaching (Kendi, 2019; Lin et al., 2008). TEs are teachers, too; thus, a vital starting point for this work is with the TEs who train PSTs.

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Teacher Education in Novel Times: Designing Comic Strips to Explore Elementary Learners' Experiences during COVID-19

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Abstract

This case study was conducted in Fall 2020 with two Elementary Education pre-service teaching candidates. The goal of the study was to better understand how students in this course developed new insights about teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic through their successful design of comic strip narrative artwork. The students created comic strips depicting the experiences of diverse elementary students during the pandemic, which were displayed in a campus art gallery. Data sources included two focus group interviews, written reflections, participants' final comics from the gallery, and other artifacts. Analysis was framed using Eisner's (1985/2005) concept of 'aesthetic knowing.' Findings regarding the insights the participants developed through this assignment were presented in the following themes: pedagogical perspectives, dialoguing, and audience. Conclusions and implications include a call for greater uptake of and research about arts-based teacher education assignments to better prepare candidates to enter the field as agents of change.

Keywords: teacher education, design, art

In Fall 2020, I began a faculty position in an Elementary Teacher Education program at a mid-sized state university in Georgia. The contexts and premises of what my fourth-year undergraduate Elementary Education students in my science teaching methods course had come to understand about teaching and learning had been upended to say the least.

Within the school district in which these teaching candidates were placed for field hours, teachers were working with classes split between face-to-face and virtual attendance at the discretion of students' parents/guardians. Teachers significantly increased their use of digitally-mediated teaching and learning approaches (OECD, 2020). Vaccines and efficacious treatments for COVID-19 were not readily available in the United States; facial coverings, social distancing, and rigorous hygiene practices were the few available virus mitigants (CDC, 2021).

Having had my final year as a full time elementary classroom teacher cut short by the pandemic before my career transition, I empathized with the challenges these teaching candidates would confront in meeting the many needs of elementary learners in their practicum work. I began to brainstorm ways for my students to consider the impacts of the pandemic on the K-5 learners they would work with that fall.

It was important for these candidates to engage in critical reflection about how the pandemic had impacted different facets of teaching and learning, particularly the experiences of diverse students.

In alignment with objectives of my elementary science teaching methods course regarding inquiry-based science teaching and learning, equitable participation of diverse learners, and fostering the development of science process skills, I assigned readings and facilitated course discussions and activities in which students considered these impacts on all learners. For example, the students designed science WebQuests in which elementary learners would engage in active science inquiry in digitally-mediated ways and design a product of learning using technologies. In formulating these plans and virtual materials, the students and I discussed accommodations needed for students who may not have developed the digital media skills or have adequate home support.

In collaboration with an art professor at my institution, I designed “The Diversity Art Project.” The assignment objective was for these teaching candidates to highlight an issue elementary learners were facing during the ongoing pandemic by designing a short comic strip narrative; students were encouraged to consider needs of specific groups of learners, particularly those to whom they might relate, have observed, or directly worked with in the field. The art professor suggested comic strips as a fruitful medium for this project given its accessibility to a

wide variety of artists and readers (Akcanca, 2020). Also, comic strips offered the students a unique opportunity to creatively present and construct narratives through visuals and words, utilizing "panels to express the passage of time" (Eisner, 2008, p. 25) between pre-COVID and pandemic times.

In preparation for their artistic engagement, the students listened to a 2020 episode of NPR's *Short Wave* podcast titled "The Science Behind Storytelling;" the episode details the relatable, cognitively engaging power of sharing and listening to stories as a means of understanding lived experiences of scientific engagement. Students participated in two workshops with the art professor in which they learned techniques for drawing and inking their comics, organizing them into panels, and designing cohesive narratives.

They shared and discussed drafts before submitting a final comic strip at the end of the course, which was scanned and professionally printed for display in an on-campus, publicly-visible window gallery. This project aligns with Standards 1 (Teaching) and 7 (Public Advocacy) of the Association of Teacher Educators (2008) Standards for Teacher Educators.

Given the dynamic shifts in public school contexts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher educators cannot rely on past approaches to coursework design (Goldhaber & Ronfeldt, 2021). Novel times call for innovation to effectively prepare candidates to foster equitable participation for face-to-face and virtual learners, critically considering their diverse needs and life experiences (Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to better understand how students in my course aesthetically developed new insights about teaching amidst the pandemic through their successful completion of the comic strip assignment. The research question for this study was:

How do elementary pre-service teaching candidates develop new insights about teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic through the design and creation of comic strip narrative artwork?

Literature Review and Framework

Arts-based approaches to reflection and participating in professional "Discourses" (Gee, 2008, p. 2) can be viewed as divergent from traditional forms of teacher education to which institutions and candidates have become accustomed (Dixon & Senior, 2009). The process of artistic discovery can challenge teaching candidates, especially if they do not see themselves as artistically-inclined (Shugurova, 2019). They draw upon their conceptions of schooling informed by past experiences as students (Bertling, 2019), complicating their art-based reflection and construction of new pedagogical meaning.

However, I harken Bruner's (1986) call for narrative understanding as an alternative to positivistic knowledge, leveraging artistic engagement and expression for teacher education students. Candidates can workshop approaches and ideas for artistic work alongside peers and instructors, satisfying their "affiliative needs" (Allport, 1955, p. 32) as they find their place in a profession in which they seek induction (Bjorkland, Jr., et al., 2020; Gierhart, in press).

Eisner (1979) argued that teachers often view pedagogy and the act of teaching as an artform, as decisions made in real time to effectively meet students' needs require "skill and grace" (p. 153). An arts-based lens can support the conceptualization of pedagogy and the process of learning to teach, viewing one's experiences in dialogue with and relation to each other rather than in an isolated, prescriptive manner (Dall'Alba, 2009; Dewey, 1994; Rugg, 1952). I theorized about the students' engagement through Eisner's (1985/2005) proposition of the "aesthetic [mode] of knowing" (p. 96), framing the findings of this study in terms of

reflection and insights the participants designed in the process of creating their comic strips (New London Group, 1996).

Past studies have shown that approaches to teacher education coursework that incorporate comics and graphic novels have been conducive to fostering aesthetic understanding. For example, Lewkowich (2019) reported that his teacher education students made affective connections and engaged in deep reflection on adolescence by reading and discussing two graphic novel texts, applying their insights to contemporary educational contexts. Sockman et al. (2016) shared promising findings from a study in which graduate students in an educational technology course designed digital comic strips depicting technology integration issues in classroom settings. It was found that the students were able to engage in critical reflection around issues related to digital pedagogy and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), especially as the activity was paired with relevant course readings.

It is through the stories we tell that we work through perceptions and past and present feelings as we consider future action (Brockbank & McGill, 2006). Designing comic strip artwork can serve as a means of engaging teaching candidates in forming "critical stances through and around texts" (Marlatt & Dallacqua, 2019, p. 18) about novel issues and problems of practice.

Each candidate's journey of "becoming pedagogical" (Gouzouasis et al., 2013, p. 2), was disrupted and complicated by the pandemic, laden with new and previously inconceivable challenges. Therefore, learning how pre-service teaching candidates' design and creation of artwork, such as comic strip narratives, support their aesthetic development of new insights about teaching during these novel times is incredibly relevant. In designing art for our public-facing gallery, they considered pre-COVID and present-day circumstances of teaching and

learning in the elementary classroom setting, "[conferring] aesthetic order upon our world...to make that world hang together, to fit, to feel right, to put things in balance, to create harmony" (Eisner, 1985/2005, p. 100).

It is through the arts and knowing aesthetically that new insights left uncovered by traditional "paradigmatic" (Bruner, 1986, p. 14) means can be illuminated, advancing pedagogical development (Eisner, 1991) and the construction of new meaning (Bruner, 2004). Teaching and making meaning of teaching as art can open new discourses and possibilities about what constitutes "excellence" (Eisner, 1979, p. 166) as we strive to forge educational equity for all learners in these evolving times (Ellis et al., 2020; Flores & Gago, 2020; Goldhaber & Ronfeldt, 2021).

Research Design

A single, "intrinsic" (Stake, 2003, p. 136) case study was conducted in order to describe and understand the phenomenon of interest during the Fall 2020 semester at a mid-sized state university in Georgia (Yin, 2010). Students enrolled in my elementary science teaching methods course were purposively solicited for this study due to their involvement in the comic strip assignment (Andrade, 2021). They were informed that their decision about participating in the research study would not impact their grade in the course, nor their academic standing (Glesne, 2010).

The case that was ultimately studied consisted of two students, Maureen and Sydney (pseudonyms). Their coursework in this semester required 90 hours in a local elementary classroom in which they participated in classroom activities and taught lessons across the curriculum. Participant demographic information is included in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Name	Age	Race	Gender	Field Placement
Maureen	22	White/Caucasian	Female	4th grade
Sydney	21	Hispanic/Latinx	Female	1st grade

Multiple forms of data were collected in order to establish validity and fully describe the participants' aesthetic engagement and insights (Moore et al., 2012; Stake, 2003; Yin, 2010). Two focus group interviews were conducted using semi-structured protocols with open-ended questions focused on the participants' perceptions of the comic strip design process and what they took from it (Yin, 2009). The first focus group interview took place at the end of the Fall 2020 semester and the second during the participants' student teaching experience in Spring 2021 after they had visited the gallery at which their work was displayed. Follow-up questions were posed to extend the discussion from the initial focus group regarding their design choices, pedagogical reflection, and potential insights about or applications to field-based practice (Taylor et al., 2016).

Artifacts were collected from the participants' processes of designing their comic strips (Yin, 2009, 2010), including drafts, sketches, and relevant blog-based reflection posts. Finally, scanned copies of the participants' final comic strips were collected. Utilizing artifacts from the participants' artistic engagement contributed to the authentic portrayal of their experiences in completing the comic strip assignment (Burkette & Warhol, 2020). During the initial focus group

interview, each of the participants' final comic strips were displayed on the screen as a means of provoking rich discussion around their artwork and intended messages (Torre & Murphy, 2015).

The focus group interviews and blog-based reflection entries were coded in several rounds to increasingly construct understanding of the case (Williams & Moser, 2019; Woo, 2016). First, open coding was conducted in a spreadsheet followed by axial coding in which the codes were revised upon additional readings and review; then, selective coding was conducted to through the theoretical lens of 'aesthetic knowing' (Eisner, 1985/2005) in order to frame and present the results of the analyses to a wider audience (Hays & Singh, 2012). The participants' drafts and final submissions for the gallery were used as evidence to support the analyses as visual renderings of their reflection and aesthetic construction of insights (Burkette & Warhol, 2020; Litts et al., 2019; Sockman et al., 2016; Song, 2020).

Limitations

This case in this study was limited to two individuals who consented to participate. Had more students agreed to participate in the study, additional insights and applications of the comic strip assignment may have emerged. Also, the results are not generalizable beyond these two pre-service teaching candidates (Gasson, 2004). However, the depth of understanding gained about this teacher education approach from the two participants was informative of the novel contexts of pandemic teaching and learning (Taylor et al., 2016).

I will describe how one of the participants (Maureen) incorporated comic strip storytelling into her elementary classroom teaching; however, in this study, I did not directly examine how the participants transferred their insights from the comic strip project into their observed teaching practices.

I also acknowledge that my positionality as a teacher educator and the instructor of record for the course in which this assignment was completed may have impacted my interpretations and analyses of the data (Zukauskas et al., 2018). Likewise, the data was mainly limited to what the participants perceived and chose to share (Ely et al., 1997).

Findings

The research question for this study was: How do elementary pre-service teaching candidates develop new insights about teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic through the design and creation of comic strip narrative artwork? Findings regarding the insights the participants developed through their design of and reflection on their comic strip artwork are presented in the following themes: pedagogical perspectives, dialoguing, and audience.

Pedagogical Perspectives

In their reflective writing and focus group discussions, the participants shared new perspectives on pedagogy and teaching at the elementary level in a post-COVID world. In particular, they spoke about how they aesthetically constructed new pedagogical perspectives regarding empathy, context, and designing instruction.

Empathy

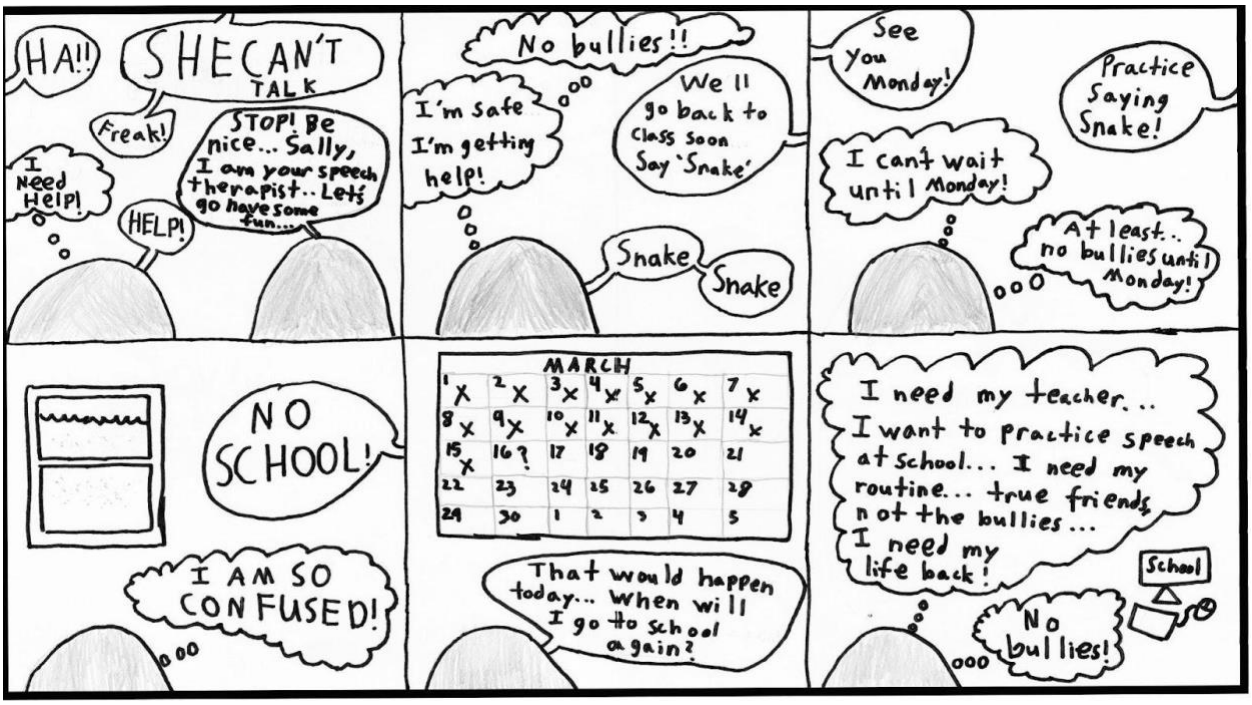
Sydney engaged in a dialogue with her past experiences as a student who was bullied for having special needs. While the pandemic interrupted the educational experiences of all students, her thoughts went to students with special needs whose services and work with specialists were impeded to varying degrees.

Sydney's comic strip depicts a child who receives speech therapy services and is bullied by peers (Figure 1). However, her story also shows the benefits of virtual learning. "[Bullying] was something that I had to deal with everyday and sometimes, the weekends were...my *safe*

spot," Sydney explained. "That's when I felt *comfortable*. I was at home. I didn't have to worry about what other people...were going to say to me" (personal communication, December 16, 2020).

Figure 1

Sydney's Comic Strip Titled "A Silver Lining?"



During Sydney's student teaching in a first grade classroom in Spring 2021, she observed one of her students being teased:

> The first day [it] happened, I had to, truly...bring back, you know, "Teacher Sydney" instead of "upset Sydney" [who used to be bullied]..So I was like, "Excuse me?!"...This particular student who was being targeted has been...virtual this week…[They're] at home. [They have] no access to those who have been bullying [them]. So at least that's one less thing that [student] has to worry about. (personal communication, March 3, 2021)

Sydney showed empathy towards a student who experienced bullying like she had in the past. As depicted in her comic strip, she recognized the social hardships some diverse learners face in school settings that they can escape by learning from home.

Like Sydney, the narrative Maureen depicted in her comic strip (Figure 2) contains a message of empathy about challenges students face in virtual learning contexts. In particular, Maureen focused how students may develop misconceptions about science content without face-to-face, hands-on engagement:

> The first student when it's pre-pandemic is able to understand the concept more, because they've experienced it in person...It's a little bit more difficult for the second student to...experience or...recognize something that they saw in class just because of, they're seeing it through a computer screen and sometimes things don't translate as well. And it's not the same kind of...hands-on experience. (personal communication, December 16, 2020)

Figure 2

Maureen's Comic Strip Titled "Doing Science"

Maureen's message about the challenges of effective virtual teaching and learning originated, in part, through her field work with a class of fourth graders primarily attending school virtually. In a mid-October blog post, Maureen noted, "I spent a lot of my time helping students [individually] in breakout rooms with class assignments while my CT was notifying students of assessments that they have to complete…[They] informed me that we would have 5 students attending in-person starting next week."

Contextual Considerations

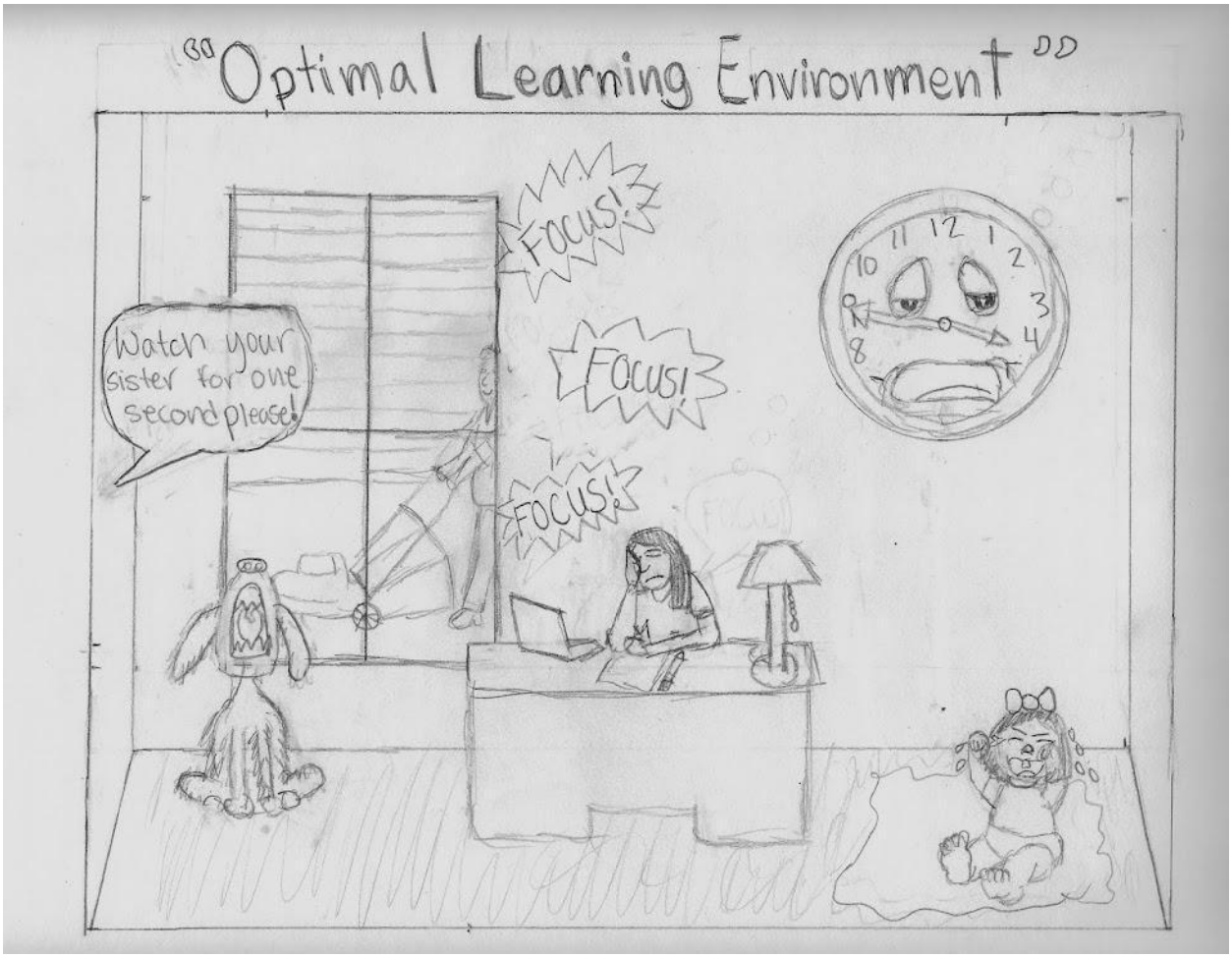
Maureen felt challenged by the work of teaching a majority of her class virtually, especially content like science that she felt was more suited for in-person, hands-on activities:

> It's one thing to be *in* the classroom and actually learning and having that hands-on experience [as opposed to] looking at things through a screen and you're just *watching*...How do you participate in that *actively*? And it's difficult to get a student to participate actively *in* that and to completely understand what's going *on*. (personal communication, December 16, 2020).

Maureen had depicted these concerns through one of her early comic strip drafts she posted on her blog in mid-September 2020 (Figure 3). In this single-panel comic, Maureen shows the many distractions students encounter when attempting to engage in virtual learning from home

Figure 3

Mauren's Comic Strip Draft Titled "Optimal Learning Environment"



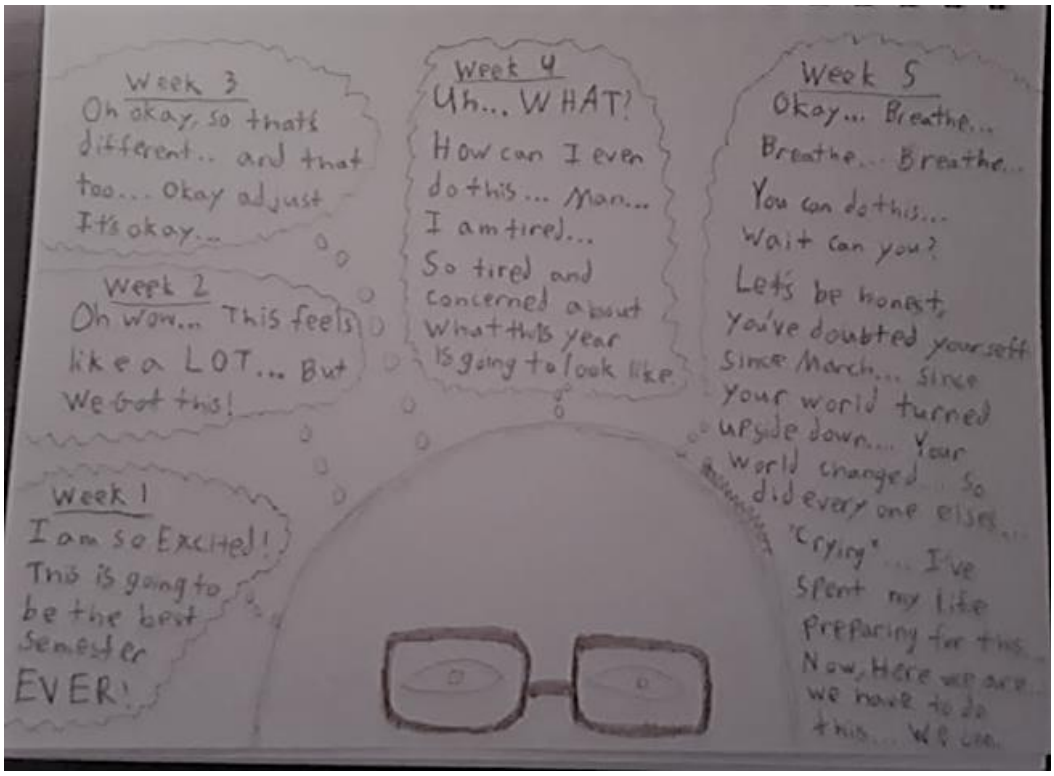
Maureen also lamented how virtual learners may miss out on social learning and opportunities to interact meaningfully with peers:

> My *niece*...is staying at home just because it's easier on [her parents]. But she's...missing *out* on a lot of...good interaction. But also, too, families wanna' be *safe*...*Overall*, without a doubt, there is a lot of...loss in communication when learning is done through a computer screen...especially in science. (personal communication, December 16, 2020)

Sydney attended all course meetings in Fall 2020 virtually and shared her anxiety about the challenges of the pandemic. In a mid-September blog post, she uploaded a comic strip draft (Figure 4) that depicted her personal struggles at that time:

Figure 4

Sydney's Initial Comic Strip Draft (Untitled)



As the semester progressed, Sydney turned her focus outward towards elementary students receiving special education services that she would be working with in the field and during student teaching. In her final draft, she connected her experiences as an elementary learner from the past to how she perceived similar students would be experiencing the pandemic within a virtual learning environment.

Instructional Design

Maureen incorporated the approach of storytelling through comic strips in her teaching practices. In October 2020, she implemented a lesson in which her fourth graders designed an original comic strip narrative using the website Storyboard That. The students analyzed their multimodal texts and summarized them, describing the main idea and supporting details.

In her written reflection on the lesson plan, Maureen recognized that students appreciated working with familiar texts that they had composed themselves. She noted, "In the future, I plan to immediately engage the students by connecting the content to their personal lives and experiences before working on texts that are [less] familiar."

Maureen noted that students were very engaged in designing their own comic strip stories:

> One student that I can never get to turn in work. *Never*. And this was one of the *first* assignments [they] turned in in *weeks*...Only in *one* [criterion were they] lacking...I immediately went in...and told [them], "That was *awesome*! I loved your *story*!"...When I saw [their] *name*, that [they] had turned it *in*, I couldn't *believe* it! (personal communication, December 16, 2020)

Dialoguing

Sydney and Maureen both shared how they had engaged in a metaphorical dialogue with their life experiences as they constructed the aesthetic meaning of teaching and learning during a global health crisis.

Sydney dialogued with her experiences of being bullied. She considered what it would be like to receive special services during the height of the pandemic, interrupted by school closures or virtually working with specialists. Having to visually represent what her experiences would be

like, despite escaping the bullying of peers in the physical school setting, allowed her to reflect on and build new insights about special education during COVID-19:

> As an elementary student, I was in speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy...I couldn't imagine doing *any* of those virtually. Especially physical...There's *so* much hands-on that goes into that. But speech therapy...it's really hard...I mean, the speech therapist could be on *one* screen and then the student could be on the other screen. And then someone's screen *lags*. The computer, the Internet messes up...You're not truly able to practice that skill that you're trying to *learn*. To be able to speak to where...your [teachers] and your peers can understand you and to really be able to display and communicate what you're trying to communicate. (personal communication, December 16, 2020)

Miranda used the comic strip project to reflect on her teaching experiences during Fall 2020. Most of her fourth graders at her field placement virtually attended school. She witnessed how this complicated the processes of teaching and learning, particularly with content areas like science that she felt should be learned through hands-on approaches:

> When I was last in the classroom, we had six in-person and 21 virtual...When kids come into the classroom, when they do some kind of assignment, instantly, you can check them off. You can evaluate them if you have them there. But...we're begging kids to turn things in [online]...The experience in the classroom is [very different]. Like, it's so much easier to explain something to a student when they're right there with you than it is over a computer screen. [In my comic], I just wanted to highlight those two different experiences. (personal communication, December 16, 2020)

Audience

Initially, Maureen and Sydney had different reactions and outlooks to engaging in an arts-based assignment in a teacher education course. Sydney did not view herself as a very artistic person and was nervous about having to turn in an assignment that involved drawing. Once she developed a more focused concept of what she wanted to 'say,' her outlook shifted. "After truly starting to work on it, and...reflect on what I wanted to do," Sydney explained, "I believe that...allowed me to tie it back to what I really wanted to display to viewers" (personal communication, December 16, 2021).

Conversely, Maureen felt confident in her artistic abilities, utilizing watercolor paint to portray her dichotomous narrative of face-to-face and virtual science learning. She expressed pride in highlighting the experiences of elementary science learners during the pandemic:

> It felt so *cool* to see my artwork on display. Like, on a street that's passed by so, so *much*....And I'm excited for other people to *see* it and make a connection or to *think* about...something that they hadn't necessarily *thought* about. Maybe a couple's passing by who *doesn't* have kids. (personal communication, March 3, 2021)

Conclusions and Implications

The participants shared how they aesthetically developed meaningful insights through designing comic strip artwork. Both candidates constructed new pedagogical perspectives of empathy towards students during the pandemic. They considered the impacts of contextual barriers faced by students. For example, Maureen worked through the struggles of teaching students online, especially in content areas such as science that she believed were better suited for active, hands-on engagement. Sydney reflected on her experiences as a student who received

special education services and empathized with how difficult it would be to receive speech therapy through virtual means.

This comic strip project, as perceived by these participants, was a fruitful endeavor that allowed them to construct insights through an aesthetic lens (Hannigan & Raphael, 2020). Maureen found such value in this form of aesthetic engagement that she incorporated comic strips into her teaching, implementing a language arts lesson with fourth graders in which they designed and analyzed their own digital comics.

Britzman (2003) conceptualized teachers' daily work as a process of dialoguing between one's personal experiences, expertise, morals, and external forces such as standardized testing, education reforms, and particularly in Fall 2020, the restrictions and burdens of COVID-19. Through drafting and discussing their comic strips, the participants made aesthetic sense of the face-to-face and virtual contexts in which they would teach and how the pandemic had impacted the equitable participation of all learners (Baroud & Dharamshi, 2020). Like Sydney, teachers may be in dialogue with their past experiences as students (Greene, 1995). They may also dialogue with problems of practice in the present as they consider new approaches and solutions (Novoa, 2018), such as Maureen's work with a primarily-virtual class.

Finally, both participants used the comic strip assignment as a means of engaging authentic audiences, illuminating - in a public-facing gallery - the pandemic experiences of diverse learners. In completing classroom-based field hours, they developed insights about approaches and competencies required of teachers in 2020 and beyond (Howell et al., 2021), such as consistent communication with families (Beaunoyer et al., 2020) and social, participatory learning activities across face-to-face and virtual contexts (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Gallagher & Cottingham 2021).

Portraying stories in comic strips does not substitute for other forms of skill-based preparation for enacting critical pedagogy. Future research should explore how effectively arts-based pre-service coursework and assignments impact candidates' observed professional practices (Kim & Xing, 2019; Novoa, 2018). Art-based assignments can serve as low stakes opportunities for teaching candidates to consider problems of practice, preparing to confront them with a critical mindset (DeMink-Carthew & Bishop, 2017; Liu et al., 2020). Teaching candidates must enter the field as agents of change, perceiving themselves "as participants in a dialogue rather than objects of [authoritative] reform" (Aydarova et al., 2021, p. 10). In future iterations of this project in my elementary science teaching methods course, I plan to integrate reflective activities in which students explicitly link their aesthetic insights to instructional design and classroom practice.

After teaching in Illinois public schools for 11 years, I transitioned into teacher education full time during some of the most challenging months of the pandemic. I was trying to understand new contexts of teaching and learning at the elementary level alongside my students. My practices needed to evolve in the college classroom to better support teaching candidates' enactment of effective practices in pandemic and future endemic times. While it was beyond the scope of this study to examine how students' insights from the comic strip assignment transferred to instructional design and implementation, it was evident that this project helped the participants construct insights around the contextual 'canvas' of their current and future teaching.

Teacher educators should consider aesthetically-oriented assignments in which students can transfer their knowledge (Felten, 2017), informed by theory and field-based experiences, in public-facing ways (Hannigan & Raphael, 2020). Such engagement would support their critical

reflection and empathy for diverse learners that will ideally continue into their professional careers (Martinie et al., 2016).

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Preparing Teacher Candidates for Successful Communication with Diverse Families Using Simulations

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Abstract

This study examined concerns that teacher candidates have about communicating with families and studied the use of three simulation techniques to enhance candidates' confidence and perception of preparedness for communicating with diverse families. Twenty-five teacher candidates in a senior-level education class participated in three simulation conditions: Peer-to-Peer role playing, parent actors, and technology-based simulation using avatars in TeachLivE™. Data were collected using surveys before, during, and after the simulation sessions. A t-test revealed that candidates felt more confident in their abilities after the simulations, and inspection of means revealed that the parent actors were found to be the most preferred simulation condition. Inductive analysis was used to establish themes in the qualitative responses, showing that candidates were most concerned about appearing confident and discussing difficult topics. Based on the findings, the authors recommend the inclusion of structured simulations involving parent and teacher interactions during teacher preparation programs.

Keywords: collaboration, parent simulation, teacher education, teacher preparation, preservice teacher, teacher candidate

Family-centered communication strategies allow teachers to communicate effectively with families to support the health, well-being, and success of children. Families and teachers need to be able to engage in reciprocal communication in order to work as a team to nurture and educate children (Watson, Kiekhefer, & Olshansky, 2006). Standards for Teacher Educators

from The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) emphasize the importance of Cultural Competence (Standard 2) including an ability to "Apply cultural competence and promote social justice in teacher education…and foster a positive regard for individual students and their families regardless of differences such as culture, religion, gender, native language, sexual orientation, and varying abilities" (ATE, 2012, p. 4). These standards also highlight the value of Collaboration (Standard 6) as teacher educators are urged to "Collaborate regularly and in significant ways with relevant stakeholders to improve teaching, research, and student learning" (ATE, 2012, p. 6).

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children echoes the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) sentiments by prioritizing family as well as teaming and collaboration in the educational programming and services for young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities (DEC, 2014; NAEYC, 2010). Despite this ideal, there are preservice teachers who complete their programs without a formal opportunity to communicate or collaborate with diverse families, particularly as it relates to seemingly sensitive topics such as academic, behavioral, or social challenges of their child (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Patte, 2011). The purpose of this study was to investigate ways to fill this gap in teacher education programs.

Background and Rationale

When parents are involved in their children's education, meaningful and positive outcomes include improved academic, social, and emotional performance (Dawson & Wymbs, 2016). Teachers play a key, front-line role in engaging and involving parents (Brody et al., 1999; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Jeynes, 2003, 2007). Many teacher education faculty agree on the value of preparing candidates to engage in meaningful family-professional partnerships (Kyzar et al.,

2019). Indeed, the education field has identified regular, effective communication and collaboration with families as a high leverage practice for general (Ball & Forzani, 2009) and special education (McKleskey et al., 2017) teachers. Based on the work of Ball and Forzani (2009), TeachingWorks states teachers need to be able to communicate with families regarding academic progress, behavior, or development and to ask for information or assistance from families (TeachingWorks, University of Michigan, High Leverage Practices). Additionally, the Council for Exceptional Children posits that teachers should be able to lead and participate in meetings with families, demonstrate active listening, solicit feedback, and foster consensus building through verbal and nonverbal communication (McKleskey et al., 2017). The InTASC Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers also highlight the importance of collaboration between teachers and families, working with adults and the notion that these skills are needed to meet challenging goals for learners (2013).

Despite the recognition of the value and importance of communication and collaboration between families and teachers, this content is often not covered in preparation programs (Kyzar et al., 2019) and preservice teachers are rarely given a formal opportunity to take part in low or high stakes parent-teacher meetings, such as conferences and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Hiatt-Michael, 2006). Indeed, beginning teachers may often enter their classrooms with limited knowledge of how to make the environment parent-friendly, how to inform parents about what is happening in the classroom, or how to have collaborative and productive conversations with their students' parents and caregivers so that they believe that they are truly collaborative partners in learning (Ferrara & Ferrar, 2005). Candidates who have limited opportunities to practice professional communication and collaboration skills may feel unprepared which may lead to avoidance, errors, or even attrition

(Willemse et al., 2017). The field has expressed concern with the dearth of opportunities for teacher candidates to interact and communicate with parents and caregivers (Dotger et al., 2008). For educator preparation programs to ensure the delivery (and possible mastery) of these high leverage teaching practices in their graduates, programs often rely on coursework, in-class discussions, and other important, yet less realistic methods to prepare teacher candidates to communicate and collaborate with families. More realistic methods should be considered to facilitate the generalization of these skills from the college course and into the classroom environment (Accardo & Xin, 2017).

Using Simulations to Develop Teacher Candidate Communication and Collaboration Skills

Walker and Dotger state, "wisdom can't be told" (2012, p. 62), highlighting the notion that educator preparation programs cannot simply rely on talking about what to do when interacting with families during a conference or meeting. It may be more helpful to practice the fundamental capabilities of communication and collaboration between teachers and families in simulated environments, which resemble a more realistic experiences in the classroom. A simulation is an instructional technique that tries to represent certain aspects of reality so that participants can learn by doing and develop knowledge, understanding or skills (Cruz & Patterson, 2005). Simulations can take many forms, including Peer-to-Peer role playing, live actor role playing (such as standardized parent/caregiver simulations), as well as role playing using technology-based avatars. Each of these is described below.

Peer-to-Peer Role Playing. Teacher educators have successfully used peer role plays to help teacher candidates practice communication techniques in simulated parent conferences (Aich et al., 2017; McNaughton et al., 2007). When students take on both the parent role and the teacher role, they practice empathy and perspective taking (Rao & Stupans, 2012).

Parent/Adult Actor (non-peer). Teacher educators have examined the benefits of role playing for teacher candidates with individuals who are trained to act as "standardized parents," who present to teacher candidates a “case” during a simulated parent-teacher conference. Cases are selected because they are either prevalent or of critical importance for teacher candidates to consider (Dotger et al., 2008).

Technology Based Simulated (Mixed-Reality Environment). More recently, simulations using technology have been examined and provide “situations and participants who look like, feel like, and act like they would in real-life scenarios” (Dieker et al., 2014, p. 51). Researchers have begun to study the use of mixed reality technology-based simulations in educator preparation and have used these to develop a variety of teaching skills (Peterson-Ahmad, 2018; Ely et al., 2018). For example, Dawson and Lignugaris/Kraft (2017) found that teacher candidates improved foundational teaching skills by utilizing the virtual classroom TeachLivE™ and were mostly able to generalize their performance to real classroom settings. Driver et al. (2018) reported significant shifts in preservice teacher perceptions on their readiness to work in collaborative settings, as well as improvement in communication skills following the use of a TeachLivE™ simulation experience. Accardo and Xin (2017) utilized TeachLivE™ to promote teacher candidates’ collaboration with a parent avatar during a 504 plan conference leading to improved self-reflection and self-assessment in teacher candidates’ evaluation of their parental collaboration skills and ability to make appropriate instructional decisions during parent teacher conferences following the simulation, compared to candidates who did not engage in the simulation. Other fields have also successfully used TeachLivE™ as a simulation tool to improve professional communication behaviors when interacting with caregivers (Taylor et al,

2017) compared to more traditional methods of "talking about it" in coursework or clinical experiences.

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study was threefold. First, we sought to identify teacher candidates' perceptions of their preparedness, including their skills, confidence, and areas of concern, related to communication and collaboration with diverse families. Second, we sought to compare three different parent-teacher simulation methods and examine their impact on candidate confidence and perception of preparedness to engage in such interactions as beginning teachers, as well as their rating of each of the simulation's effectiveness in impacting their own feelings, knowledge and skills. Finally, we ultimately wish to use these results to inform curriculum, leading to program improvement and the enhancement of teacher quality, particularly as it relates to candidate understanding, attitudes, and experiences in communicating and collaborating with parents and caregivers from diverse families.

We used the definition of families as "…any relatively stable group of people bound by ties of blood, marriage, adoption; or by any sexually expressive relationship; or who simply live together, and who are committed to and provide each other with economic and emotional support" (Schwartz & Scott, 2007, p. 3). Our definition of diverse family was adapted from Demo et al. (2000), who noted that each person within the family dynamic possesses individual differences which can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, or other ideologies. The families included in this study are fictional representations of families with common student challenges experienced in traditional school settings.

To meet these goals, we determined that teacher candidates should take part in structured experiences to learn and practice professional skills needed for success. Three parallel simulation methods were used to facilitate semi-realistic experiences whereby candidates practiced newly learned skills in a supportive, low stakes, and structured environment mimicking a meeting or conference between parent or caregiver and teacher. The three methods involved Peer-to-Peer interactions, candidate to parent actor interactions, and candidate to simulated parent-based interactions. Research questions included:

1. How do teacher candidates rate their preparedness (skills and confidence) for communicating and collaborating with diverse families? What concerns do they have?
2. What is the impact of simulation method on teacher candidates' confidence and perception of preparedness in their ability to communicate and engage in collaborative interaction with parents/caregivers?
3. What simulation method do teacher candidates judge to be most/least effective in preparing them to communicate and collaborate with parents/caregivers? What ongoing concerns do they have about engaging with diverse families?

Method

The parent-teacher simulations were a culminating experience in the undergraduate course titled: *Families, Schools and Communities*. This is a required course for all early childhood or combined early childhood/childhood majors, most of whom take it during their junior or senior years of college, concurrently with student teaching or in a previous semester. The course emphasizes the building of partnerships among parents, schools, and diverse communities, emphasizing collaboration and learning about family involvement strategies. This culminating simulation experience took place on a college campus across three different

medium-sized classrooms. Two rooms contained rows of 35 individual desks/chairs; the third was the TLE TeachLivE™ simulation lab, equipped with a large computer monitor placed in front of a table and chair where the "teacher" would sit facing the monitor. The entire study took place in one 3.5 hour window during normal class time.

Participants

Twenty-five teacher candidates participated in the study, comprised of 24 seniors and 1 junior. All were enrolled in an Early Childhood (n=13) or combined Early Childhood/Childhood Education (n=12) program at a medium-sized, master's granting public institution in western New York State. Three of the 25 participants were currently enrolled in student teaching at the same time as the *Families, Schools and Communities* course; others were scheduled to complete student teaching the following semester. Fifteen participants reported being employed in a setting where they could communicate with parents/families regularly (such as a childcare center, after-school program). Four participants reported that they communicated with families on topics about their child's academic or behavioral performance regularly; whereas nine reported only sometimes communicating about these topics. See Table 1 for additional participant information.

Table 1

Participant Information

Characteristic	N	%
Gender		
Male	0	0
Female	25	100 %
Major	13	52%
Early Childhood Ed	12	48%
Early Childhood/Child. Ed		
Class Year		
Junior	1	4%
Senior	24	96%
Student Teaching Status	3	12%
Currently enrolled	22	88%
Complete Next Semester		
Job experience w/ Parents/Families	15	60%

Research Design and& Procedures

We utilized a within group repeated measures design and employed counterbalancing to control for order effects by systematically varying the order of the three simulation conditions. A random assignment generator was used to assign the 25 candidates to one of the three groups to start. Each candidate was given a rotation schedule and took part in all three simulation methods

on the same day, rotating through each simulation room in small groups of 8 to 9 people. Each room had at least one researcher present who facilitated the session and distributed the surveys.

Surveys

Data were primarily collected using surveys before, during, and after the simulation sessions. The pretest Candidate Perception Survey gathered demographic information as well as additional items focusing on their feelings of preparedness and skill level in communicating and collaborating with parents/caregivers in their role as a future teacher. The survey included Likert-style items ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 6 (Strongly Disagree) whereby a candidate who was highly confident in their skills in this area would mark a lower score on each item (such as 1 for Strongly Agree or 2 for Agree). The survey also included some open-ended prompts asking them to describe areas of concern, their past experience in working with families, and strategies they could use to facilitate productive communication with families.

Additionally, participants completed brief Candidate Post-Condition Debrief Forms at the end of each of the three simulation conditions. Questions aligned to pretest questions and used similar Likert-style items where they evaluated the extent to which that session helped build their skills and confidence related to working with, communicating and developing relationships with parents/caregivers. A score of 1 indicated that candidates strongly agreed that the session was helpful. A score of 6 indicated that candidates strongly disagreed that the session was helpful.

Finally, a posttest Candidate Perception Survey was administered at the completion of the entire simulation study (after all three conditions were experienced). It consisted of the same items on the pretest, but candidates were also asked to describe how their participation in parent-teacher simulation activities impacted their feelings of preparedness and confidence to facilitate communication with diverse families and to explain what they could have done to better prepare,

and if they had any additional concerns. The posttest survey also asked candidates to identify which of the three conditions was most and least helpful in preparing them to collaborate and communicate with diverse families and explain why.

Parent-Teacher Conference and Collaboration Scenarios

Teacher candidates were presented with a set of 12 scenarios involving a classroom teacher and a parent, guardian or caregiver. Each scenario described an academic, behavioral, social, and other familial challenge that set the occasion for the meeting between the two. Sample reasons for the meeting included the need to discuss an academic intervention, bullying prevention, excessive absences, unique parent requests, or other behavioral concerns. In some cases, the scenario stated that the parent/caregiver requested the meeting, in other cases it was initiated by the teacher. The topics or issues described in the scenarios were developed by the research team, gleaned from prior experience as well as by informal polling of our school-based clinical partners and their personal experiences.

Two levels of each scenario were developed: an "overview" version with only key information (names, age, overview of challenge or reason for meeting) as well as a more detailed version that provided more context and background about the parent/caregiver, including their characteristics or disposition during the meeting as well as any additional "life factors" that may influence the parent/caregiver's attitude, approval/disapproval, or level of concern. Examples of overview and detailed scenarios are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Sample Simulation Scenarios

Scenarios	
Brief Scenario Overview	Detailed Scenario
Preschool child with specific food needs	You have a classroom of sixteen pre-school students who attend a full day program. One of your students Harper Johnson, has a very strict regime of foods her parents provide her. They send in a lunch daily for her and expect Harper to be offered "her" lunch if she refuses to eat what the school is providing. They request a daily written report of exactly what she was offered and what she ate for lunch and afternoon snack. Mom is a certified nutritionist and claims that Harper will become ill if she eats school provided food every day. She is insistent on knowing exactly what foods will be provided.
Child not doing homework. Caregiver is overwhelmed	During a parent teacher conference, the grandmother (who is the legal caregiver) of your student, Trevor Johnson, says that she does not know exactly what to do with her first-grade grandson at home anymore. She cannot control her grandson's behavior; she cannot force him to complete his homework. The grandmother is at a loss. She reports that she feels depressed and is overwhelmed trying to manage the household and keep track of Trevor. She has virtually no support system as she is single and raising her grandchildren. She is also worried about her own physical health. She reports that most evenings Trevor sits and plays videogames on his phone.
Child is confrontational, talking back and destroying property at least once a week	You have requested a conference because Max Jackson has been demonstrating disruptive behaviors in your preschool classroom. He is frequently not listening or following directions. At least once a week, he has been confrontational with you, talking back and destroying property. Both parents attend and appear apologetic and under a lot of stress. They share that Max has a brother who is diagnosed with a chronic medical condition that requires adult support for daily living skills. His parents admit that at times Max is left to 'fend for himself' while they take care of his brother.

Note: Twelve scenarios were created for this study. Details upon request.

The 25 teacher candidates received all the abbreviated scenarios a week in advance of the simulation sessions and were encouraged, but not required, to review them and prepare in any way they wanted. Preparation could include activities such as reviewing class notes, conducting research on various topics mentioned in the scenarios, or doing their own practice role playing outside of class. Candidates were not told which scenarios they would be assigned during the three conditions. The parent actors participated in a brief training session the week before the class, describing their role. They were provided with the more detailed version of the scenarios and encouraged to expound on the situation by adding details, reacting, and responding however they wanted; no formal script was provided beyond a suggestion of the parent's general attitude during the meeting (such as angry, unengaged, sensitive and overwhelmed, etc.). Similarly, the detailed scenarios were given to the TLE TeachLivE™ interactor in advance with comparable directives stated above. The sequence of the scenarios used were also counterbalanced across all three conditions so that all teacher candidates experienced scenarios 1-4 in the first rotation; all experienced scenarios 5-8 in the second rotation; and all experienced scenarios 9-12 in the third rotation.

Simulation Conditions

The independent variable for this study was the type of simulation condition experienced by the teacher candidate. Three simulation conditions took place simultaneously across three different rooms during the study: (1) *Peer, (2) Parent Actor*, and (3) *TeachLivE™*. The evening began in a large room where teacher candidates completed consent forms and the Candidate Perception Survey and received a folder with the list of partners and a personalized schedule showing the rooms to enter for each session. Candidates also learned if they were Partner A or Partner B, indicating the order that they would be functioning as the teacher during the evening.

The three small groups of candidates remained in each condition for approximately one hour, before they were prompted to rotate to the next session/room. In each room at least one researcher and/or facilitator monitored the time, administered the post-session debrief surveys, and conducted an oral "debrief" session after each parent-teacher interaction. The debrief was designed to be open-ended and allowed candidates to briefly reflect on (1) *What happened? What strategies did you use or see in use?* (2) *So what? What was significant or important in what happened?* (3) *Now what? How will this impact your actions in the future?* Candidates shared their answers aloud but were not provided formative feedback. In this study, there was no specific plan for coaching or instructional feedback from the researchers/facilitators.

For each scenario, interactions were timed by the facilitator not to exceed five minutes. Each session began with a very brief 1-minute introduction and about 25 minutes for the role playing of four scenarios with Partner A acting as the teacher and the other participants observing in a fishbowl technique. In some cases, the sessions were shorter if consensus was reached between the participants or if the simulated parent ended the session abruptly. Additionally, candidates were instructed that they could briefly "pause" the interaction to regroup, consult their notes, etc. After all candidates or pairs of candidates (in Peer Simulation Condition) completed their first interaction within the condition, they were given 15 minutes within the same condition, to collaborate and talk to their peers and plan any changes they would like to employ in a second round with the same parent. Then, the second round of simulations took place with Partner B taking the role of teacher (about 15 minutes) A three item Post-Session Debrief Survey was administered where candidates answered questions directly related to their experience in that condition, and this survey took about 3-4 minutes.

Peer Simulation Condition. The Peer Simulation condition took place between two teacher candidates role playing; one acted as a parent and one as a teacher. During this session Partner A took on the role of teacher and Partner B took on the role of family member. The non-interacting pairs waited and observed the pair "simulating" in a fishbowl format. The roles were then reversed whereby Partner B became the teacher and Partner A became the family member. In all cases, the peer playing the role of the parent/caregiver received a more detailed scenario described above.

Parent Actor Condition. The Parent Actor condition involved an actual parent, who role played the part of different parents or caregiver depending on the scenario, while the candidate played the role of the teacher. Each candidate had an opportunity to interact with the parent actor using one of the scenarios while their peers observed.

TLE TeachLivE™ Condition. The technology based TeachLivE™ simulation condition involved the use of a virtual simulator designed to be a fully immersive environment where the teacher candidate engaged with what appears to be an actual parent/caregiver, albeit an avatar, who was able to see, talk, and respond in real time. Each candidate played the role of the teacher and had an opportunity to interact with the parent avatar using one of the 12 scenarios while their peers observed. The avatar interactor was provided with the detailed scenarios in advance, and given the constraints of the avatar technology, the parent/caregiver was female in all cases. The responses and reactions of the parent/caregiver were controlled by a person known as a "digital puppeteer/improvisational voice actor" located at the University of Central Florida's Center for Research in Education Simulation Technology. The avatar appeared on a 65-inch screen directly across the table from the candidate, mimicking a "conference room" type atmosphere. Although the responses could not be formally scripted, the actor was aware of the scenario in advance and

knew the general disposition of the parent/caregiver (upset, angry, worried, overwhelmed, etc.). The actor was able to see and hear the candidate through a video camera.

Data Analysis

The research team analyzed candidate responses to the pretest-posttest Candidate Perception Surveys and Candidate Post-Condition Debrief Forms with a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics as well as qualitative analysis. Two researchers manually coded each open-ended verbatim response provided by candidate participants on the pre and post-survey items into the four following themes: (1) how candidates prepared for the sessions, (2) what they felt most concerned about, (3) what prior experience or knowledge may have helped their sense of preparedness and (4) specific strategies they could use to have productive communication with families. Our analysis was deductive, drawing on the framework of approximation of practice (Grossman et. al., 2009). Each rater applied a flat code frame to establish themes, using an inductive coding approach. After establishing the aforementioned specific themes, and to affirm accuracy and reliability of the coding, the research team compared the two independent coding decisions, and revised and/or recoded as necessary. Illustrative quotes were selected to substantiate each theme.

Results

Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed to answer the research questions. The mean, standard deviation, range, and percent for each item on the pre and posttest Candidate Perception Survey are reported in Table 3 and Candidate Post-Condition Debrief Forms in Table 4. Themes and patterns of responding as well as candidate comments are shared below.

Table 3

Pretest-Posttest Survey Results Perception of Skill and Preparedness

	Pretest *n=25*			*Posttest* *n=24*		
Survey Item	*M*	*SD*	*Range*	*M*	*SD*	*Range*
I feel:						
*…have the skills to **work with** parents/caregivers to help them to support their child **academically**.*	2.44	0.7	1-4	1.58	0.57	1-3
*…have the skills to **work with** parents/caregivers to help them support their child **socially and emotionally**.*	2.16	0.67	1-3	1.50	0.65	1-3
*…have the skills to create a **welcoming and supportive environment** for parents/caregivers in my classroom.*	1.6	0.57	1-3	1.33	0.47	1-2
*…can show **empathy** for situations that parents/caregivers face in childrearing.*	1.72	0.53	1-3	1.13	0.33	1-2
*…have the skills to **build positive relationships** with parents/caregivers of my students*	1.56	0.5	1-2	1.29	0.45	1-2
*…have the skills to **communicate** with parents/caregivers to make them a partner in their child's education.*	2.32	0.68	1-3	1.58	0.57	1-3
*…have the skills to **invite** parents/caregivers to school events in support of their child's education.*	2.04	0.72	1-3	1.42	0.64	1-3

…am confident about ***communicating behavioral or academic challenges*** *that are negatively impacting learning/classroom environment to a parent.*	2.96	0.53	2-4	1.88	0.67	1-3
…am ***aware of strategies*** *that will facilitate* ***difficult conversations*** *with parents/caregivers*	2.92	0.69	2-4	1.50	0.65	1-3
…am comfortable ***using strategies*** *to facilitate* ***difficult conversations*** *with parents/caregivers.*	2.96	0.45	2-4	1.71	0.68	1-3
OVERALL	22.88	3.07		14.92	3.90	

Note: lower scores indicate higher levels of agreement, e.g., 1 for Strongly Agree, 2 for Agree, etc.)

*$p < .001$

Table 4

Candidate Post-Condition Form Rating of Helpfulness

	Parent Actor			*Peer-to-Peer*			*TeachLivE™*		
Survey Item	*M*	*SD*	*Range*	*M*	*SD*	*Range*	*M*	*SD*	*Range*
Participating in this Peer Simulation Conference activity helped to build my skills in working with parents /caregivers to help their child succeed.	1.29	0.46	1-2	1.32	0.48	1-2	1.78	0.90	1-4
Participating in this Peer Conference activity helped to build my skills in developing positive relationships with parents/caregivers of my students.	1.29	0.46	1-2	1.32	0.48	1-2	2.0	0.90	1-4
Participating in this Peer Conference activity helped to build my confidence in communicating behavioral or academic challenges that are negatively impacting learning/ classroom environment to a parent.	1.42	0.65	1-3	1.40	0.65	1-3	2.04	1.11	1-4
Overall	1.35	.053		1.35	0.53		1.94	0.97	

Ratings of Preparedness Overall

We examined how teacher candidates rated their preparedness (skills and confidence) for communicating and collaborating with diverse families as well as their concerns before and after the simulation sessions. Prior to the simulation activities, the areas where candidates appeared to feel most prepared were with dispositional skills (building positive relationships, creating welcoming and supportive environments, and showing empathy). On average, areas where candidates appeared to feel least prepared were knowledge and skill-based areas, including their awareness and use of specific strategies to facilitate difficult conversations, as well as their ability to communicate academic or behavioral challenges that negatively impact learning or the classroom environment. These same areas showed the biggest changes after the simulation sessions, whereby candidates' rating of their confidence, awareness, and comfort in using strategies to communicate saw the most growth, improving on average, more than one point on the 6-point scale on these items (e.g., from 3 "Somewhat Agree" to 2 "Agree"). This suggests that the simulation activities were successful in impacting candidates' confidence, awareness of strategies and comfort in using strategies in communicating with families. On average, total scores at pretest across the 10-item survey (M = 22.88, SD = 3.07) were higher than total scores at posttest, M = 14.92, SD = 3.90. This indicates that candidates felt more confident in their abilities to engage with parents/caregivers following the interventions. A t-test revealed that this difference was statistically significant, t (23) = 2.07, $p < .001$. See Table 3 for pretest and posttest survey results.

Following all simulation conditions, candidates were asked how the simulations helped their feelings of preparedness when communicating with families. Comments overwhelmingly

emphasized their feelings of confidence and preparedness for real world experiences as a future teacher. Candidates wrote:

- *I feel a lot better after this experience; it boosted my confidence level.*
- *Practicing having tough conversations with fake parents made me feel less scared because I learned different strategies to use.*
- *I think I am more prepared to deal with angry parents.*
- *It made me see that not all parents are the same.*
- *It gave me the chance to think of ideas on the spot. It kept me on my toes.*
- *It made me feel better seeing other people do it and practicing.*

To a lesser extent, candidates reported that the experiences gave them tools and an increased awareness of how and what they would say to parents:

- *I am more mindful of the language I will use with parents.*
- *Helped me learn how to communicate better and always address the good before the bad.*

Candidate Areas of Concern in Collaborating and Communicating with Families

Prior to the simulation sessions, all participants reported feelings of concern when communicating with families. The most frequently cited concern on the Candidate Perception Survey was engaging with either difficult or disagreeable parents/caregivers (n=10) or communicating with those who appear uninvolved or disinterested (n=5). Candidates also reported that discussing difficult topics and other behavioral challenges was an area of concern (n=6). Candidates wrote:

- *I am most concerned about working with parents that do not believe me.*
- *Some families have trouble believing that their child would indulge in such behavior*
- *I am most concerned about parents not listening to me.*

- *If there is a situation where parents are not doing what they need to be, I'm not sure how I would handle that.*

In addition, candidates' ability to appear professional and portray confidence and was also a concern (n=6), in some cases, specifically related to the academic content being discussed (n=2). Examples included comments such as:

- *I am most scared of coming off the wrong way or miscommunicating what I mean.*
- *I feel that I may be unconfident on certain content making me come off as unprofessional.*
- *I am concerned about being intimidated and being nervous and sounding like I don't know what I'm talking about.*
- *I am scared of conflict and not being able to hold my ground in a respectful, knowledgeable way.*

Candidate Ratings of Simulation Method Effectiveness and Helpfulness

To address research question 3, we examined the candidates' rating and reasoning of which simulation method they viewed as most and least effective on the Posttest Survey. Results are summarized in Tables 4 and 5. Over half of the candidates (n=13, 52%) rated the Parent Actor simulation method as the most effective. Eight candidates (32%) rated the TeachLivE™ simulation followed by three candidates who rated the Peer-to-Peer method as most effective (12%). One candidate reported that all methods were effective, but that TeachLivE™ "prepared her for the rest."

When asked which simulation method was least effective, 11 candidates (44%) chose Peer Interaction, nine candidates (36%) chose TeachLivE™, and one (4%) rated the Parent Actors as least effective (4%). Four candidates did not explicitly state which was least effective

because they expressed that no conditions were judged ineffective; in their opinion, all were helpful/effective. One individual did not complete these survey items.

When asked to provide a rationale for their effectiveness rating, of those candidates who reported the Parent Actor Condition (n=13) as the most helpful, candidates referenced the realistic nature of the interactions and the debriefing and follow up the actors provided after the session (solutions, advice, etc.). Some candidates also reported feeling more comfortable with the actors (compared to peers and avatar) and found the face-to-face interaction less stressful. Candidates noted:

- *They were experienced with situations like these and were willing to work with me on a solution.*
- *It was less intimidating. I understood what we needed to work on without being too focused on my nerves.*
- *Felt like a real parent-teacher conference. Actors did things unexpected and reactions weren't scripted.*
- *I was able to see their facial expressions and a real person*

Of those candidates who preferred the TeachLivE™ simulation condition (n=8), the majority found it to be more realistic, particularly when the parent avatar acted in a more challenging manner. Some candidates reported that although the TeachLivE™ simulation was intimidating or intense, they felt it was a good preparatory experience for a real, human interaction in the future. Candidates wrote:

- *TeachLivE™ was the most intense and I had to try very hard to remain calm and professional.*

- *TeachLivE™ was intimidating in a good way. It showed that there will be times when a parent doesn't want to hear you out.*
- *I think the TeachLivE™ was hard which was good because it prepared me for the rest.*

The two candidates who preferred the Peer Interaction simulation method stated that they felt more comfortable and less stressed in that situation. Additionally, they reported the realistic nature since they didn't know how the partner would respond. Comments included the following:

- *They give you real responses without going too easy or too hard on you.*
- *This felt the most realistic and useful.*

When asked to explain why a particular condition was rated as least helpful, candidates also explained their responses. Of the eleven who rated the Peer-to-Peer method the least helpful, ten reported that it was due to the setting being too informal and comfortable compared to others. Additionally, the peer who acted as the "parent" was often too nice or lacked experience and background to act as a real parent. Candidates explained:

- *It was nice to be both parent and teacher, but peers are nicer in certain scenarios.*
- *It felt more informal talking to peers.*
- *We weren't as experienced with these situations and how to react.*
- *I think peer simulations don't give you a real parent response because they just agree with you.*
- *Our peers feel what we are going through, so they won't be as hard on us.*

The nine candidates who found the TeachLivE™ condition to be the least helpful explained that this was mostly due to the parent avatar acting in a manner that they perceived as being mean, rude, or intimidating, reportedly impacting the candidates' confidence and anxiety

levels. Finally, some candidates (n=3) reported wanting more suggestions or advice following the interaction. Candidates wrote:

- *It was pretty intimidating.*
- *We were speaking to a screen…just not realistic.*
- *It made me feel less confident in my abilities.*
- *The parent was rude the whole time and we weren't given ways to go about it.*
- *It felt like most of the parent responses were too extreme.*
- *The parent was very hostile and didn't want to listen. I would've liked to hear some suggestions in talking to these parents.*

Only one candidate found the Parent Actor condition to be the least helpful, stating it was intimidating and less likely to help her.

Candidates were also asked to rate the helpfulness of each simulation method immediately following each condition using a Post-Session Debrief Form. Candidates indicated that all three conditions were helpful in refining their skills. However, the average scores for the Parent Actor (M = 1.33, SD = 0.53) and Peer-to-Peer (M = 1.35, SD = 0.53) conditions were more favorable than the TeachLivE™ condition (M = 1.94, SD = 0.97). Upon further examination of the results, Question 2 about developing positive relationships seemed to be the most useful in differentiating the groups. While the Parent Actor and Peer-to-Peer condition scores averaged at 1.30, the TeachLivE™ condition mean scores were less favorable (2.0). See Table 5 for details.

Table 5

Candidate Rating of Least and Most Effective Simulation Condition

Condition	Most effective		Least effective	
	n	%	n	%
Peer-to-Peer	3	12%	11	44%
Parent Actors	13	52%	1	4%
TeachLivE™	8	32%	9	36%
All Conditions were effective	1	4%	n/a	-
No Conditions judged ineffective	n/a	-	4	16%

It should be noted that although the overall purpose of the present study did not include a coaching or feedback model to improve teacher candidate performance, it may have inadvertently occurred during one or more of the simulation sessions. During the Parent Actor condition, two parent actors, a facilitator, and one research assistant were present in the room before, during, and after the sessions. On occasion, during some of the breaks between sessions, teacher candidates overtly requested input and casual discussions took place between the candidates, the parent actors, and researcher. This debrief included an informal analysis of the interaction and recommendations for future practice.

Discussion

The process of engaging in parent-teacher simulation was judged to be impactful for teacher candidates overall. Indeed, perception of skills and knowledge related to preparedness to interact with diverse families was positively influenced by the experience. Individual simulation methods appear to have some strengths as well as areas of potential improvement.

What appeared to be the most promising method based on candidate feedback was the Parent Actor simulation condition. Utilizing a parent volunteer who may have experience interacting with teachers on controversial or high stakes topics offers a realistic model. Peer-to-Peer simulations may not offer as realistic an experience to the teacher candidate. In addition, Peer-to-Peer sessions appeared to be the least influential and least preferred by candidates in this study, although they were reported as the "least stressful." Data regarding teacher candidate perception of the TeachLivE™ simulation method indicated that it provided realistic preparation for future interactions with families. However, there was some indication from participants that the TeachLivE™ experience was also intimidating or intense, based on the parent avatar interaction.

Recommendations for Future Research and Implications for Practice

The Peer-to-Peer simulation method may be useful early in a semester or program to provide a non-threatening opportunity for teacher candidates to practice family communication skills following a gradual release model (possibly beginning with Peer-to-Peer exchanges and working up to Parent Actor or TeachLivE™ later in the course or program). If using Peer-to-Peer simulations, more effective preparation protocols for peer actors would be necessary to assure that the simulations are more realistic. In future simulations, the research team plans to explore the use of TeachLivE™ with a graduated level of challenging parent/family behavior to give teacher candidates the opportunity to build their skills through a progression of scenarios. Additionally, it may be beneficial for teacher candidates to be made aware of the possibility that some interactions in the TeachLivE™ simulation will involve a parent/caregiver who is angry and/or disagreeable, thus allowing the candidate to prepare for potential interactions where challenging verbal and physical behaviors are present. Additional training to enhance teacher

candidate communication skills when dealing with confrontational or accusatory family interactions is also recommended.

An interesting variable uncovered during this research was the provision of meaningful feedback during the Parent Actor sessions. While this could be judged to be a limitation of the study, we feel that it offers insight into the value of a coaching/immediate feedback model, which did not occur during the other sessions. Further research utilizing a formal model of coaching and feedback following each simulation interaction will be studied to determine if the simulation type, the feedback model, or the combination of simulation type and feedback model is most impactful on teacher candidate confidence and perceptions of preparedness when interacting with families.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the researchers found that parent-teacher simulations impact teacher candidates' confidence and perception of preparedness to engage in collaborative interaction with diverse families. These results also indicate that the simulation methods used in this study presented participants with various challenges to be addressed in future research. Based on the findings, we recommend the inclusion of structured simulations involving parent and teacher interactions during teacher preparation programs. We also recommend that future research examine the impact of adding a coaching and immediate feedback component to simulations and study the impact it has on the preparedness and skill level of candidates.

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Examining the Validity of a Student Teaching Evaluation Instrument

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Abstract

This study examines the validity of a student teaching evaluation instrument used in a teacher preparation program. Grounded in research-based conceptualizations of teaching and aligned to standards from relevant professional associations, the instrument is used to evaluate teacher candidates during their student teaching experience. To determine the instrument's validity, we used exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to study responses from cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and student teachers. Findings partially confirm the validity of the instrument and indicate that the 30 competencies of the instrument comprise an invariant structure of four domains: planning, onstage teaching, assessment, and professionalism. Implications include instrument revision, the need for rater training, and further exploration of curricular alignment.

Keywords: evaluation instrument, student teaching, validity

Initial preparation to undertake the work of teaching relies on authentic practice in field-based settings (AACTE Clinical Practice Commission, 2018; Ball & Forzani, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). Meaningful field-based experiences provide opportunities for student teachers (STs) to apply what they have learned during coursework, and they present situations that prompt and require STs' continued learning (Zeichner, 2010). Teacher preparation programs (TPPs) rely on partner K-12 schools to provide a setting for such clinical experiences and on cooperating teachers (CTs) and university supervisors (USs) to provide mentoring, coaching, and evaluation during that experience (Clarke, et al., 2014; Gareis & Grant, 2014).

Although mentoring is the central task of being a CT (Gareis & Grant, 2014), CTs also serve in an evaluative capacity, providing summative judgments of the quality of STs' performance and their potential to be successful teachers (Wang et al., 2003). CTs work in conjunction with USs, who represent the TPP and its affiliated interests, namely, ensuring that STs are developing as autonomous professionals who will be prepared to join the teaching profession as novice, professionally credentialed educators.

Providing CTs and USs with the tools necessary to enact their evaluative roles is an obligation for all TPPs. If STs' effectiveness is to be meaningfully evaluated during their clinical experiences, then the instrument used to make that determination must be sound. As Bryant et al. (2016) assert, the "assessment of pre-service teachers' performance in the field must include…the assurance that the assessment is valid and reliable" (p. 81). Accreditation bodies, too, emphasize the intentional development and consistent use of valid evaluation instruments (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013; Sandholtz & Shea, 2012). High-stakes consequences associated with summative evaluations, such as final grades, credentialing, and hiring decisions, compound the need for trustworthy evaluation instruments (Clarke et al., 2014).

Despite the centrality of evaluation instruments in judging ST performance, the quality of such tools may be insufficient to summatively judge the performance of STs (Clarke et al., 2014), particularly with regard to their validity and reliability (Bryant et al., 2016; Choi et al., 2016). Indeed, Richmond et al. (2019) characterize the development and validation of "informative, scalable, and accepted" instruments for assessing ST performance as "a persistent challenge facing teacher education" (p. 86). Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate the validity of the student teaching evaluation instrument currently used in our

TPP. Because this study provides evidence of such validation, our methodology and findings may serve as a model for other TPPs attempting to design, revise, and/or validate their evaluation instruments.

History and Evolution of the Student Teaching Evaluation Instrument

The evaluation instrument investigated in this study is currently used by the TPP at a mid-sized public university in Virginia. The current instrument was initially developed in 2001–2002 when the TPP convened a committee to study the student teaching standards as outlined by relevant professional associations, including the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Council of Teachers of Math (NCTM), the National Council of Teachers of Science (NCTS), and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The committee's work was also influenced by Stronge's (2002) research-based review of qualities of effective teachers and Danielson's (1996) Framework for Teaching.

After completing a crosswalk of these professional standards, frameworks, and guiding conceptual elements, the committee, comprised of general education, special education, gifted education, and educational leadership faculty members, established an agreed-upon set of competencies which represent the knowledge, skills, and dispositions STs should develop throughout their coursework and field experiences. A panel of Clinical Faculty (CTs in our affiliated K-12 schools who have taken a master's level course in CT preparation) also reviewed the competencies to ensure that they reflected the skills necessary for effective teaching and were readily understood by our K-12 partners.

Ultimately, the committee proposed an evaluation instrument of 30 competencies divided into six domains (see *Appendix*): Foundational Understanding; Ability to Plan, Organize, and Prepare to Teach; Teaching Skills; Assessment and Evaluation of Learning; Classroom Management Knowledge and Skills; and Professional Knowledge and Skills. The instrument offers performance indicators as illustrative examples of each competency; however, these indicators are not intended as an explicit list of required behaviors. Rather, the instrument allows for the possibility that an evaluator might not observe any of the performance indicators but may note other, equally valid indications of the demonstration of a competency.

Revisions to the Competencies

Over time, the original 30 competencies have undergone both minor and substantive revisions. Slight changes in wording have constituted most of the minor revisions. For instance, Competency 26 originally stated the expectation that a ST "participates in professional development" (School of Education, 2002) but was later revised to clarify that a ST "participates in *and applies* [emphasis added] professional development" (School of Education, 2016).

In 2009, an ad hoc committee in the TPP made more substantive revisions to the competencies to ensure that they reflect both the college's Diversity Statement and the TPP's commitment to preparing STs who are dedicated to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Grounded in the belief that respect for and attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion pervade a teacher's core responsibilities, the committee decided to incorporate these attributes throughout the existing competencies rather than creating additional competencies or an additional domain. For instance, Competency 5 originally stated the expectation that a ST "demonstrates an understanding of the purposes and roles of K-12 education" (School of Education, 2002) but was revised to clarify the expectation that a ST "demonstrates an understanding of the purposes and

roles of PreK-12 education *in a diverse and inclusive democratic society* [emphasis added]" (School of Education, 2016). The TPP again consulted with Clinical Faculty from partnering K-12 schools to solicit feedback and suggestions on these changes.

Revisions to the Rating Scale

The TPP has also made revisions to the rating scale of the evaluation instrument. Initially, the evaluation instrument enumerated three performance levels: "Below Expectations," "Meets Expectations," and "Exceeds Expectations." Over several years of the instrument's use, USs shared that some of the competencies addressed less visible teaching tasks and were not always evident during their observations. Similarly, CTs argued that other of the competencies addressed theoretical constructs which were sometimes more challenging to observe in applied practice. Based on these concerns, "Unable to Observe" was included as an element in the rating scale beginning in 2004. In 2013, Clinical Faculty from the TPP's partnership schools voiced concerns that the scoring system did not provide a means of acknowledging STs who were moving in the right direction but not yet meeting expectations. Supported by empirical evidence (Gareis & Grant, 2014), the TPP added "Developing" as an option between "Below Expectations" and "Meets Expectations."

Uses of the Instrument

The evaluation instrument is not an observation tool. Rather, it conveys accumulated judgment about a ST's performance based on multiple sources of information, including observations and coaching conversations. The evaluation instrument is used formatively at the midpoint of the student teaching experience and summatively at the end of that student teaching experience. At both intervals in the term, the instrument is completed by the ST, the CT, and the US, thus creating a total of six evaluations of a ST's performance. The CT and US's evaluations,

combined with the ST's self-evaluation, are used formatively to provide clarity about areas for continued growth. Summatively, the instrument leads to a final judgment regarding a ST's overall teaching effectiveness, resulting in a grade of pass or fail in the student teaching experience.

Methodology and Results

Grounded in professional standards and considerable stakeholder feedback, the current evaluation instrument was created with substantial face validity. Therefore, the intent of this study was to investigate the validity of the instrument using empirical methodology, namely factor analysis. Specifically, we sought to answer two questions:

1. To what degree does a consistent factor structure emerge from the rating data?
2. To what degree does that structure reflect the a priori six-factor structure upon which the instrument was theoretically constructed?

Sample

The data for the current investigation were extracted from the ratings of three cohorts of STs over a six-semester timeframe. The midterm and final ratings of USs, CTs, and STs were examined for a common factorial model. The data set included 1,486 cases with complete rating scales which were used in the analyses. Table 1 displays the number of cases at each time period for each group.

Table 1

Sample Size by Time and Rater

Rater	Midterm	Final
Cooperating Teacher	262	237
University Supervisor	250	251
Student Teacher	256	230

Analyses

Because the TPP developed the instrument using a theoretical model, we conducted initial analyses using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), treating the item-level rating data as ordinal inputs. We conducted CFAs in MPus v7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) using diagonally weighted least squares (WLSMV) as the estimator. WLSMV is specifically designed to handle ordinal data (Li, 2016). We used three fit measures to judge the fit of our models, including the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), confirmatory fit index (CFI), and weighted root mean square residual (WRMR). We considered a model to fit well if the RMSEA was at or below .05, CFI was greater than .95, and WRMR was lower than 1 (DiStefano, 2016; Hu & Bentler, 1999; & MacCallum et al., 1996). When using WLSMV, typical chi-square difference testing cannot be conducted in the usual manner (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). Therefore, we relied on the fit indices as a guide for better models.

First, we conducted two CFAs for each group (i.e., STs, USs, and CTs) at each time point (i.e., midterm and final). The initial CFA tested a unidimensional model, and the second CFA tested the proposed correlated six-factor model. The unidimensional model was estimated to provide a comparison point for the six-factor model. Table 2 presents the results of the unidimensional and six-factor models. As suspected, the unidimensional model did not fit the

data well. The six-factor model was an improvement over the unidimensional model in all instances as indicted by the lower chi-square value and fit indices that achieved or approximated the established thresholds for good fit. However, four of the six-factor models evidenced a non-positive definite covariance matrix, rendering those solutions inadmissible. Based on the magnitude of the correlations among the factors, we tested both second-order and bifactor models for each group. Neither of these models fit well in more than one group.

Table 2

CFA Results for the Unidimensional and Six-Factor Models

Model	df	$\chi 2$	RMSEA	CFI	WRMR
US Midterm					
Unidimensional	405	1325.24	0.09	0.88	1.85
Six Factors	390	865.36	0.07	0.94	1.35[a]
ST Midterm					
Unidimensional	405	943.28	0.07	0.94	1.40
Six Factors	390	683.72	0.05	0.96	1.06[a]
CT Midterm					
Unidimensional	405	1085.49	0.08	0.94	1.48
Six Factors	390	735.94	0.05	0.97	1.06
US Final					
Unidimensional	405	990.24	0.07	0.94	1.42
Six Factors	390	744.68	0.06	0.96	1.12[a]
ST Final					
Unidimensional	405	799.48	0.06	0.95	1.27
Six Factors	390	602.04	0.04	0.97	1.01
CT Final					
Unidimensional	405	825.64	0.06	0.96	1.22
Six Factors	390	611.41	0.04	0.98	0.95[a]

Note: The latent variable covariance matrix was not positive definite.

Before testing for a common structure across groups, researchers typically demonstrate that the proposed structure fits the groups independently (Byrne, 2016). The lack of an

acceptable solution for the six-factor model in four of the CFAs argues against a common structure. We therefore applied an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) approach known as Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling (ESEM) (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009) to the data sets to determine whether a consistent factor pattern could be identified. ESEM incorporates the advantages of the less restrictive EFA and the more advanced CFA (including tests of model fit) at the same time. ESEM has shown to result in improved model fit and deflated inter-factor correlations compared to EFA (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009; Marsh et al., 2014). The ESEMs were conducted in MPus v7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) using WLSMV as the estimator with geomin rotation. We examined the CFI, RMSEA, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) as indicators of model fit. We considered a model to be a good fit if the CFI was greater than .95, the RMSEA was at or below .05, and the SRMR was less than .05 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum et al., 1996). Although two of the analyses (ST and CT final) indicated an acceptable three-factor model, the requirement of an acceptable model across all six samples indicated a four-factor solution was necessary.

A common four-factor model was created by randomly selecting 50 cases from each of the six groups and conducting a constrained four-factor ESEM using WLSMV as the estimator with geomin rotation. The use of 300 cases ensured sufficient power in the analysis without over reliance on any particular sample. Table 3 presents the final factor solution with significant factor loadings in bold. The loadings shows that some of the original factors (e.g., “Professional Dispositions” and “Assessment and Evaluation for Learning”) were maintained as distinct, other factors were merged (e.g., “Teaching Skills” and “Classroom Management Knowledge and Skills”), and some factors had their competencies distributed over new factors (e.g., “Foundational Understanding”). At the competency level, some competencies

had weak association to the new factors (specifically, Competencies 3 and 5), and there was distinct cross loading for other competencies (Competencies 7, 19, and 20). Table 4 presents the factor reliabilities and correlations. The values indicate that the new factors have substantial reliability and, as expected, correlate significantly with each other.

Table 3

Common Factor Solution Significant Loadings in Bold

Domain and Competency	1 Onstage Teaching	2 Professionalism	3 Planning	4 Assessment
Foundational Understanding				
1. Demonstrates understanding of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge for instruction.	.090	.113	**.440**	.075
2. Demonstrates understanding of how students learn and develop and provides learning opportunities that support students' intellectual, social, and personal development.	**.601**	-.040	.102	.115
3. Demonstrates understanding of the central role of language and literacy in student learning.	.192	.158	**.253**	.187
4. Demonstrates understanding of how all students differ in their experiences and their approaches to learning.	**.667**	.038	-.077	.133
5. Demonstrates an understanding of the purposes and roles of PreK-12 education in a diverse and inclusive democratic society.	.077	**.300**	.142	.174
Ability to Plan, Organize, and Prepare for Teaching				
6. Plans lessons that align with local, state, and national standards.	-.244	.046	**.919**	.025
7. Selects appropriate instructional strategies/activities aligned to instructional	**.505**	-.194	**.467**	.014

goals and responsive to diverse student needs.				
8. Selects appropriate materials/resources aligned to instructional goals and that are reflective of diverse perspectives.	.179	-.121	**.641**	.008
Teaching Skills				
9. Teaches based on planned lessons.	.048	.115	**.592**	.058
10. Provides for individual differences.	**.607**	.013	-.091	.206
11. Uses motivational strategies to promote learning for all students.	**.871**	.030	-.169	.004
12. Engages students actively in learning.	**.737**	-.007	.088	-.071
13. Uses a variety of effective teaching strategies.	**.532**	-.050	.150	.054
14. Helps students develop thinking skills that promote learning.	**.505**	.064	.094	.151
15. Monitors student learning.	**.354**	.106	.038	.105
Assessment and Evaluation for Learning				
16. Creates and selects appropriate assessments for learning.	.097	-.103	.139	**.668**
17. Implements assessments for learning.	-.062	.049	.025	**.852**
18. Interprets/uses assessment results to make instructional decisions.	.060	.117	-.031	**.672**
Classroom Management Knowledge and Skills				
19. Builds positive rapport with and among students, fostering an environment that values and encourages respect for diversity.	**.572**	**.350**	-.090	-.199
20. Organizes for effective teaching.	**.323**	.135	**.347**	-.018
21. Demonstrates use of effective routines and procedures.	**.522**	.118	.190	-.033
22. Demonstrates efficient and effective use of time.	**.549**	.060	.178	-.005

23. Maintains a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for all students.	**.433**	.172	.076	-.135
24. Responds appropriately and equitably to student behaviors.	**.646**	.117	-.098	.043
Professional Dispositions				
25. Demonstrates professional demeanor and ethical behavior.	.073	**.620**	.156	-.183
26. Participates in and applies professional development.	-.123	**.618**	-.064	.173
27. Demonstrates effective oral and written communication.	-.018	**.620**	.159	.040
28. Reflects actively and continuously upon practice, leading to enhanced teaching and learning for all students.	.052	**.443**	.213	.072
29. Cooperates, collaborates, and fosters relationships with families and other members of the community.	.127	**.706**	-.181	.061
30. Demonstrates potential for teacher leadership.	.122	**.461**	-.006	.059

Table 4

Factor Correlations and Omega Reliabilities

Factor/Domain	**Onstage Teaching**	**Professionalism**	**Planning**	**Assessment**
Onstage Teaching	.94			
Professionalism	.74	.89		
Planning	.78	.65	.87	
Assessment	.68	.61	.67	.85

Note: Values in the diagonal are omega reliability coefficients.

Discussion

The original six-factor model classified the stated competencies into six domains. The study results, however, indicate that these competencies are more appropriately grouped in a common four-factor model. Our review and analysis of this outcome led us to label the four new factors as "Professionalism," "Assessment," "Onstage Teaching," and "Planning."

Professionalism and Assessment

Within the common four-factor model, two of the original domains ("Professional Dispositions" and "Assessment and Evaluation for Learning") remained distinct, with all the competencies initially ascribed to those domains continuing to correlate with those factors. That is, Competencies 25–30 continue to group as "Professionalism," and Competencies 16–18 as "Assessment" in the common four-factor model. Essentially, these results indicate that raters using the instrument operationally conceptualize each of these sets of competencies as unified factors (or "domains" in the language of the TPP). Both Stronge (2002) and Danielson's (1996)

frameworks emphasize similar sets of competencies with regard to professional competencies, and Stronge also includes a similar set of competencies with regard to assessment.

We submit that the clear, unequivocal language used in the competencies comprising these two domains helps to distinguish the competencies as clearly belonging to their respective factors. For instance, the word "assessment" is used in each of the competencies affiliated with that factor, and the order of the three competencies suggests an assessment process. Likewise, the competencies associated with "Professionalism" use words such as "professional," "communicate," "cooperate," "collaborate," "reflect," "relationship," and "leadership," which may signal their inclusion in that factor.

Onstage Teaching

Both Stronge (2002) and Danielson (1996) maintain separate domains for instruction and classroom environment; our original six-factor model did as well. However, ESEM confirms that the raters using our instrument do not distinguish between teaching and classroom management as separate factors but rather perceive them to be two parts of one whole, suggesting that the raters conceive of classroom management as integral to effective instruction. These results lead us to conclude that the tasks encompassed by the competencies in these particular domains are those teacher behaviors that occur during class time and are thus most visible to others. We have labeled these readily visible tasks "Onstage Teaching" as a means of differentiating them from the tasks of teaching that occur when teachers are not actively working with a class of students (e.g., planning, reflection, assessment, feedback, etc.), tasks which Macfarlane (2007) terms "offstage" (p. 49). Although classroom management's inclusion as a subset of "Onstage Teaching" could suggest a diminished view of

its importance, we contend that, at least for the raters using this instrument, classroom management is perceived as essential to, and inseparable from, effective instruction.

Redistributed Competencies

In the common four-factor model, several of the competencies redistributed to factors other than those to which they were originally assigned. This is the case with the first five competencies which were grouped in the original six-factor model as "Foundational Understanding." Unlike the other five original domains, which encompass observable competencies, this domain focuses more on understandings that are developmental and foundational. The ESEM results, however, indicate that raters using this instrument do not perceive these five competencies as comprising a unified factor. Instead, the competencies distributed across three other factors in the common four-factor model. Competency 1 redistributed to "Planning," a change which might be explained by the competency's language about understanding subject area content and pedagogy. Competencies 2 and 4 correlated strongly with "Onstage Teaching." Competency 2 calls for STs to "provide learning opportunities," and Competency 4 requires STs to demonstrate their understanding of student differences. In both cases, the language suggests instruction, an idea supported by raters' perception that these two competencies belong in "Onstage Teaching."

Competency 3, which focuses on a ST's understanding of the central role of language in learning, did not correlate strongly with any factor. Given that the competency appears to be an outlier, there are three possible explanations: Either (a) the item is not relevant to effective teaching, (b) it *is* relevant but unlike any of the other competencies, or (c) its meaning is unclear. We contend that the second explanation best applies: Though unique, this item is

foundationally imperative as it emphasizes the need for STs to understand that language, as the primary means by which people express thought, is essential to all teaching and learning.

Competency 5, which addresses the role of public education in a democratic society, also did not correlate strongly with any factor. As an apparent outlier, the same three explanations are possible: irrelevant, unique, or unclear. We hold that two of these are likely: the item is both unclear and unlike other items. Our review of Competency 5 suggests that the use of multiple conceptual terms creates a complex statement whose meaning may not be readily apprehended by the raters using the instrument. In addition to being linguistically complex, Competency 5 is also unique. We contend, however, that its focus on understanding the purpose and role of public education, though unlike any of the other competencies, is nonetheless relevant to effective teaching.

Shared Competencies

In three cases, a competency is "shared" between two of the new factors. Competencies 7 and 20 are shared between "Onstage Teaching" and "Planning." Competency 7, originally allocated to the "Ability to Plan, Organize, and Prepare for Teaching" domain, still has a strong connection to "Planning" but aligns even more strongly with "Onstage Teaching." The language of the competency is mixed, emphasizing the planning domain with reference to selecting appropriate strategies and emphasizing the instructional domain with reference to instructional strategies and activities. Competency 20, initially allocated to "Classroom Management Knowledge and Skills," has a weak relationship to both "Onstage Teaching" and "Planning." The shortest of all the competencies in terms of wording, it nonetheless still has double-barreled language that might cause it to group with either of those categories. For instance, the word "organizes" suggests planning whereas "effective teaching" indicates

alignment with “Onstage Teaching.” Competency 19, originally allocated to “Classroom Management Knowledge and Skills,” still aligns most strongly with “Onstage Teaching;” however, the results indicate that some raters consider this competency to more appropriately fit with “Professionalism.” Phrases such as “positive rapport” and “environment” may create a problem with clarity about the intention of the competency. In all cases, the mixed message of the competency may explain why raters perceive it as grouping with two possible factors.

Diversity: An Integrated Construct

As noted previously, significant changes were made to the wording of the competencies in 2009 to reflect the university’s Diversity Statement. The intentional decision to incorporate language that addresses diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the instrument rather than creating an additional domain for diversity is supported by the ESEM results. Despite terms and phrases such as “diverse,” “diversity,” “inclusive,” “equitably,” and “all students” appearing in ten of the competencies, these competencies did not correlate in the common four-factor model to create a fifth factor. Rather, with the exception of Competency 5, they all remained in factors similar to their original domains, evidence that affirms the committee’s decision.

Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

The empirical methodology of this study has provided important insights into a judgment of the validity of this student teaching evaluation instrument. Here we explore three pragmatic implications that extend from the findings.

Revision of the Instrument

The instrument could be strengthened through further revision, both in terms of the competencies themselves as well as the arrangement of those competencies into particular domains. The clarity of several of the competencies is problematic, particularly those that are

redistributed to new factors (Competencies 1, 2, and 4), those that are shared among the four factors (Competencies 7, 19, and 20), and those that are weak contributors to any factor (Competencies 3 and 5). Revision of these competencies for greater clarity and precision is certainly warranted, with these revisions potentially leading to stronger correlation of the various competencies to the four factors. Such revisions should draw on updated professional standards and may also consider the updated models of both Stronge and Danielson. Rearranging the competencies into the four factors indicated by the common four-factor model is another means of improving the validity of the instrument as restructuring the competencies to represent the findings of this study may provide a more integrated view of the act of teaching.

Another possible revision might be to consider how to continue to elevate respect for and attention to diversity, equity, and social justice. Guided by the belief that these principles pervade all teaching responsibilities, the 2009 revision committee chose to embed them throughout the competencies rather than to create a separate domain for them. As noted earlier, this decision appears to be supported by the data from this study. However, the phrasing of the competencies themselves might be strengthened to better reflect the university's commitment to diversity, equity, and social justice. Faculty have recently adopted a more robust Diversity Statement which explicitly addresses antiracism and social justice, and we anticipate that this new statement will prompt further discussion about the evaluation instrument and how it might be revised to ensure that our TPP graduates are committed to these principles.

Training

Regardless of what revisions are made, efforts to promote a common understanding among all raters of the expectations of STs, as articulated by the competencies, is imperative (Bryant et al., 2016; AACTE, 2018). Systematic training for all who use the instrument would

provide a means of achieving this common understanding. A study of the TPP's Clinical Faculty Program, which offers training for teachers recruited to serve as CTs, concluded that explicitly, systematically, and intentionally training CTs to understand and utilize the student teaching evaluation instrument resulted in more accurate evaluations of STs (Gareis & Grant, 2014).

Currently, USs and STs in our TPP do not receive similar explicit, systematic, or intentional training on the rationale for, construction of, and use of the instrument. Extending this training to all rater groups would likely improve rater clarity about the intentions of the competencies and increase the likelihood that the language and structure of the instrument are not barriers to applying it as intended.

Teacher Preparation Program Curriculum

Finally, given the interdependent nature of assessment and curriculum (Gareis & Grant, 2015; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), our study of this student teaching evaluation instrument must consider the implications of that assessment for the program's curriculum. Given the results from this study, we question whether the instrument is aligned with the TPP's scope and sequence of coursework. The question of curricular alignment is particularly salient for the two competencies that did not correlate strongly with any of the four factors and raises questions about whether these elements of teaching are receiving sufficient attention in the curriculum. These findings, then, imply that policy decisions regarding curriculum must be framed by the instrument and, conversely, that revisions to the instrument should shape conversation regarding the curriculum.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study is subject to several limitations. First, because the study is specific to this TPP, its results are not generalizable. Furthermore, the study does not investigate the perspectives of those stakeholders who use the instrument or their reasoning behind their conceptualizations of

the instrument, nor does it consider the influence of the stakeholders' demographics, such as years of experience or previous contextual experiences. The study is also limited in that it does not investigate the impact of potential differences between the midterm evaluation (used formatively) and the final evaluation (used summatively). Nonetheless, this study may provide instructive insight to other TPPs regarding their own instrument development and validation.

Future research might focus on a qualitative or mixed method study that further investigates the perspectives and conceptualizations of stakeholders who use the instrument and the role of demographics in influencing their use of the instrument.

Conclusion

The creation of this student teaching evaluation instrument began with qualitative consideration of the constructs for which it is intended to provide evidence. The work, undertaken by a committee of faculty experts drawing upon professionally recognized standards and frameworks, culminated in a conceptual framework of 30 competencies organized into six domains. After more than 15 years of use and refinement of the instrument, this quantitative study sought to examine how those same competencies and domains manifest in the student teaching evaluation instrument through its use by the three rater groups. Although findings indicate that the three rater groups do not perceive the competencies as holding together in the same way the committee originally conceived of them, there is an invariant structure close to the original upon which the three rater groups all agree. Although there are implications in these differences, the instrument nonetheless serves to provide reasonably valid and reliable evidence of STs' competencies. With attention to minor revisions, expanded training opportunities, and closer alignment of components of the TPP curriculum to the evaluation criteria, the TPP can

increase the validity of the student teacher evaluation instrument and the efficacy of the inferences and actions resulting from its use.

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Appendix

Domains and Competencies of the Student Teaching Evaluation Instrument

Domain 1: Foundational Understanding

1. Demonstrates understanding of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge for instruction.
2. Demonstrates understanding of how students learn and develop and provides learning opportunities that support students' intellectual, social, and personal development.
3. Demonstrates understanding of the central role of language and literacy in student learning.
4. Demonstrates understanding of how all students differ in their experiences and their approaches to learning.
5. Demonstrates an understanding of the purposes and roles of PreK-12 education in a diverse and inclusive democratic society.

Domain 2: Ability to Plan, Organize, and Prepare for Teaching

6. Plans lessons that align with local, state, and national standards.
7. Selects appropriate instructional strategies/activities aligned to instructional goals and responsive to diverse student needs.
8. Selects appropriate materials/resources aligned to instructional goals and that are reflective of diverse perspectives.

Domain 3: Teaching Skills

9. Teaches based on planned lessons.
10. Provides for individual differences.
11. Uses motivational strategies to promote learning for all students.
12. Engages students actively in learning.
13. Uses a variety of effective teaching strategies.
14. Helps students develop thinking skills that promote learning.
15. Monitors student learning.

Domain 4: Assessment and Evaluation for Learning

16. Creates and selects appropriate assessments for learning.
17. Implements assessments for learning.
18. Interprets/uses assessment results to make instructional decisions.

Domain 5: Classroom Management Knowledge and Skills

19. Builds positive rapport with and among students, fostering an environment that values and encourages respect for diversity.
20. Organizes for effective teaching.
21. Demonstrates use of effective routines and procedures.
22. Demonstrates efficient and effective use of time.
23. Maintains a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for all students.

24. Responds appropriately and equitably to student behavior.

Domain 6: Professional Dispositions

25. Demonstrates professional demeanor and ethical behavior.
26. Participates in and applies professional development.
27. Demonstrates effective oral and written communication.
28. Reflects actively and continuously upon practice, leading to enhanced teaching and learning for all students.
29. Demonstrates potential for teacher leadership.
30. Cooperates, collaborates, and fosters relationships with families and other members of the community.

Examining the Role of Self-Reflection as an Impetus for Cultivating Equitable Practices for Multilingual Learners

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Abstract

Scholars and teacher educators continue to research ways to effectively promote culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2010; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Villegas & Lucas, 2007) and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017) with pre- and in-service teachers. Daniel (2016) postulates that teacher preparation programs need to strive to guide teacher candidates to enact culturally responsive practices across their coursework and field-based experiences. We complemented Daniel's (2016) research by implementing self-reflection practices as graduate students learned about and strived to implement culturally responsive and sustaining strategies with their tutees. The purpose of our study was to investigate how tutoring students in a community-based field placement and reflecting on these experiences affected graduate students' understandings about culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices. Key themes emerged pertaining to asset-based perspectives, relationship building, and equity, reflecting key concepts from both culturally responsive practices and culturally sustaining pedagogies.

*Keywords***:** self-reflection, teacher preparation, multilingual learners

Scholars and teacher educators continue to research ways to effectively promote culturally responsive practices (CRP; Gay, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2007) and culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP; Paris & Alim, 2017) with pre- and in-service teachers. Daniel (2016) postulates that teacher preparation programs need to strive to guide teacher candidates to enact CRP across their coursework and field-based practicum experiences. One way to achieve this goal is through self-reflective practices that engage students in the discipline of *noticing* events and actions in their field-based placements and reflecting on specific connections to their course readings and academic experiences (Daniel, 2016). Although Daniel (2016) argues, "Teacher educators must design pedagogies that [...] guide teachers toward grappling with the specifics of how they can enact — not just conceptualize — culturally responsive pedagogy" (p.

592), few studies provide contextualized examples of fostering reflective processes in graduate students and explore how self-reflection promotes transformative learning (Mezirow, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of our study was to investigate how tutoring students in a community-based field placement and reflecting on these experiences affected graduate students' understandings about culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices.

Literature Review

Our study was grounded in CRP (Gay, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2007) and CSP (Paris & Alim, 2017). In addition, self-reflection practices (Daniel, 2016) on community-based learning experiences (Schneider, 2019) were explored.

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogies

As Gay (2010) explains:

> Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches *to and through* strengths of these students. (p. 31)

Furthermore, Paris (2012) advocates that "research and practice need equally explicit resistances that embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equality" (p. 93). Paris and Alim (2017) encourage educators to extend beyond asset-based practices and to focus on pluralistic outcomes, not white middle class monolingual norms when assessing student achievement. They also argue that culture is not static or in the past, but constantly evolving and changing. As an individual's sense of identity contains various intersecting factors, educators need to make adjustments to their curricular practices to incorporate those influences and help nurture students' identities. These practices can include cultural and linguistic pedagogies that honor students' use of both their

native language and culture and therefore strive to sustain important aspects of their lives (Paris & Alim, 2017).

Community-Based Learning Experiences

To support transformation in graduate students' learning, community-based learning experiences serve as a means to broaden their awareness of sociopolitical factors impacting multilingual students' lives. These experiences can enable graduate students to gain clearer understandings of course content, as they wrestle with concepts in meaningful ways.

Schneider (2019) contends, "Community-based service learning offers a unique method for helping TESOL students see language learners in relation to the larger social world… It allows emerging teachers to recognize that their own identities exist in relation to the larger social world (p. 3). However, Lucas and Villegas (2013) argue that community-based learning experiences "accompanied by facilitated discussions of those experiences can support development of an advocacy stance" (p. 104). They believe that through these experiences, preservice teachers would develop "a more nuanced, contextualized understanding of ELLs, their families, and communities, gaining insight into the challenges they face and the resources they bring to those challenges—insights that can enhance their empathy and desire to advocate for ELLs" (p. 104). Moreover, Janzen and Petersen (2020) emphasize:

> While the experiences afforded by a community-based practicum might disrupt teacher candidates' assumptions, we maintain that these experiences must be carefully and ethically constructed by giving attention to the purpose and content of the course, ensuring support for teacher candidates and constructing reciprocal engagements with the community organizations**.** (p. 64)

Schneider (2019) further proposes, “An important step in this direction is moving beyond the comfort of the campus environment to engage with community organizations as equal partners. As a starting point, we must enter their institutional spaces and listen to their perspectives” (p. 11). All of the above aspects of community-based learning experiences also reflect the principles of service-learning. Students have a reciprocal relationship with the recipients of the service they provide and through reflective processes gain understandings that benefit their own education (Cho & Gulley, 2016).

The Role of Self-Reflection

Howard (2003) posits that although the need for critical reflection is essential for all educators, “teachers of students of diverse backgrounds stand to gain immeasurable benefits from a process that requires them to put the needs of their students ahead of all other considerations” (p. 201). As Daniel (2016) explains, “...teacher educators can consider how to incorporate structures, assignments, and in-class activities that give TCs [teacher candidates] time and space to discuss what and how they notice in their daily practicum experiences” (p. 592). In this study, the researcher conducted a series of seminars containing empathetic, critical integrations (ECIs) of multiple perspectives with her preservice teachers. ECIs were created to help preservice teachers to become culturally responsive and to discuss perspectives they encountered in schools that differed from what they were learning. These ECIs are a “potential route for facilitating teacher candidates’ abilities to integrate understandings they have gained from students in their field-based practicums, mentors and teachers at the practicums, and instructors and peers from their university-based teacher education coursework” (Daniel, 2016, p. 150).

Similarly, Cho and Gully (2016) argue that teacher educators need to integrate "formal components of facilitating student reflections" on field-based experiences into their TESOL coursework because without "thoughtfully integrated TESOL education and reflection" (p. 630), field-based experiences by themselves may reinforce stereotypes of multilingual students.

However, Min Shim (2020) warns about the feelings of discomfort and vulnerability exploring the notion of self-reflection in race ideology. In her study on three white male preservice teachers, she explains, "Even though all the participants are committed to the project, 'major disruption to the "normal" way of life for the majority of Whites' (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 28) is not welcomed as shown by the participants' statements" (Min Shim, 2020, p. 842). The researcher argues that people's ways of thinking cannot be changed through rational reflection:

> Educators must still acknowledge and face the desire for wholeness that are intensified through the unconscious internalization and embodiment of white racial supremacy that seems very persuasive in generating resistance to ambivalence, incommensurability and vulnerability which in turn can invoke resistance in self-reflective practices pertaining to issues of race and racism. (p. 844)

Schneider (2019) further insists that if teacher educators want to help preservice teachers engage in self-reflection on their community-based field experiences, "we, as instructors, must be responsive to students' evolving efforts to navigate this challenging terrain, and we must also maintain and display a critical awareness of our own positions within the model" (p. 11).

Therefore, our study was situated in CRP (Gay, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2007) and CSP (Paris & Alim, 2017) with the focus on self-reflection practices (Daniel, 2016) on community-based learning experiences (Schneider, 2019). Since the inception of our partnership with a

community migrant education program, we have wondered about our graduate students' abilities to make connections between coursework and their community-based learning experiences. We were curious to understand how they wrestled with cultural and linguistic equity issues, if at all. Consequently, we explored the following research question in our study: How did self-reflection on tutoring in a community-based experience affect graduate students' understandings about teaching multilingual learners?

Methods

We employed a qualitative case study approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to provide an in-depth description of two graduate students' reflective practices as they participated in weekly tutoring sessions with their assigned migrant education students. Since the study sought to explore the perceptions of graduate students when teaching migrant education students and their learning in the early field experience, it was appropriate to conduct qualitative research. We were interested in the meaning they derived from these experiences. In addition, our study also represents a case study because it is "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37); it focused on a specific community-based field experience with migrant education students in the fall semester of 2018 and 2019. Our case was bounded by time and activity; we collected detailed information using a variety of data sources over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2009).

Context

This study focused on two participants: Mary as a white cisgender middle-class monolingual English female and Ting as a Chinese-American cisgender middle-class multilingual female. They both worked with Spanish-speaking low-income youth from Latin American countries. The former was a practicing elementary teacher in our local school district

while the latter was a pre-service teacher working on her initial P-12 English as a Second Language (ESL) licensure. For confidentiality purposes, pseudonyms were used for all names.

We, as researchers, also were instructors of these students in either a second language acquisition or cross-cultural education course as well as supervisors of their community-based field experiences. We are both white cisgender female teacher educators who have been working with graduate and undergraduate TESOL students at our master's comprehensive university in the eastern part of the United States. One of the researchers is a former language learner who was born and raised outside of the United States.

We partnered with a local community-based organization that supports migrant education students. In order to qualify for services, families would have to demonstrate their displacement in pursuit of work in the agricultural field or poultry industry. Our graduate students served as tutors to migrant education students in helping them with homework and other academic work either at public places, such as schools or libraries, or at migrant education homes. In our study, one of the participants met with her two students after school in the same school in which she taught and students attended while the other participant worked with her student in his home.

Data Collection

We collected multiple data sources, such as an action research project from the language acquisition course, weekly journals and a philosophy of diversity paper from the cross-cultural education course, and individual semi-structured interviews.

Our research incorporated weekly journals in which participants recorded descriptions of their experiences and tutees' reactions. We urged them to reflect on key connections to their coursework that stimulated their thinking about language or culture concepts, as evident in their tutoring sessions. Students delved deeper in their understanding of these concepts in their action

research project and philosophy of diversity, assignments that were grounded in participants' migrant education experiences.

Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded and further transcribed verbatim. This interview took place after these courses were completed and final grades were assigned. The list below depicts the interview questions that were used with participants. Additionally, five to six follow-up questions were asked based on each participant's quotes in their written work. We read five to six quotes and asked each participant to elaborate on their remarks. In addition, we followed up with additional questions based on their explanations.

1. Please tell us about your experiences with your migrant education student. Who did you work with? Where? How long? What did you work on with your student, and why?
2. Could you describe an experience you had with your student that you felt really influenced or impacted you? If so, tell us about this experience and why it was significant.
3. What cultural and linguistic knowledge, if any, did you gain through your experience with your student?
4. What pedagogical skills, if any, did you gain through your experience with your student?
5. How did the experience with your student influence your attitude toward teaching diverse students?
6. Varied questions based on participant quotes.
7. Is there anything else you would like to share that we didn't ask you yet?

Data Analysis

The data obtained through two individual interview transcripts, a total of 21 journals, two action research projects, and two philosophy of diversity papers were coded and analyzed for themes using an inductive and comparative analysis process following Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) guidelines. The first phase of data analysis was to code each data source separately using our research question as a guide. We looked for segments in our data that were responsive to our question and provided notes and informal labels to serve as beginning themes. The process involved reading and rereading all data in their entirety multiple times in order to clarify themes. Each theme was given a definition to explain the meaning of the identified data, and some themes were collapsed into a larger category upon review and dialogue among the researchers. In addition, we conducted member checking with participants of individual interviews by reviewing interview transcripts with them to eliminate any inconsistencies and to confirm their previously made statements.

The researchers worked together to reach inter-rater reliability. We conducted two cycles of coding interview transcripts together to determine a common language for the coding and to establish consensus. Each investigator then coded half of the remaining student written work based on the previously established protocol. We then conducted several more rounds together before reaching final consensus on the data themes.

Additionally, we incorporated several strategies to protect against validity threats, such as triangulation, member checking, and adequate engagement in data collection along with using rich, thick description to convey our findings (Creswell, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). We triangulated our data sources by examining evidence from each source in order to build a justification for our themes. By converging our sources of data, we added validity to our study.

Moreover, we used member checking to validate the accuracy of our qualitative findings by asking our participants to review our findings. Finally, we incorporated adequate engagement by describing only the findings that "felt saturated", those themes where we had substantial evidence for our interpretations and few, if no, alternative explanations. Furthermore, by providing a thick, rich description of our participants' experiences, we strove to add to the validity of our findings.

This study highlights the themes that emerged: asset-based perspectives, relationship building, and equity. The asset-based perspective theme included a total of 23 codes. The equity theme comprised a total of 24 codes while the relationship building theme encompassed a total of 16 codes.

Findings

These findings revealed that both participants challenged their personal assumptions and became involved in pedagogical, cultural, linguistic, and ethical concerns to support their students. They worked with Spanish-speaking, low-income youth from Latin American countries. From their practices they gained asset-based perspectives and insights into the role of relationships with clearer understandings of equity in educational settings.

Asset-Based Perspectives

We defined asset-based perspectives as incorporating students' backgrounds, motivation, interests, and identities into instruction in addition to providing a choice in how students would demonstrate their understanding and knowledge. Both participants grew in their understanding of how their students' biographies and intersectionalities affected their instructional practices.

Mary

Mary explained ways that she tried to connect to students through the selection of multicultural books that resonated with them, as follows: "During my Migrant Ed placement..., I incorporated several texts into our sessions that I thought [my students] could relate with and enjoy. Watching [them] genuinely connect with texts relevant to their lives proved how crucial it is for students to be represented on classroom bookshelves."

By incorporating books that included Spanish, her tutees were more engaged in the activity and also able to serve as a mentor to their teacher by helping her understand Spanish, a language they knew well, as echoed in the following remark:

> [My students] loved the bilingual book *Mango, Abuela, and Me* (2017) by Meg Medina and Angelina Dominguez. After I introduced the book, the girls immediately lit up and their joy was obvious as they took turns reading the text aloud. Maria and Carmen took pride in teaching me words in Spanish.

She engaged in dialogue with her students and put herself in a position to show her own vulnerability in order to provide more meaningful and authentic experiences for her students.

Seeing herself as a facilitator with students taking charge of their learning, Mary situated her students at the center of the teaching-learning process. She summarized it in her philosophy paper, "As an instructor, I will act as a facilitator and pose questions, provide guidance, and offer insight while learners take the lead in designing classroom discussions and learning experiences that reflect their interests."

Consequently, drawing on students' cultural and linguistic capitals, Mary discovered that the lessons that incorporated both the families' funds of knowledge and native language contributed to her students' sense of belonging, as stated in the interview:

> Throughout our sessions, [my students] found the lessons that allowed them to share about their family traditions and explore their native language to be the most meaningful. These were the sessions that ended with jovial feelings and a sense of belonging and togetherness between the girls and I.

Ting

Ting also emphasized the importance of finding ways to connect to a learner's identity through native language and cultural experiences. Both required her to broaden her perspectives as she strived to integrate relevant learning experiences using Spanish, a language she did not know. In an interview she stated, "Learn something about the student's culture, like a language or their social customs, like traditions like festivals." She embraced her own advice by learning a few words in Spanish and seeking books that could resonate with her tutee's cultural background. In one example, she found a book that focused on the Day of the Dead, an important holiday for some Latinx students, that honors loved ones who have passed away. She was attempting to support Juan's culture, but discovered he had no knowledge of this holiday. Ting recognized that students' identities are nuanced, and she needed to learn more about her tutee's traditions. However, she remained committed to finding relevant literature. As she stated in her interview, she valued using multicultural literature "so students can feel the existence of their culture in the curriculum so that everybody would feel kind of proud."

When engaging Juan in discussions of the picture books she read to him, Ting intentionally asked questions to stimulate connections between her tutee and characters in the book. As she wrote in one of her journals, "When I read the page about reading picture books, I asked Juan, 'Does your dad read books to you too before bedtime?' Juan said, 'Yes. My dad read books to me, too!'" In her writings, she elaborated on the excitement that Juan expressed when

realizing similarities between himself and book characters. Ting applied this strategy frequently as a way to connect to her tutee's life.

A final way that Ting incorporated asset-based perspectives was her awareness that this kindergartner needed to be active in order to engage in her tutoring sessions. She often incorporated movement, drawing, and use of artifacts to engage Juan as he learned English. Ting explained in her interview, "You have these interactive activities for them to participate in. Then they will be more...motivated or interested in your class, in your lessons." By providing opportunities for movement, Ting cultivated a meaningful learning environment that incorporated Juan's strengths.

Relationship Building

Relationship building was another key theme that emerged in our study that paved the way for more equitable and power-sharing experiences. We define relationship building as learning about the needs and experiences of students and their families and fostering a partnership with them in order to establish a culture based on trust and mutual understanding.

Mary

Mary believed that in order to create a safe and welcoming learning environment, positive relationships with her tutees needed to be established. By asking about the best of part of their day and one thing they learned that day, she helped build a sense of safety and trust, as stated in her interview:

> And so, building those relationships they weren't grounded in an academic, you know, learning expectation, but they did help the three of us feel more connected to each other. And I think that that's important, because if that doesn't exist, then approaching

> academic learning is really difficult. If students don't feel safe or like they can express themselves in a vulnerable or open way.

These "authentic connections" would enable students to take risks in learning and show their vulnerability of not having the background knowledge of unfamiliar contexts. In the interview, Mary emphasized that building connections with students as individuals and as a whole class would help "the overall atmosphere of the classroom become more positive and more supportive and more successful."

As Mary continued working with her tutees, she learned about their funds of knowledge as they discussed books and played games, as stated in her philosophy of diversity paper: "I was thankful to learn about the girls' lives during our time together. Throughout our time together [students] demonstrated that their true abilities cannot be measured by a multiple-choice assessment." Seeing students for who they are and what they bring to the learning process is a powerful example of a teacher who is driven to create equitable and affirming learning spaces for all her students.

Ting

Because Ting's tutoring time took place in the student's home, her focus on relationship building included direct relationships with the student and the family. At first, she struggled to communicate with family members, in part due to her lack of proficiency in Spanish. However, when she brought a bilingual book in English and Spanish to one session, she noticed a dramatic shift in the families' interactions with her. Not only was Juan excited, but his mother opened up to Ting. As she noted in a journal entry:

> I am very glad to know that when I tried to use their language to communicate, I felt the tension or awkwardness in the air suddenly gone. When they knew that I could speak

> their language, even just a few words, the distance between them and me seemed to get shortened immediately.

In this case, the use of a few words in her native language fostered a more open relationship between Ting and Juan's mother. Ting also welcomed feedback to improve her Spanish abilities. As she stated, "[Juan's mom] also taught me how to pronounce the R sound in Spanish." By being vulnerable and open to support from Juan's mother, Ting strengthened her relationship with the family. She also provided her a pathway to contribute to the tutoring sessions by using some Spanish. Finally, this practice encouraged Juan's mother to learn more about Ting, as she noted in her journal, "Juan's mom even sat down and asked me whether I am Chinese or Japanese in English, which was the first time that she tried to talk to me." In our interview, Ting spoke about the importance of relationship building and emphasized that she valued both the relationship between the teacher and student and the relationship with the student's family.

Equity

Another theme that emerged in our study was equity, which we defined as enacting an ethic of care, providing differentiated instruction, advocating for students, and collaborating with other stakeholders to promote student learning and achievement.

Mary

Mary emphasized the use of multicultural books in her classroom as leveling the playing field for both the majority and minoritized students, which in turn contribute to equitable learning experiences for all, as echoed in her philosophy of diversity paper:

> Students who are considered a part of the majority can learn about the lives of others by reading. When this happens, students see that all lives are "normal" and that we can learn about many valuable and meaningful things through books.

Thus, providing multicultural books to students would ensure that all students are exposed to stories of individuals who are part of the fabric of this country. This in turn would promote more equitable instructional practices focusing on decentering whiteness in the curriculum and allowing her students to see themselves in these books, as described in Mary's interview:

> I have been working to include children's literature in my classroom that represents the lives of many individuals around the world in an attempt to allow my students to see themselves in our classroom learning materials while also being exposed to issues of racial and social justice.

However, decentering whiteness in the pursuit of social and racial justice would require teachers to go the extra mile and be vulnerable in order to provide equitable learning experiences to students, as stated by Mary in her interview: "And I think also just being willing to put in the extra time myself to learn more about the realities of history and to think about [...] whose voice is missing here."

Ting

Ting addressed the theme of equity by focusing on teachers' obligation to differentiate and explain content in meaningful ways to multilingual learners. She summarized her beliefs in one of her papers:

> Since the language in content subjects is a big challenge to most ELL students, which is the main barrier that hinders their understanding of content instructions, and thus leads to their poor academic achievement, it is important and necessary for content teachers to accommodate ELL students' needs and explain their content terms in a way that ELL students can understand.

In these remarks, Ting advocated for teachers to make accommodations, especially in their instruction of academic vocabulary and content, to enable multilingual learners to understand the subject matter.

Related to Ting's focus on student accommodations was her commitment to learning about the student's family background in order to gain a more holistic and accurate understanding of the student's culture. That knowledge could serve as an effective tool to support the student's academic needs. In her interview, she explained:

> Some other things I think ESL teachers can do… you can visit the students' family home, talk to their parents, or you can go to their community and know about their community. So they, you know, might have a more authentic view or perceptions of the students' family background or cultural background that will better help us support a teacher to accommodate these students' needs.

This quote also alludes to another key belief Ting holds with respect to equity: collaboration between content and language teachers. Multiple times she spoke about the importance of all teachers working together to support English learners. Teachers must consult with each other and collectively support multilingual students. In one paper she wrote, "Collaboration between ESL teachers and content teachers is a very effective and applicable way that many teachers and schools are practicing to better meet ELL students' needs."

Discussion and Conclusion

Since the inception of our collaboration with a community migrant education program, we have wondered about our graduate students' abilities to wrestle with cultural and linguistic equity issues. In this study, we examined a case study of two graduate students' abilities to make connections between TESOL coursework and their community-based learning experiences. More

specifically, we explored how self-reflection on a community-based experience affected graduate students' understandings about teaching multilingual learners.

The themes of asset-based perspectives, relationship building, and equity became prominent in our study. Reflections on course readings, assignments, and community-based learning experiences encouraged participants to grapple with how they could create meaningful learning opportunities for their tutees that utilized student background knowledge. They recognized inequities, taught to and through students' strengths, and became change agents by cultivating positive relationships with their students and their families (Gay, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2018; Paris & Alim, 2017). It was clear that participants embraced asset-based approaches to instruction (Gay, 2010; Nieto & Bode, 2018), as they described and built upon the strengths their students brought to the learning process. They also gained knowledge about ways social structures can perpetuate inequalities for marginalized groups, and journal entries illustrated ways that students were critically thinking about structural barriers their tutees faced, examples related to CSP and equity literacy (Gorski, 2016; Paris & Alim, 2017).

Self-reflection served as a means for participants to process their experiences and to become better equipped to enact their understandings of CRP in their teaching practices (Daniel, 2016). The use of formal reflections, class discussions, and interviews provided participants opportunities to question cultural generalizations and instead "see" their students as individuals, not stereotypes (Cho & Gully, 2016). We followed Cho and Gully's (2016) call for integrating formal reflections on field-based experiences in our coursework to ensure that our students do not reinforce stereotypes of their multilingual learners. Our role was to support and further our graduate students' evolving self-reflection by "maintain[ing] and display[ing] a critical awareness of our own positions" (Schneider, 2019, p. 11), which helped our students to grow

in their awareness of their own positionality as they engaged with their tutees.

This study may serve as one model for other education programs that are striving to promote CRP and CSP with their graduate students. As Ladson-Billings (2014) noted, "If we are able to help novice teachers become good and experienced teachers to become better, we need theoretical propositions about pedagogy that help them understand, reflect on, and improve their philosophy and teaching practice" (p. 83). Our study was an effective starting point for assisting young professionals in self-reflection practices that helped them prioritize their students' needs ahead of all other needs (Howard, 2003) in order to enact CRP and CSP with their multilingual learners. However, the question still remains whether these educators continue prioritizing their students and reflecting on their teaching practices through the lens of social justice pedagogy by collaborating with students and their families to transform the systems that perpetuate injustice and white supremacy (Freire, 2002; Olding, 2017).

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"I Wished I Could Have Higher Scores" Guided Study Groups to Prepare Prospective Teacher Candidates for High-Stakes Teacher Licensure Exams

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Abstract

Preparing for high-stakes licensure exams can be daunting for teacher candidates and particularly intimidating for aspiring teachers who speak English as a second language, those with exceptionalities, and members of historically marginalized communities (Petchauer, 2015; Nettles et al., 2011; Tyler, 2011). University-based teacher educators are well positioned to support teacher candidate populations enrolled in or seeking to enroll in teacher education programs. This study explored preservice teachers' experiences engaging in study groups within a supportive learning community. The study groups were facilitated by university-based teacher educators leveraging socio-cognitive strategies to help preservice teachers navigate a high-stake licensure exam. The findings show students who engaged in these study group sessions reported higher affect levels, found the study group structure relevant, and articulated specific strategies for navigating the test in the future.

Keywords: licensure exams, preservice teachers, study groups

Intentional practices to recruit and retain undergraduate and graduate students who bring racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity to the field of education serving children birth through grade 12 demands consistent attention and a multifaceted approach. The U.S. Department of Education (2016) continues to chronicle a predominately White (82%) workforce serving student populations that are increasingly more diverse. Numerous systemic structures act as barriers for Students of Color seeking to become teachers (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Wynter-Hoyte et al.,

2020). The literature references teacher licensure exams as a persistent obstacle for prospective teachers (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Previous studies show that there were distinctive gaps in teaching licensing test scores and the passing rate among the racial group including Latinx, African American, and White preservice teachers (Bennett et al., 2006; Nettles et al., 2011). Underperformance on high-stakes licensure exams summarily screens out preservice teachers of color who could be effective teachers (Petchauer, 2012, 2015, 2018). Therefore, attending to practices that support preservice teachers' (PSTs') successful navigation of high-stakes licensure exams remains an area of critical importance (Petchauer, 2018).

Preparing for the licensure exams remains intimidating for many and particularly challenging for students with exceptionalities, those who speak English as a second language, and teacher candidates from other historically minoritized and marginalized communities (Petchauer, 2015; Tyler, 2011). Focused qualitative case studies documenting preservice teachers' experiences with teacher licensure exams provide insight into the challenges diverse student populations confront as well as strategies teacher educators may integrate into practice to better support students seeking to pass licensure exams (Petchauer et al., 2015; Petchauer, 2018; Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2020). Research documents students' emotional stress when they believe the test results did not accurately represent their abilities as future teachers (Bennett et al., 2006, Graham, 2013). Similarly, research also continues to document historically minoritized students report licensure exams were unfair and culturally biased (Bennett et al., 2006; Petchauer, 2012). Bennet et al. (2006) underscores the language used throughout the reading portions of the exams remains a challenge for preservice teachers of color as they report they are not familiar with Eurocentric language permeating the test instructions and content (Bennett et al., 2006). Navigating unfamiliar language patterns requires students to take more time to complete each

passage and impacts their motivation to read and engage with the materials (Bennett et al., 2006). Students' internalized fear of failure frequently leads PSTs to put off taking these exams and leaving them with less time to adequately prepare for licensure tests (Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2020).

Teacher educators are well-positioned to implement dynamic systems of support for Black students and other historically marginalized teacher candidate populations enrolled in or seeking to enroll in teacher education programs (Graham, 2013). Petchauer's (2012) work engaging with prospective educators attending historically black colleges and universities argues for embracing a "solution-oriented stance to empower Black teacher candidates to pass licensure exams en route to becoming licensed teachers" (p. 253). Teacher educators working alongside students interested in pursuing teacher licensure report students are capable of success with intentional mentoring and study sessions (Petchauer, 2018; Williams & Lewis, 2020).

Interested in supporting students' experiences preparing for a state licensure exam, we initiated a pilot study group program in the summer of 2021. Accordingly, this study examines PSTs' experiences engaging in study groups designed to help students navigate a critical licensure test within a supportive learning community. The purpose of this article is to share our process creating and implementing the study groups and communicate emerging insights. Specifically, we asked the following questions:

1. How do PSTs articulate their feelings regarding their capabilities to successfully complete the licensure exam?
2. Which study group components and strategies do PSTs identify as beneficial?

Theoretical Perspectives

Socio-cognitive conceptions associated with self-regulated learning provide essential frameworks for exploring the individual and social factors influencing PSTs' experiences preparing for state licensure exams. Early work examining self-regulated learning processes underscore the triadic reciprocality of personal, environmental, and behavioral influencers (Zimmerman, 1989). Usher & Schunk (2018) explain self-regulation is, "the process of systematically organizing one's thoughts, feelings, and actions to attain one's goals" (p. 19). Self-efficacy, defined as one's beliefs about their ability to accomplish a specific task or goal, is recognized as a key component influencing self-regulation practices (Efklides et al., 2018; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014; Schunk, 1995; Zimmerman, 1989). Self-efficacy perceptions are strong predictors of an individual's future performance (Pajares, 1997). While visualizing successful simulations are positively correlated with efficacious future enactments, Bandura (1989) cautions, "Those who judge themselves as inefficacious are more inclined to visualize failure scenarios and to dwell on how things will go wrong. Such inefficacious thinking weakens motivation and undermines performance" (p. 729). Fortunately, low self-efficacy perceptions are not fixed; rather, efficacy perceptions are susceptible to a variety of "social and enactive experiences" (Zimmerman, 1989, p. 335). For example, modeling, verbal and social persuasions, mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, metacognitive rehearsals, goal setting, strategy application, and self-reflection practices are recognized as effective practices for enhancing students' self-efficacy (Usher & Parjares, 2008; Usher & Schunk, 2018; Zimmerman, 1989).

Therefore, attending to self-efficacy perceptions may be particularly relevant for PSTs entering into high-stakes testing environments, as low self-efficacy perceptions regarding one's ability to pass the exam may have a profound impact on their performance (Petchauer, 2012).

Based on 6 years of personal experience, Petchauer (2012) details a socio-cognitive theoretical frame for preparing Black preservice teachers for state mandated licensure exams. The theoretical and practical practices described by Petchauer (2012) inform our work designing the pilot study and draws on the socio-cognitive components associated with self-regulated learning. Specifically, Petchauer (2012) identifies two theoretical lenses, self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008) and sociocultural theory (Nasir & Hand, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978) to understand preservice teachers' licensure exam experiences and to suggest practices that would help them complete the exams successfully. Petchauer (2012) reasons, "Self-efficacy mediates cognitive, affective, motivation, and selective processes (Bandura, 1997), each of which is specifically central to academic achievement broadly and teacher licensure exam preparation and performance" (p. 255). Grounded in self-efficacy theory and his previous teaching experiences with Black preservice teachers, Petchauer (2012) suggested integrating (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) verbal and social persuasion, and (d) nurturing students' physiological and affective states. Collectively, Petchauer found these intentional experiences bolstered PSTs' self-efficacy and encouraged them to believe in their own capabilities to pass the exam.

In a complementary way, Petchauer (2012) advocates for embedding socio-cultural components to shape PSTs' experiences preparing for licensure exams. These experiences include (a) providing supportive and relevant material resources (e.g., accurate testing information, study guides, and practice test materials), (b) relational resources (e.g., interactions with peers and teacher educators wherein students learn about the exam), and (c) ideational resources (e.g., test-taker identity and beliefs about their ability to pass the exam). Metacognitive

activities are also suggested to encourage PSTs to perceive their efforts to learn and improve their performance on the tests (Petchauer, 2012).

In this study, we focused on three practices: (a) structuring for mastery, (b) structuring for vicarious experience and relevant social interaction, and (c) developing positive test-taker identity through ideational resources. Structuring for mastery experiences included inviting PSTs to complete singular exam items or small sets of items, rather than completing entire practice tests in one setting. In doing so, PSTs are less likely to interpret the practice test items as failure experiences. Vicarious experiences and relevant social interactions work to increase PSTs' self-efficacy and create positive test taker identities. From a socio-cognitive perspective, PSTs need to have models who have completed the licensure tests through much effort (e.g., coping models). Through the focused vicarious experiences and social interactions, PSTs have the opportunity to gain specific test taking advice and learn strategies for navigating the exam learning "that one can improve with effort and that skill is neither fixed nor inherent" (Petchauer, 2012, p. 26). Finally, teacher educators can use verbal persuasions in the social learning environments to help PSTs develop positive test-taker identity with ideational resources. It is important for teacher educators to help PSTs understand their test performance does not provide any indication of their inherent qualities. By telling them, "the test can't change who you are," educators help PSTs internalize the idea making students less susceptible to stereotypes and identity threats (Petchauer, 2012). Another ideational resource is encouraging PSTs to believe they can work under pressure and that there is no test they cannot pass. Openly sharing with students accurate passing scores and encouraging PSTs to take the exam "one question at a time" encourages students to feel the weight of the whole exam does not depend on their response on each test item thereby helping to mitigate unnecessary pressure (Petchauer, 2012). It is against

this backdrop we worked to develop a series of study group sessions for early childhood PSTs seeking to pass a literacy focused state licensure exam.

Methods

This exploratory pilot study uses qualitative methodologies to gain insight into PSTs' experiences engaging in a series of study group sessions designed to prepare candidates for the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment (VCLA), a state mandated licensure exam. Specifically, this work seeks to document PSTs' articulated attitudes regarding the VCLA and their experiences preparing for the test within a community of learners designed to scaffold, guide, and develop personally meaningful strategies for completing the test in the future.

Designing the VCLA Study Group Sessions

In conceptualizing the pilot program for the VCLA study group sessions, we considered a number of variables, including timing, place, and facilitation strategies.

Timing

We timed the study group sessions to occur after the summer session final exam period and before the start of the fall semester. This timing also aligned with internal college deadlines that require students to submit passing licensure exam scores before they complete the application process for their student teaching experiences. We offered five 90-minute sessions that met from 6:30 to 8:00 in the evening, to accommodate student work schedules. To maintain momentum, we spaced the study group sessions across a 2-week time span.

Location

At the time, universities in Virginia were beginning to offer more events in person and instructors began transitioning from the online spaces imposed by Covid-19 restrictions to face-to-face learning contexts. In an effort to honor students' preferred learning contexts, we offered

the first session in a hybrid format. Students joined us either virtually, via Zoom, or in a classroom space on campus for session 1 and virtually for the subsequent sessions (session 2 through session 5).

Study Group Session Purposes and Facilitation Strategies

Across a 2-week time span, we provided five study group sessions each with a different purpose. The first study group session invited students to be active members of the learning community, provided an overview of the VCLA, ensured the PSTs acquired access to the free online preparation program provided by the university, and immersed students in small groups to complete a sample reading passage. Session 2 examined the reading multiple-choice section of the VCLA. Session 3 emphasized the writing multiple-choice section. Session 4 focused on composing short summary responses and the final session focused on developing students' capacities completing the longer composition response on the VCLA.

We used interactive Google Slides to facilitate all study group sessions. Students retained access to the slides after each session. To promote students' active and reflective engagement, we embedded links to Jamboard, Google Forms, and Google Docs throughout the Google Slides. For each session, we used a combination of whole group and small breakout group sessions to promote a community of learners, establish safe spaces for study group members to work through test questions together, and provide opportunities for individualized small group instruction. The first three authors co-facilitated each session. For the second and third sessions, we focused on the multiple-choice sections of the VCLA. Three additional doctoral students joined the study group session at this time to guide small group reflective conversations. This ensured no more than four PSTs were in a breakout room and afforded facilitators time to model

test-taking strategies, offer explicit instruction to correct misconceptions, and guide students to articulate effective test-taking practices.

Structuring for Mastery Experiences. Each session targeted a different part of the test to focus their attention and chunk it in a way that made it more approachable. As the PSTs completed the practice tests for sessions 2 and 3, we asked them to complete a reflection guide as they worked through the test items. This process was intentional to promote feelings of preparedness and confidence as well as to build students' metacognitive practices. The reflection guide prompted them to pause to consider the questions they grappled with and to think about why they selected each response. The reflection guide also encouraged conversation between PSTs seeking to understand the nuanced differences between test questions and possible responses.

Each study group session began with an opening reflection survey inviting students to consider their experiences completing the practice test homework and ended with a reflection survey asking students to identify how they were feeling about completing the VCLA after the study group session. Then, co-facilitators presented the agenda and introduced relevant information for that day. Students and co-facilitators then broke into smaller groups where they worked through sections of the test together. The co-facilitators opened the discussion to the students and asked them what sections they would like to prioritize and then they worked through the material together. During this time, the PSTs returned to their reflection guide to unpack questions with their facilitator and group members and articulate strategies they could use in the future when confronting similar test items. This process served to demystify test structures and empower PSTs to make informed and intentional decisions when selecting responses.

Relevant Social Interactions. Students were invited to openly speak about their experiences with and feelings toward the test in small and large groups. The sharing of their thoughts, experiences, and feelings opened spaces for the co-facilitators to offer counternarratives. The open discussions allowed the PSTs to recognize that their experiences were not uncommon. It also opened a space for us to underscore how much they had already accomplished in their program of studies already and that they were capable of passing the exam. The co-facilitators also encouraged students to be resilient even if they had not passed the test the first time. The prevailing message and tone communicated that the students were not alone in this endeavor and through our study group sessions we would learn new strategies, push forward, and consider different ways for approaching the test.

Small breakout groups were utilized to promote relevant social interactions. To build trust and promote a sense of community in a virtual space, students were asked to turn their cameras on and get to know each other while engaging in the small group sessions. Through this forum and the scaffolded process used to consider each practice question, we encouraged students to participate more and take more risks amongst their peers. Following the small breakout groups, the PSTs shared their thoughts with the larger group. The final sharing was designed to help PSTs recognize the intentional thinking and strategic problem-solving each group went through to more fully understand the different test questions and strategies for discerning the correct answers.

Throughout this time, the co-facilitators were intentional about their interactions with students including reinforcing positive affirmations. Across time, the facilitators framed the test so students understood why they were required to take the test, provided relevant background to reshape initial impressions, and collaboratively worked with PSTs to demystify test structures.

Participants

Invitations to participate in the study groups sessions were sent to all early childhood education students. Forty-five students responded to the registration survey, four students indicated they were not able to attend the study sessions during the summer; however, these students indicated they were interested in participating in future study group sessions. Of the 41 students enrolled in the study group sessions, nine students completed the informed consent process. All of the participating PSTs were enrolled in an early childhood teacher education program at a large university in Virginia. Table 1 presents participants' self-identified demographic details.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Characteristics

Demographics	Participants
Gender	
Female	8
Male	1
Education	
Associate degree	3
Bachelor's degree	5
Master's degree	1
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	2
Black/African American	1
Hispanic/Latino	2
White/Caucasian	4
Primary Language(s)	
Cambodian	1

English	6
Spanish	1
Vietnamese and English	1

Data Sources

Data sources included an initial demographic survey and five sets of reflective surveys completed before and after each session to gauge PSTs' feelings toward the exam and their thoughts about the study group experiences. All study group participants completed the demographic surveys, reflective surveys, and homework experiences regardless of whether they agreed to share their data as part of the research study. Accordingly, all of the study group members' reflections were used by the co-facilitators as formative assessments throughout the experience to inform the structure of subsequent study group sessions. However, only the nine participants who completed the informed consent are included in the analysis of data.

Data Analysis

Analysis of survey responses included simultaneous coding using emotions coding and in vivo coding to document PSTs' feelings completing the mandated licensure exam (Saldaña, 2009). We used emotion coding to gain an understanding of PSTs' affective states in relation to the VCLA. We focused specifically on PSTs' reflective responses to the opening and closing survey question, "How are you feeling about completing the VCLA?" We used structural coding to understand aspects of the study group the PSTs recognized as supporting their learning. We also used structural coding to gather an understanding of the literacy test taking strategies the PSTs articulated as meaningful when responding to, "What test taking strategies will you use in the future to help you prepare and complete the VCLA?"

We created coding charts and worked to consensus utilizing the commenting tool available in Word to negotiate and confirm participant statements and document how many participants reported similar ideas. This consensus process created a visible and concrete audit trail of the coding process. The in vivo coding process allowed us to remain close to the participants' words, mitigating preconceived interpretations or assumptions we held as study group facilitators and served to enhance the trustworthiness of our findings (Rodham et al., 2015). Accordingly, throughout the findings section, we integrate participants' quotes to transparently illustrate PSTs' affective articulations, study group experiences, and test taking strategies reported by the PSTs on the opening and closing surveys.

Findings

In the findings we examine shifts in participants' self-reported affective states. We then consider elements participants reported as potentially beneficial study group experiences.

Considering PSTs' Evolving Affects

Upon entering the VCLA study group, PSTs' self-articulated feelings around the VCLA indicate a low self-efficacy regarding their capabilities to pass the exam. Out of nine participants, six PSTs articulated they had already completed the test at least once and needed to retake the exam to obtain passing scores. Specifically, three PSTs indicated they were nervous about completing the exam; of these, two PSTs had already completed the exam and needed to retake it and one PST was getting ready to take the exam. Illustrating their concern, one PST explained, "I am nervous about the writing part of the VCLA but I am hoping this test preparation will better prepare me." Three PSTs who had already attempted the exam described the VCLA as "hard." As one PST articulated, "I dislike the writing portion... It's hard and confusing for me." Two PSTs stated they were not good test takers, and one who had not yet completed the exam said

they did not yet know how they felt about it. Overall, the PSTs' responses offered on the opening survey suggest a pessimistic affective state.

The PSTs' affective responses shifted over the course of the study group session. After engaging in the study sessions, all of the participants said they found the study group "helpful." Their positive experience also seemed to bolster their overall immediate confidences regarding the exam. While PSTs acknowledged needing more practice, they also consistently articulated they felt more "confident" with the material and group activities. For example, before study group session 3, four out of eight responding participants articulated concern about the multiple-choice writing sections of the exam, one had not yet completed the practice test, and three were feeling okay about their practice test experience. After the study group session, eight out of nine respondents felt better or more confident after discussing their responses on each item with other peers and facilitators.

Considering Impactful Study Group Elements

Survey responses yielded some insight into components of the study group experience participants found beneficial. PSTs appreciated the opportunity to work in breakout groups to problem-solve specific subcomponents of the test. The PSTs' reflections revealed intentional metacognitive work occurred with study group members and facilitators as they unpacked different test subcomponents. For example, one PST expressed, "The element of the study group session I found useful was listening to other group members answer the questions and developing reasons as to why the answers were wrong or right."

Focused attention on their own thinking during the small breakout groups prompted PSTs to reflect on strategies they could use in the future. "Process of elimination" & "read questions and responses carefully" were the most frequent strategies that PSTs identified considering the

multiple-choice questions. Additionally, considering how they should approach multiple choice questions, one PST reasoned, “Highlighting the main idea, supportive ideas, and conclusion” would enhance their capabilities analyzing written passages. All of these strategies were explicitly modeled and examined within the small groups, affording PSTs opportunities to articulate ways to successfully navigate complex text.

The PSTs survey responses also provided insight into how PSTs utilized two strategic organizers designed to support their engagement. First, PSTs completed a reflective graphic organizer as they completed the practice tests to analyze the questions they missed and document why they selected their responses. Some participants found the tool supportive, as one participant explained, “I found it really helpful! It makes you look back at why you made those mistakes.” Others indicated they were unsure how to use the organizer or did not have time to complete it. The second organizer, presented to PSTs during session 4 and session 5, focused on supporting PSTs’ writing efforts. This organizer received limited but positive feedback because only three participants attended the final two sessions. Nonetheless, one participant noted, “The Graphic Organizer helps” by “breaking down the essay.” More reflective statements from future participants will be necessary before evaluating the usefulness of this writing tool.

Discussion

Examining work that explicitly demystifies and empowers PSTs toward the successful completion of high-stakes licensure tests remains a critical area of research if the field of education hopes to mitigate the marginalizing impact such tests have on communities of color (Petchauer 2012). The low self-efficacy stances articulated by PSTs in this pilot study echo findings reported across the literature examining the impact of high-stakes teacher licensure exams (Petchauer, 2012; Tyler, 2011). In response, facilitators worked to reframe PSTs’ negative

affective statements by acknowledging students' accomplishments and establishing inclusive communities of practice focused on helping students identify strategies for systematically approaching test questions in the future. Positive affirmations of PSTs' abilities are recognized as an effective tool for encouraging students to shift low self-efficacy stances and position the passing of the exam as a manageable hurdle and not an indictment on their character or effectiveness as a teacher (Petchauer, 2015).

The intentional opportunities to grapple with exam questions in study groups bolstered participants' reported feelings of efficacy, positively shifting their comfort with exam materials. Though the data remains limited, PSTs' experiences engaging with relevant material resources, including the google slides, practice test materials, and reflective guide provided a meaningful structure for the study groups sessions. In this way, the experience aligns with Petchauer et al., (2015) who reasoned,

> Going through preparation activities gave students a resource to lean upon when they experienced nervous[ness] or another negative affective state. Additionally, preparation activities gave students opportunities to work through front-end negative affective states before they stepped into the real test event. (p. 187)

The PSTs in this study articulated gaining confidence in their capabilities with VCLA after discussing each item in the small group and identified specific strategies for bolstering their engagement with the exam in the future.

This study provides a foundation for this programs' work and contributes to focused discussions of experiences designed to prepare PSTs for successful completion of high-stakes licensure exams. We suggest future research further contextualize PSTs' experiences with socio-cognitive frameworks that more fully consider situated learning contexts with co-regulation and

shared regulation models (Hadwin et al., 2018). Finally, we recognize these findings are limited in that they represent the voices of nine participants. Therefore, the general statements offered by these participants need to be explored further. To this end, future work will need to follow study group participants through their licensure exam process and seek to learn from them the practices and strategies they found most beneficial as they worked to navigate testing requirements.

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Becoming a Teacher of English Learners: A Case Study

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Abstract

This qualitative case study presents findings from research focused on the preparation of elementary teacher candidates (TCs) and the instruction of English learners (ELs) in the general education classroom. Set within the context of a literacy methods course on second language acquisition, this inquiry goes on to explore the influence of such experiences as TCs move into their roles as novice classroom teachers. Utilizing praxis as a means of supporting TCs as they move from preservice to novice teachers, this research examines the impact of course-embedded opportunities to learn about the instructional needs of ELs. Findings revealed that course-embedded opportunities supported teachers in developing capacity for the awareness and tensions in teaching ELs, reinforced understandings related to both social and academic language, and provided occasions to own the role and responsibility as a teacher of ELs. Implications for novice teachers, teacher education, and research are discussed.

Keywords: preservice teacher education, English learners, elementary teachers

As teacher education standards and state-level certification requirements increasingly include the teaching of English learners (ELs)[1] as a part of preservice teacher education, teacher educators are teaching courses that focus on instruction for ELs for all teacher candidates (TCs) in order to best prepare teachers for linguistic diversity (Deng et al., 2021). Including core teaching practices (i.e., high-leverage practices) and practice-based opportunities within preservice teacher education to support elementary students, in general, and in support of ELs more specifically, have emerged as promising pathways to support equitable teaching and to more effectively prepare TCs for their work as teachers (Horn & Little, 2010; Peercy, 2014; Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2017). In order to implement meaningful classroom and field experiences, these opportunities require collaboration between PreK-12

[1] I refer to English learner (EL) students in this paper as students that are receiving English language services. There is full recognition that these students are emergent bilingual or multilingual learners and bring linguistic and cultural resources.

schools and institutions of higher education to work towards equity, accept educational responsibility, and prepare culturally and linguistically responsive teachers (Lucas et al., 2018).

This study examines the role of a literacy methods course focused on second language acquisition and the embedded learning opportunities in a teaching-focused college. In addition, this inquiry examines the professional capacity of teachers as they move from TC to first-year, elementary classroom teacher. This case study is important, as we know that teacher preparedness to work with ELs is impacted by learning experiences and opportunities to work with ELs, yet there is limited research that unpacks how learning opportunities in coursework on second language acquisition support the capacity of TCs across varying teacher education contexts and once TCs start teaching. Furthermore, the role of teacher education in meeting new mandates (e.g., coursework on teaching ELs) is not fully understood across educator preparation program contexts. This inquiry focuses on the following research questions:

1. In what ways do TCs who have taken part in a literacy methods course on second language acquisition, including innovative course-embedded Studio Days, understand their role and responsibility as teachers of ELs before and after they enter their first year of teaching?
2. How does drawing on praxis support teachers' capacity development and experience of becoming a teacher of ELs?

This paper highlights findings from this research focused on praxis—integration of theory and practice— as a means of supporting teacher candidates (TCs) as they expand their knowledge and expertise in teaching ELs in the elementary classroom.

Conceptual Framework

Recent research highlights both the mismatch between university coursework in teacher education programs and the reality of TCs' field experiences, as well as the need to learn the

actualities of teaching in PreK-12 classrooms (Brown et al., 2020). Furthermore, current scholars of teacher education suggest that teacher education needs to decenter whiteness by incorporating antiracist pedagogy, hiring and supporting more faculty of color, and ensuring that teacher education research promotes equity for teaching and learning for our most vulnerable student populations, their families, and communities (Carter Andrews et al., 2021). ELs are often some of our most vulnerable student populations, and yet there continues to be consensus that as the number of ELs in United States PreK-12 schools continues to grow (Batalova & Zong, 2016), teachers are often unprepared or under-prepared to teach these students when they enter the classroom (Elfers et al., 2013; Gandara et al., 2005; LaCroix & Kuehl, 2019). Additionally, it is recognized that there is a need to move to teacher education pedagogies that focus on culturally and linguistically sustaining teaching (Paris, 2012). Moreover, there is also a necessity to move from the notion of cultural competence to a more robust and relevant focus on TCs and the development of equity literacy – an understanding of how to include equity-oriented teaching practices (Gorski, 2016).

In order to make such imperatives a part of teachers' practice, research suggests that centering professional learning opportunities within the context of teachers' classrooms, through job-embedded professional development, can support teachers as they cultivate their sense of collective responsibility and urgency in the instruction of ELs in their classrooms (Von Esch, 2021). For TCs, the opportunity for course-embedded learning opportunities has the potential to occur during occasions to engage in problems of practice related to ELs during innovative field experiences and partnerships with PreK-12 partners.

Practice-Based Approaches to Teacher Education

Teacher education scholars suggest that a promising approach to bridging this gap between university coursework and the realities of the field include practice-based opportunities embedded within teacher preparation programs (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2017). This research suggests that creating increased opportunities to move between the theoretical and practical, with guided support of teacher educators and mentor teachers, will enable TCs to translate coursework pedagogies through opportunities to observe and enact practice.

Moreover, current research on practice-based teacher education and instructional practices for ELs indicate that opportunities to engage in implementation and occasions for providing and getting feedback; as well as explaining these goals clearly to TCs is critical (Peercy, 2014). Implementing a practice-based approach in teacher education coursework aligns with calls to focus on equity for ELs in teacher education as we move toward critical practice teacher education (Kavanagh & Danielson, 2020). A critical practice focus in teacher education is rooted in the practice of teaching, while at the same time moving in the direction of social transformation. In doing so, teacher educators can move towards decentering whiteness in their coursework and pedagogies in pursuit of educational equity (Carter Andrews et al., 2021).

Using a practice-based approach within teacher education programs can further impact outcomes of TCs as they move into their roles as novice classroom teachers. Recent research suggests that opportunities for practice-based teacher preparation can positively influence outcomes for instruction in novice teachers' first year on the job (Kang & Windshitl, 2018). Thus, this approach can lead to positive outcomes after TCs leave their teacher preparation programs and begin their teaching careers.

Praxis and Equity Literacy: Meeting the Needs of English Learners

This analysis draws on the dynamic interface between research and practice, or praxis, in teacher education (Bishop, 2014; Pillay, 2015). Praxis goes beyond the application of theory and moves towards engagement in theorizing in local contexts (Pillay, 2015). By inviting TCs to engage in intentional reflection during both their teacher education program and as first-year teachers, teachers are supported in praxis, by reflecting on the interplay between what "the research says" and what are considered to be core practices for teaching, and their lived experiences in local contexts (Bishop, 2014; Pillay, 2015). Moreover, drawing on research on professional learning that facilitates the development of critical praxis highlights the themes of agency, power, and relational trust as enabling structures (Francisco et al., 2021). As TCs engage in course-embedded learning opportunities within the field they have occasions to cultivate their agency and power as teachers of ELs. TCs can draw on this agency and power as teachers of ELs as they move into their roles as novice teacher focused on enacting equitable teaching for linguistically diverse students (i.e., students identified as ELs, multilingual students exited from formal programs for ELs, or students whose native language is not English).

Finally, the construct of equity literacy (Gorski, 2014, 2016; Gorski & Swalwell, 2015), for both teacher educators and TCs, is used to guide this research. In the context of this study, equity literacy refers to, "...cultivating in teachers the knowledge and skills necessary to become a threat to the existence of inequity in their spheres of influence" (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015). Meeting the needs of ELs in the general education classroom is one area where teachers can use their spheres of influence to make an impact and address issues of equity for linguistically diverse students. Equity literacy for general education classroom teachers includes a recognition

and awareness of inequities in instruction for ELs, responding to this inequity, redressing this inequity, and sustaining equity efforts (Gorski, 2016).

This study adds to what we know about course-embedded learning opportunities in teacher education, as well as fills the gap between what we know about elementary teacher preparation and how these TCs come to understand their role and responsibility as teachers of ELs. Further, this study will add to what we know about praxis in teacher education and approaches to supporting capacity development for TCs as they cultivate their skills and knowledge in meeting the needs of ELs.

Research Methods

This qualitative case study research is situated within a particular context and inquires into how TCs understand their role and responsibility as teachers of ELs before and after they enter their first year of teaching, as well as how praxis can support teachers' capacity development and experience of becoming a teacher of ELs. In this section, the research methods are described, including: (1) background, (2) setting and participants, (3) methodology and data collection, and (4) data analysis.

Background

The context for this study is a teacher certification and master's degree program in childhood education located in a mid-size liberal arts college. The focus for this inquiry is located within the course, *Literacy Development and Second Language Acquisition*. At the time, the state in which the teacher education program was located did not require a course on second language acquisition for certification (this has since changed and is now a state requirement), yet the program deemed the content necessary and required that TCs working towards elementary certification in grades one through six take the course for both program completion and to be

recommended for certification. Given the TCs in the course were not seeking certification for teaching ELs and knowing the research and literature on the gaps between coursework and the field (Horn & Little, 2010; Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2017), as well as the professional dissonance in the professional learning trajectory of teachers in taking responsibility for meeting the instructional needs of ELs (Von Esch, 2021), steps were initiated to integrate a more innovative approach in teaching the course.

Setting and Participants

The field-based component for the methods course involved collaboration with a local PreK-12 partner to provide on-site class sessions at an elementary school. These on-site class sessions were intimately connected to course content and pedagogy. This opportunity was framed by an approach that used two Studio Days, where the class observed and participated in small group instruction in a linguistically diverse classroom with roughly 30% of the students identified as ELs. Studio Days were embedded as a part of the course, held during regular class meeting times, and were outside of the TCs' assigned field placements. Notably, the majority of TCs (n=6) did not have ELs in their assigned field placements, so this was a distinct opportunity to be in a classroom and gain hands-on experience with ELs. During Studio Days, data was collected about student learning and language use and development within the context of math lessons, and debriefed with the partner teacher - a master teacher certified in both elementary and as an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher.

Methodology and Data Collection

Using a qualitative case study methodology, this research took an interpretivist approach to data collection and analysis (Yin, 2014). To structure this case study, a bounded set of data sources for this investigation were used, including TC work samples from Studio Days;

reflective writing and formative assessment data on the practice-based opportunities from the course; and autoethnographic memos, field journal and observation notes from the researcher/teacher educator. In addition, once TCs from the teacher education program were in their first year of teaching, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two focal teachers, Cora and Jasmine (both names are pseudonyms), at the end of their first year of teaching. Cora was teaching in the same partner district and school that Studio Days were located. Her fifth-grade classroom included around a 25% EL student population with 40% of the students in the building receiving free or reduced lunch. Jasmine, on the other hand, had moved out of state and was working in an urban school and district. Her fourth-grade classroom included a roughly 30% EL student population and 100% of the students in the building received free and reduced lunch. Total data collection spanned one and a half years.

Based on analysis of the data that was collected and through ongoing refinement of research questions and the conceptual framework for the study, the focus was on TC and novice teacher learning related to teaching ELs after participation in course-embedded learning opportunities, including innovative field experiences within a partner school, taking a practice-based approach to teacher education (Kavanagh & Danielson, 2020). This interpretivist case study method drew on TC learning through Studio Days and investigated how these learning opportunities during teacher preparation led to subsequent novice teachers' understanding of their role and responsibility in teaching ELs.

Data Analysis

An iterative process was used to code all data sources: course materials, student work samples, memos, field journal, observation notes, and interviews (Charmaz, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Additionally, the constant comparative method was used to analyze the data

corpus (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using an inductive and iterative coding and data analysis process allowed for qualitative codes, categories, and themes to emerge (Glesne, 2006). Drawing on aspects of grounded theory, where the findings emerge from the collected and analyzed data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), while at the same time referencing the initial conceptual framework, provided an analytic process that enabled key themes to emerge from the data. Ongoing data reduction was used to refine hunches and findings, while making associations between my research questions, the study context, and data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, triangulation was used across data sources to identify any disconfirming evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994); this included verification and discussion with study participants during the iterative data analysis process.

Findings

Several findings emerged from the data (1) preservice and novice teachers' awareness and tensions in teaching ELs, (2) development of a teaching practice inclusive of social and academic language development, and (3) course-embedded opportunities as instances to own the role and responsibility as a teacher of ELs.

Preservice and Novice Teacher Awareness and Tensions in Teaching Els

Based on evidence from student work samples in the course, Cora and Jasmine both developed a greater sense of awareness of ELs. Through course-embedded learning opportunities within the teacher education program, the TCs were able to connect theory to practice as they deconstructed, planned, and rehearsed core practices for ELs within the course setting and then moved into the field to observe and support ELs and teachers doing this important work in support of ELs from the position of classroom teacher. As these same TCs moved into their first year of teaching, and reflecting back across the school year, both teachers articulated the tensions

they experienced as they better understood their roles, the demands they experienced as practicing teachers, and the resources available to them to support their instruction of ELs in the elementary classroom.

Growth and Awareness Through Course-Embedded Opportunities

Reflections from Cora and Jasmine during and after Studio Days reflected growth and awareness in teaching ELs and the integration of theory and practice. After each Studio Day, students were asked to respond to a series of specific prompts related to their notes about noticing and wondering about supporting language development in the elementary math classroom. Students made links to theory and practice in their responses, specifically wondering about how the classroom and instruction could support the best-practices we had been reading about for class. For example, Jasmine noted some big picture wonderings after the first Studio Day:

- *I wonder how students' home language can be incorporated more into lessons; more than learning greetings in other languages?*
- *I wonder how the classroom teacher has collaborated with parents to incorporate students' language/culture funds of knowledge into the classroom?*

Cora wondered about the logistics of the Studio Day, pondering how the lesson and instruction would have looked with fewer adults in the room. These wonderings speak to the TCs recognition of both best practices for teaching ELs and also what they were observing as missing (i.e., how classroom teachers can incorporate home language into math instruction), as well as hints at their concern about how they might implement something similar in their own teaching in the future (i.e., what does this lesson look like when less adults are available to support students?).

During the second Studio Day TC wonderings became more specific. For instance, Cora wondered "…how this activity could be expanded to be offer opportunities for students who answered quickly to challenge themselves." Jasmine also stretched her wondering and thinking making the following comments:

- *How can you contextualize and make math word problems relevant to students in the class, but prepare them for [the state] assessment?*
- *How does content confidence impact ELs confidence in orally sharing information?*

The noticing and wondering that the TCs participated in after both Studio Days helped them to make sense of what they were observing and experiencing in the field. The data suggests that the TCs were able to demonstrate growth and awareness of what it means to be a teacher of ELs in an elementary classroom. They grappled with questions that many teachers of ELs in general education classroom settings wrestle with as they meet both content and language development demands (Valdes et al., 2014).

Moving From Theory to Practice

That said, once the teachers moved into their roles as first-year teachers tensions related to how to best serve ELs in their contexts emerged. Both teachers grappled as first-year teachers with taking what they knew to be true from theory and research, as well as their own social justice frameworks of teaching, to the point of action. Both teachers believed they knew some things about teaching ELs and what it might mean to advocate and teach ELs, yet they were unsure of how to respond in their contexts. Both were in situations where they were expected to reach out to the ENL teacher assigned to the ELs in their classrooms on their own. Without a formalized plan for collaboration, both teachers were left to negotiate this professional relationship individually. Cora had more success with this as her ENL teacher pushed-in every

day. Jasmine, on the other hand, only had the support of an ENL teacher once per week and this teacher moved between buildings. As Cora pointed out in an interview at the end of her first year of teaching, "I think that the ENL teacher here a great resource, but it's up to us to make that connection."

As Jasmine was not able to collaborate with the ENL teacher frequently, she mainly received input from other teachers in her building. These interactions sometimes pushed upon her own beliefs about ELs and her ability to advocate. In one critical moment, Jasmine found herself unprepared to respond to her more experienced colleagues. Jasmine reflected on one particular moment from her first year of teaching:

> Teachers will sometimes make inappropriate comments about Muslim students or the ELs, because they're mostly Muslim… I had some behavioral issues with these two kids who are both ELs, both Muslims and one of the teachers was like, 'Yeah, just keep riding it out. It's a cultural thing. Those kids don't respect women.' I really wanted to respond to that, but I was just like, 'I'm just gonna let that go and walk the other way.' I just don't know how to respond sometimes and how I [can or should] advocate.

Jasmine's reflection clearly articulates this tension between what she knows and thinks from a social justice and theoretical perspective and yet struggled with how to respond within the context of her professional work with more experienced teachers countering her own beliefs. While the course-embedded learning opportunities and content embedded in her teacher education program provided her with a foundation for understanding her role as a teacher of both content and language as an elementary classroom teacher, this culture and climate in her new teaching position was not supportive of enacting best practices for ELs, advocating for culturally and linguistically diverse students, or her own social justice position.

Development of a Teaching Practice Inclusive of Social and Academic Language Development

As TCs and as novice teachers in their first year of teaching, both Cora and Jasmine were aware of ELs' social and academic language development based on their knowledge of theory and course-embedded learning opportunities from the methods course on second language acquisition (Valdes et al., 2014; Walqui, 2006). Moving this knowledge of second language acquisition and core practices for ELs into their instructional practice was more fraught as they each tried to make sense of their teaching in response to the need to support academic language development while teaching standards-aligned content.

Making Sense of Social and Academic Language Development Through Course-Embedded Learning Opportunities

Through analysis of reflective writing and discussions during and after Studio Days, TCs demonstrated "critical noticing and wondering" that highlighted their emerging understandings of teaching ELs, as well as ELs' social and academic language development. For instance, both noted that they recognized the importance of connecting with students' prior knowledge and backgrounds. They stated that they saw the importance of providing linguistic scaffolds for ELs and all their students.

After the first Studio Day, both TCs engaged in intentional reflection that led to insights related to their understanding of social and academic language development. Cora noticed how, "…explicitly and thoughtfully language was used within the classroom." Moreover, Cora was able to unpack how ELs' linguistic resources were used within the math lesson stating on the class online discussion board: "This lesson promoted opportunities for students to use their own experiences and understanding of their survey questions to develop a strategy that worked for

them and allowed them to record their data." Additionally, TCs were able to frame their 'wonderings' in ways that connected second language acquisition theory to observations from practice. Jasmine wrote the following on the class online discussion board after the first Studio Day: (1) "I wonder how the classroom teacher has collaborated with parents to incorporate students' language/culture and funds of knowledge into the classroom?" and (2) "I wonder how classroom teachers and the ENL teacher can collaborate to support students in the classroom, even when the ELL teacher is not there?"

Coming back for the second Studio Day, the reflective comments made by both Cora and Jasmine were more nuanced. Jasmine noticed the following related to linguistic scaffolds, "The teachers were supporting students and acting as scaffolds for students that need extra support," and, "Students used their whiteboard as a scaffold for their speaking." Furthermore, Jasmine was able to breakdown the academic language demands expected of ELs during the lesson responding with the following on the discussion board related to the academic language demands expected of students: "Comprehend the question (listening), write a statement (writing), orally share your whiteboard (speaking)."

The reflective comments made by Cora and Jasmine after the Studio Days highlight how this course-embedded learning opportunity within the methods course focused on second language acquisition for elementary TCs provided the students with the space to connect theory on social and academic language within the context of an actual classroom with ELs.

Making Sense of Social and Academic Language Development as First-Year Teachers

As the teachers moved into their first year of teaching, the focus on supporting both social language development, as well as ELs' academic language development continued as a

theme. The development of a teaching practice that could support both the social and academic language development created some anxiety for both teachers.

Cora discussed this tension as it related to one of her entering ELs from her first year of teaching, “I want him to develop that comfort in just speaking… having that time for social interaction…in fifth grade, it feels like there’s not enough of that…it’s very academic.” So, in this sense, it seemed that Cora was grappling with how to support both social and language development, alongside supporting academic language.

That said, Cora did note in the interview at the end of her first year of teaching that she noticed the effectiveness of using clear structures for collaboration, specific protocols, consistent routines and structures as important tools for setting expectations and supporting academic language development. So, it did seem that Cora was able to negotiate sentence stems that are posted at the top of the board that she had her students use for conversation throughout the school year. Cora noted how useful this strategy was in teaching students how to interact with one another during class conversations:

> Several of the ENL students really latch onto those [sentence stems] and use them frequently, and I think it really supports them…because I noticed in the beginning of the year that a lot of students were only thinking about what they were gonna say. And how they were gonna say it…and I think those encourage them to think about what other people are saying and then build off that.

Jasmine also noted the impact of the second language acquisition methods course as a TC on her first year of teaching stating in her interview:

> I think the ELL course we took really just prepared me overall because I think a lot of…my students struggle with language, so whatever I would have done with the ELL

> kids is really helping all of them…all my kids are under grade level…they really struggle with reading…with writing and language…so I didn't feel unprepared at all.

Additionally, in recounting a science lesson on, "Liquids, solids, or gas?" Jasmine noted that the students did not have the language for icicles. The students called icicles "ice sticks." She noted, in general, the need to develop academic language with all of her students noting the importance of, "…trying to build that academic language, while also using a lot…of visuals and videos in order to build that background knowledge." She also discussed the importance of group work and strategic pairing of students, going on to say, "…maybe sometimes I rely on it too much but I rely on having those social interactions help the students."

Jasmine was able to think back to her experiences as a TC and experience from the methods course on second language acquisition to process and make sense of her teaching as a first-year classroom teacher of ELs. This sense making and connection to theory came through when she highlighted in her interview:

> It was really interesting to see this girl that came right from Mali to our school, how quickly her non-academic [social] language grew and how quickly she was picking up English…that was just really interesting because it was exactly like what they saw, what we read about in class.

As Cora and Jasmine made sense of social and academic language as TCs and as first-year teachers, they were able to process and make sense of theory and then link the theoretical to what they were observing and experiencing in the classroom. This seemed to happen during both their course-embedded learning opportunities as TCs during Studio Days, as well as once they were in their own classrooms as first-year teachers. As Cora remarked after the second Studio Day, "This Studio Day reiterated many of the instructional strategies we have learned to support

ELs." The data revealed that both Cora and Jasmine entered their first year of teaching with a strong sense of ownership for the role and responsibility of teaching ELs.

Course-embedded Opportunities as Instances to Own the Role and Responsibility as a Teacher of ELs

One criticism of some approaches for the instruction of ELs is that it is not enough to consider instruction for all students, but specifically requires attention to the linguistic needs of ELs (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Still, as a teacher educator in a preservice program for general education teachers, this is a common refrain from TCs, as well as experienced teachers, and seems to be an entry point for owning the role and responsibility as a teacher of ELs. As Jasmine concluded when asked what else she wanted to share about her first year of teaching, she stated "I think just overall, how EL kids learn. I think being able to apply that just in the gen ed classroom has been helpful because all my kids really do struggle with the same things an EL student may struggle with."

Reflecting on the course-embedded learning opportunities afforded by Studio Days within the second language acquisition methods class, the data suggests that instances of observing instruction and ELs in an authentic classroom setting can trigger meaning-making for TCs that has the potential to carry over into their first years of teaching. For instance, Jasmine asked the following question after our second Studio Day: "How can you contextualize and make math word problems relevant to students in the class, but [also] prepare them for the [state] assessment?" Moreover, Jasmine wanted to know, "How does content confidence impact ELs confidence in orally sharing information?" While Jasmine was eager to share that she believes that linguistic scaffolds are supportive for all her students, and in her case as a first-year teacher she teaches many students that are academic language learners, she is also seemed to develop

expertise and key understandings about ELs and the intersection between academic language learning, second language acquisition, assessment demands, and social development.

Cora also demonstrated her understanding of the role of the elementary classroom teacher in helping to provide linguistic scaffolds for ELs remarking on the second Studio Day lesson:

> [The master teacher] highlighted one students' response to labels, letting students know that using labels in math is very similar to using labels in science. I think it is important to offer opportunities for students to see connections between subject matter.

This is true, in particular, for ELs that are learning language and content simultaneously. This noticing by Cora suggests that she was able to pick-up and make sense of the role of the classroom teacher in making these linguistic connections for students related to the language demands across subjects. This responsibility for providing linguistic scaffolds for ELs carried over into Cora's first year of teaching.

While not required, Cora made a point during her first year of teaching to develop a plan with the ENL teacher to make time for consistent co-planning. Cora took on this responsibility and assumed this duty as a part of her role as a fifth-grade classroom teacher. They use Google Docs to plan and squeeze in their planning time however they are able: at lunch, after school, through email, or text. Cora remarked in her interview that as first-year teacher in terms of planning with the ENL teacher:

> Some weeks are better than others and what we're working on…impacts that. But I think we're both excited to bounce ideas off of one another…she has a lot of ideas which I really appreciate because I feel like I need it.

The opportunity for ongoing conversations with the ENL teacher seemed to have impacted Cora and her understanding of her role as both supporting English language development and

supporting first language preservation. She remarked that a student from Iraq was speaking less and less Arabic, so the ENL teacher started an Arabic Club at lunch and the student was reading and practicing their Arabic and would be reading an Arabic children's book to different classes. This interaction helped Cora to reflect on the importance of supporting and preserving ELs first language, remarking: "I've…been thinking about the importance of language and of really fostering students' languages and how do I support them in, not only learning English, but also in preserving and continuing to learn in their language." Cora further went on to note ongoing conversations she has been having with the ENL teacher related to holding high expectations for ELs in terms of final products stating: "How are we holding [ELs] students to high expectations…pushing them as learners but also creating opportunities for them to be successful? What does that look like?" In reflecting on these conversations, Cora referenced having the background in second language acquisition was super important to her understanding of assessment for ELs and what might be her "look-fors" with ELs across different language proficiency levels when having them complete a specific assignment.

Drawing on the data from the Studio Days as TCs and triangulated with interview data at the end of the first year of teaching, both Jasmine and Cora seem to own the role and responsibility of teaching both ELs and academic language learners their fourth and fifth-grade classrooms, respectively. The data points to the impact of the second language acquisition class and the course-embedded learning opportunities located within the course as impactful to this sense of ownership related to their roles as teachers of ELs as first-year teachers.

Discussion and Implications

This qualitative case study research provides an example of how innovative approaches to teacher education (Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2017), specifically related

to preparing general education teachers to work with ELs in elementary school contexts, can support teachers of ELs before and after they enter their first year of teaching in understanding their role and responsibility. As teacher educators begin to transform their pedagogy and take up course-embedded learning opportunities and innovative approaches to teacher education, this research contributes to what we know about supporting teacher capacity for the instruction of ELs in both preservice and inservice contexts (Babinski et al., 2018; Bauler & Kang, 2020; Russell, 2017; Von Esch, 2021).

The reality is there needs to be a sense of urgency and support for the instruction of ELs across teacher preparation and once teachers move into their roles as practicing teachers. As districts move to models that include ELs in the general education classroom, it is imperative to draw on collaborative models of teaching between general education and ENL teachers (Hopkins et al., 2019; Kibler et al., 2019; Russell, 2019), as well as job-embedded professional learning opportunities that support both this transition and the ongoing work of teaching ELs in the general education context (Von Esch, 2021). Ultimately, the goal with such course-embedded learning opportunities and innovative approaches to teacher education is to support TCs as they develop skills and knowledge, while simultaneously cultivating an equity and advocacy stance for ELs (Russell & Richey, 2017).

While there are limitations to this qualitative case study including a small sample size with only two TCs turned first-year teachers under analysis, the findings are significant in that they speak to the tensions involved as TCs develop their capacity for teaching ELs. There is a vital need for elementary teachers to develop their capacity as they become teachers of ELs. Moreover, this research provides insight into how these teachers developed a teaching practice that was cognizant and inclusive of social and academic language development. Finally, the

findings suggest that the experience of a course-embedded, innovative approach within a second language acquisition methods course provided the opportunity to cultivate the role and responsibility as a teacher of ELs that carried over into the TCs first year of teaching.

Current research suggests that course-embedded learning opportunities with the field, such as Studio Days, can be mediated when teacher educators take on the role of facilitator in ways that encourage collaborative learning among all participants, allow for experimentation, and cultivate a nurturing professional learning environment that feels safe and trustworthy (Gibbons et al., 2021). Making room for this emotional space within a course-embedded, innovative learning opportunity was seen when TCs wrestled with tensions and questions through their noticing and wondering during and after Studio Days. Moreover, this critical inquiry and wondering, for both Cora and Jasmine, carried over into their work as first-year teachers as they were confronted with both practical and conceptual push-back, either logistically or from other teachers, within their teaching contexts.

This study indicates that we need to know more about how teacher educators are encouraged to transform their pedagogy and take-up critical and innovative approaches. There is a need to further examine the impact of such approaches on teacher educators, TCs, and novice teachers once they enter their own classrooms. In addition, the findings from this research suggest that we need to know more about the longer-term impact of teachers' capacity and commitment to the role and responsibility as teachers of ELs after the first year in their classrooms. Moreover, research related to the teachers' school contexts and the support, or lack thereof, of school and district leadership to sustain a commitment to the instruction of ELs in the general education classroom need to be explored.

Conclusion

Seeing oneself as a teacher of ELs, along with owning the role and responsibility as a teacher of ELs, is not a given for general education teachers. This makes course-embedded, innovative approaches to developing TCs' capacity for teaching ELs all the more impactful. This study contributes to current research concerned with innovative approaches to teacher education (Peercy & Troyan, 2017; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2017), specifically related to preparing general education teachers to work with ELs. As our elementary classrooms become more linguistically diverse, it is imperative that our teacher preparation programs are responsive to the needs of preparing teachers that have the capacity, as well as dispositions, for teaching this student population (Heineke & Giatsou, 2020). More specifically, our elementary teachers must own this role and responsibility in teaching ELs; they must, in conclusion, become teachers of ELs.

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Interrupting Microaggressions, Bias, and Injustice in Social Studies Pre-Service Teachers' Field Experiences

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Abstract

This manuscript shares how one teacher education program is working to interrupt racist, xenophobic, homophobic, antisemitic, ableist, and sexist microaggressions and other forms of discrimination that occur in P-12 field experiences. In this article, we share our context, actions, and examples (i.e., critical cases) of microaggressions from pre-service social studies teachers' field experiences. Drawing upon microaggressions theory, we frame our work with equity literacy to analyze pre-service teachers' field experiences and connect to microinterventions. We argue that teacher education programs must prepare teachers to respond to and interrupt microaggressions, and move toward curricular interventions in the social studies in an effort to transform schools to be more equitable in the curriculum and institutionally. We hope practitioners will engage with the ideas and practices presented and reflect on connections and applications to their schools, communities, and contexts.

Keywords: microaggressions; microinterventions; field experiences

Field experiences are an important part of social studies teacher education. Observing teaching practices, building relationships with students, and enacting newly learned methods provides pre-service teachers (PSTs) with the space to critically engage with theories and practices learned in the university classroom. What happens, however, when PSTs are

confronted with microaggressions in their field placements, preventing them from engaging fully in the experience? Or when PSTs witness and experience teaching that upholds racist, xenophobic, sexist, ableist, antisemitic, or heteronormative ideas, attitudes, behaviors, histories, and/or policies? This article explores these questions by sharing how faculty members in one College of Education (CoE) in Virginia are interrupting microaggressions, bias, and injustices in field experiences, in hopes of creating more equitable and responsive classrooms and school communities.

Microaggressions are subtle, everyday, discriminatory actions, insults, and/or comments directed toward historically marginalized or underrepresented people that may be racist, sexist, ableist, linguicist, xenophobic, heterosexist, and transphobic, among other forms of oppression (Fleurizard, 2018; Nadal et al., 2011; Pierce et al., 1977; Sue et al., 2019). We explore microaggression theory in this paper and share how microaggressions manifested in PSTs' field experiences across school divisions in our region. We discuss how to interrupt microaggressions in a Teacher Education Program (TEP) by using a framework for equity literacy and responding with microintervention strategies (Sue et al., 2019).

Due to a history of systemic injustices in public schools coupled with the current national rhetoric involving the experiences of marginalized communities, P-12 students and their families, PSTs, and teachers/administrators/staff are experiencing an uptick in bullying, implicit/explicit bias, and aggressive behaviors. These behaviors are rooted in racism, linguicism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination, inequity, and oppression (Barshay, 2018; Lombardo, 2019). Social studies is committed to "an interdisciplinary exploration of the social sciences and humanities…in order to develop responsible, informed and engaged citizens and to foster civic, economic, global, and historical literacy" (NCSS, 2010,

n.p.). Thus, when confronted with increased microaggressions in schools, we were concerned with P-12 students' and PSTs' abilities to develop the knowledge and skills for "responsible, informed, and engaged citizens" (NCSS, 2010, n.p.). For us, these characteristics of "citizen" are rooted in empathy, anti-bias (Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010), justice-orientated (Freire, 1968; Kumashiro, 2009), and antiracist pedagogies (Love, 2019). We were no longer willing to wait for someone else to challenge and interrupt these issues facing PSTs and their current and future P-12 youth and families, and developed a plan to address these pervasive and traumatizing experiences.

Contextualizing Our Work

In Summer 2018, we formed a committee in our CoE to explore and act on equity, diversity, and justice issues in our PSTs' field placements. As a committee, we have: created an online survey to collect information about students' experiences with field-based microaggressions; removed students from harmful field placements; conducted workshops for students and faculty in the CoE as well as other partners on campus; conducted workshops for in-service teachers; shared our work at conferences; and met with stakeholders (e.g., superintendents, school administrators, CoE leadership) to discuss issues of equity and social justice. This paper shares our context, actions, and examples (what we call critical cases) of microaggressions from pre-service social studies teachers' field experiences. We hope the frameworks, experiences, and critical cases offer readers an opportunity to consider transferring these ideas for taking action to address microaggressions to their own school communities, classrooms, and TEPs. While we consider social studies PSTs' context and experiences specifically in this paper, we have also conducted qualitative research that responded to broader analyses of PSTs' field experiences and reflected as teacher educators on ways to take action to

interrupt microaggressions in field experiences and TEPs (Jaffee et al., 2020) and described in detail the workshop we have developed and provided for stakeholders at various levels including PSTs, CTs, and university faculty (Kavanagh et al., 2021).

We come to this work as teacher educators committed to social justice in education. We acknowledge that we cannot and should not claim to separate our own perspectives from this work, as our positionality inherently influences every aspect of our teaching, research, and service (Noblit et al., 2004). We recognize that everyone enters dialogue around microaggressions from different places. Some people reading this article might experience the weight of microaggressions daily, while others enter the conversation and literature with distance, having not experienced microaggressions, nor their compounded trauma.

We ask ourselves how we can develop a TEP to prepare our social studies PSTs for the realities of the current social, political, and economic contexts of school and schooling, while also challenging their ways of thinking and being in society. We seek to transform PSTs' understanding of the purpose and goals of teaching social studies. It is imperative that we interrupt Whiteness in social studies curriculum and policy, such as disrupting traditional ways Black history is taught in the classroom (Busey & Walker, 2017; King, 2020; King & Brown, 2014) and broadening definitions of civic engagement (Duncan, 2020; Sabzalian, 2019; Woodson & Love, 2019). Challenging systemic issues related to discrimination, inequity, and oppression is truly a democratic imperative and the health of our democracy depends on how we respond. Bias incidents, intimidation, and hateful acts in schools are disruptive to learning and create unsafe learning environments for children (Teaching Tolerance, 2017); it is our responsibility to respond as critical, justice-oriented teacher educators.

Conceptual Framework: Equity Literacy, Microaggressions, & Microintervention Strategies

To consider how to take action in social studies teacher education by enacting micro- and macrointerventions, or what Sue et al. (2019) described as "the process of disarming, disrupting, and dismantling the constant onslaught of micro- and macroaggressions" (p. 132), we outline the equity literacy framework (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015), define microaggression theory, and introduce how to respond to microaggressions by using microintervention strategies.

Equity Literacy

Gorski and Swalwell (2015) argued that the fundamental issue facing critical multicultural education is moving education programs and organizations from celebrating diversity to equity initiatives. For example, teachers, through an equity literacy lens, should have more of an understanding of "equity and inequity and justice and injustice" rather than "this or that culture" (p. 36). Curriculum and teacher preparation, therefore, should focus on understanding the systemic nature and roots of inequity and injustice, fostering a depth of understanding how institutions were developed on notions of racism, sexism, and classism. These critical discussions are the core of social justice education and support the action-taking work we are striving for in challenging injustices in schools.

Equity literacy cultivates four key abilities for educators and students (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015):

- *Recognize* even subtle forms of bias, discrimination, and inequity.
- *Respond* to bias, discrimination, and inequity.
- *Redress* bias, discrimination, and inequity not only by responding to interpersonal bias, but also by studying structural inequities.

- *Cultivate and sustain* bias-free and discrimination-free communities, which requires an understanding that doing so is a basic responsibility for everyone.

It is within this equity literacy framework that we situate the objectives and ongoing goals of the microaggressions workshop discussed in this paper and our roles in social justice-oriented social studies teacher education writ large.

Microaggression Theory

Sue and colleagues (2007) described microaggressions in three forms: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations (pp. 274-275):

- *Microassaults* are explicit, verbal or nonverbal attacks meant to hurt someone. They are a conscious or an explicit bias. For example, using a racial, xenophobic, homophobic, or sexist slur is a microassault.
- *Microinsults* are verbal or nonverbal subtle snubs and insults that carry hidden meaning. They are unconscious or an implicit bias. For example, a store owner following a Black customer around the store is a microinsult.
- *Microinvalidations* are verbal communications that invalidate the experiences of a person of color. They are also unconscious or an implicit bias. For example, when an Asian American (born and raised in the U.S.) is complimented for speaking English well, it is a microinvalidation.

Importantly, the prefix *micro* does not refer to the size or impact of the microaggression, but it instead refers to the microsystem of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1994) where microaggressions occur interpersonally (e.g., school, neighborhood, peers, places of worship). We use microaggression theory to help us critically examine the incidents that took place in our social studies PSTs' field experiences by identifying the type, intent versus impact, and

responses to disrupt them. We center the impact and harm in our analyses and discussions; however, we have found that analyzing possible intent can provide nuances to illuminate the type of microaggression, form of bias, and responses. By identifying stakeholders and possible harms, educators can recognize who is harmed directly or indirectly and how, while providing agency for mitigating that harm.

Microintervention Strategies

> Microinterventions are defined as:
>
> everyday words or deeds, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates to targets of microaggressions (a) validation of their experiential reality, (b) value as a person, (c) affirmation of their racial or group identity, (d) support and encouragement, and (e) reassurance that they are not alone…They are interpersonal tools that are intended to counteract, change or stop microaggressions by subtly or overtly confronting and educating the perpetrator. (Sue et al., 2019, p. 134)

Sue and colleagues offered practical examples for PSTs to interrupt microaggressions taking place in field placements. For example, strategies include: making the invisible visible (e.g., asking “What did you mean by that?”); disarming the microaggression (e.g., saying, “I disagree with that sexist stereotype.”); educating the offender (e.g.; saying, “While you might have intended to make a joke, you actually harmed students of that faith.”); and seeking external support (e.g., seeking guidance from a faculty member or mentor).

We use the conceptual framework of equity literacy, microaggressions theory, and microinterventions as a lens to *recognize, respond, redress,* and *cultivate and sustain* bias-free and discrimination-free communities when addressing the myriad of deeply problematic situations taking place in schools and TEPs. This framework provides an organizational structure

for TEPs to use with their social studies PSTs as they analyze cases of microaggressions reported here, or as PSTs encounter them in the field. By embracing equity literacy, we foster an interdisciplinary space for the development of the key abilities, while working alongside our partners to critically transform classrooms that center on anti-bias, antiracist, asset-based, and inclusive spaces for marginalized and underserved youth and families.

Critical Cases

The scenarios below are real situations that occurred in the field. We used the survey software *QuestionPro* to offer an open space for PSTs to respond to a series of questions. The survey was given to all practicum and student teaching instructors/supervisors in the CoE to share with PSTs during 2018 – 2019 and 2019 – 2020 academic years. The questions are open-ended[2], responses are anonymous (unless PSTs choose to share their name and/or seek the support of CoE faculty), and the link remains open. PSTs shared experiences that caused them to become deeply emotional, question their decision to become a teacher, and inquire about ways to interrupt what they experienced in the field.

In previous work (Jaffee et al., 2020), we have reported on our related qualitative research; here, we use sample critical cases from our social studies PSTs in order to model how PSTs and teacher educators can apply equity literacy, microaggression theory, and microinterventions in classroom-based scenarios. In this section, we share several critical cases

[2] The following questions are asked in the survey:

- Have you witnessed or experienced an uncomfortable situation or ethical dilemma in your practicum and/or student teaching placement (e.g., issues related to race, language, religion, (dis)ability, gender, and/or sexuality involving you or student/families? If so, describe the dilemma you witnessed or experienced.
- Does this situation or dilemma reflect an isolated incident or a persistent issue? Please explain.
- Do you want to meet with a faculty member to discuss the ethical dilemma you faced and to receive support while navigating this situation? If so, please include your name, program area, and e-mail address.
- Is there anything else you would like to share or discuss about your practicum and/or student teaching placement related to challenging ethical situations?

that were experienced by social studies PSTs and present each case using questions guided by the conceptual framework of equity literacy, microaggression theory, and microinterventions. We discuss strategies for enacting microinterventions that interrupt persistent microaggressions taking place in P-12 classrooms.

Case 1

During a high school student teaching experience, a cooperating teacher told her students that Judaism was not a religion. The student teacher in the class, a Jewish woman, expressed to her CT that she practices Judaism and would like to talk to the students about her religion. The CT ignored her and did not do anything to alter her statement or address her student teacher's experience with the students.

Case Analysis: Recognizing the Bias

1. *Who are the stakeholders?*

The stakeholders include the student teacher, the CT, and all of the students in the class.

2. *What is the microaggression? Is it a microassault, microinsult, or microinvalidation?*

The microaggressions in this case could be easily argued as all three types. For example, some may argue that this is a microassault because it is an explicit bias the teacher holds and the antisemitic statement is meant to harm. When the CT is given an opportunity to change course after the student teacher interjected and disrupted the microaggression, she doubled down on her bias by ignoring the student teacher and refusing to correct her false claim. This action gives more credence to the argument that this is a microassault. Some, however, may see this as a microinvalidation because she is invalidating the identities, experiences, beliefs, and religion of roughly 14 million people who identify as culturally and/or religiously Jewish. Still others may

consider this a microinsult, a snub or hidden meaning, to center Christianity as the only religion present in this teacher's perspective.

3. *What is the intent of the person(s) in this case?*

Depending on the type of microaggression analyzed above, one might argue that the intent is to cause harm as a microassault, invalidate or dismiss Jewish people and the Jewish religion as a microinvalidation, or center Christianity as a microinsult.

4. *What is the impact? Who is harmed and how?*

There are several impacts, regardless of the identified type of microaggression, harm was caused and that is the most important thing to recognize, respond, and redress. First, the student teacher is harmed because the power and words of the teacher have invalidated her identity as a Jewish woman. As a result, their working relationship will be harmed and trust broken which has major consequences for teaching and learning. Finally, the students are harmed because they have been taught a damaging, incorrect piece of information that has curricular consequences on state assessments and life consequences as they exist in a multicultural world with an antisemitic belief about Judaism. Additionally, if students or their families identify as Jewish, they will experience harm against their religious identity and relationship with their teacher.

Microinterventions: Responding to the Bias

5. *What could you do next? Who could you reach out to for support?*

First, the PST attempted to disrupt the microaggression by expressing disagreement, which is known as "disarming the microaggression" (Sue et al., 2019, p. 135). When that did not work, she could then contact a professor or university supervisor to discuss the incident. A university professor/supervisor could share this incident with the program coordinator or department head who, alongside the professor/supervisor and student teacher, could develop a

process and protocol for reaching out to school administrators or directly to the teacher to take additional action to interrupt further microaggressions committed by the teacher. Action to interrupt this (and other) microaggressions in the classroom might include professional development experiences, such as reading, reflecting, listening, and learning about microaggressions and bias that take place in everyday life, schools, and workplace environments. The actions discussed here represent microintervention strategies that "seek external interventions" by challenging the perpetrator of the microaggression and directing the action toward institutional macroaggressions.

In this situation, teacher educators should reach out to other faculty, supervisors, family, and/or friends for support. Trying to navigate microaggressions alone might become overwhelming, potentially falling into the trap of "explaining them away" or saying, "maybe it really wasn't that big of a deal." Gaining support, reflection, and encouragement allows a person to process what is taking place and figure out how to move forward with ideas for intervention and action to prevent microaggressions in the future. These opportunities reflect microintervention strategies that seek external intervention(s) including: therapy/counseling, support through community, and attending a support group (Sue et al., 2019).

Case 2

A student teacher was in a social studies classroom when discussions about the migrant caravan came up. The majority of the students said to "build the wall", while one White female student, Karen, went even further to say that if she were the President, she would "bomb the caravan." Another White student used the N word, and then chose Trump's campaign to focus on

for a project and said his platform was to build the wall to keep the Mexicans out and to keep the Mexicans from stealing our jobs.

Case Analysis: Recognizing the Bias

1. *Who are the stakeholders?*

The stakeholders include the PST, the CT, and students in the class who said or heard the statements.

2. What is the microaggression? Is it a microassault, microinsult, or microinvalidation?

There are several microassaults in this case because they are conscious, explicit biases that use racial slurs and xenophobic stereotypes against immigrants from Latin or South America. The microassaults were derogatory, verbal assaults, and name calling that went beyond dehumanization to threatening or wishing violence and death upon a group of people because of their ethnicity.

3. *What is the intent of the person(s) in this case?*

The intent of the offenders is to cause harm, dehumanize, and explicitly draw an "us versus them comparison" (Sue et al., 2007) while holding a hierarchical (White supremacy) and pathologizing description of Latinx culture and people.

4. *What is the impact? Who is harmed and how?*

While we do not specifically know the ethnic or racial makeup of this setting to know whether any students of color in the classroom were specifically targeted, we know that hateful rhetoric or inaccurate thoughts rooted in White supremacy, racism, and xenophobia can have a ripple effect that impact those inside and outside the classroom from peers, colleagues, and neighbors to family members. These beliefs, if gone unchecked, promulgate explicit bias, dehumanization, stereotyping, and discrimination in schooling and social settings. We have seen

first-hand the results of this combination with mass shootings, hate crimes, and domestic white supremacist terrorism towards BIPOC, LGBTQ+, Asian American, Jewish, and Muslim folx throughout the U.S. and internationally. Each perpetrator of violence was a student in many classrooms prior to their violent act.

Microinterventions: Responding to the Bias

5. *What could you do next? Who could you reach out to for support?*

It can be a startling experience to hear overwhelming support for xenophobic, racist, and derogatory tropes in a setting where these microassaults are not interrupted and are supported by others. The PST might feel unsure of where to start or how to intervene because it appears to be the climate of the classroom, and possibly school, to commit racist, linguist, or xenophobic microaggressions. The PST might consider dismissing the comments for fear of being the only one to push back, but instead could try several microintervention strategies (Sue et al., 2019). For example, they could disarm the microaggressions by "educating the offender" about the realities and facts of immigration and migrant work or point out the xenophobic stereotypes. Additionally, the PST could "point out the commonality" of parents trying to provide better for their kids by moving to find a better school, job, or be close to family members whether they are American or Mexican (Sue et al., 2019, p. 135). In field-based settings where school climates reflect similar instances to this case, it can be challenging to push back because the vocal majority disagrees. The PST might consider reaching out for support from a professor or supervisor who could help them navigate the specific school context and find someone in that school who could work alongside them to disrupt the macro- and microaggressions.

Case 3

A Black female student teacher reported that she had a White middle school student make offensive comments to her referring to "the 'hood." He changed his voice to a dialect that was not his and said "yeah because that's how they do it in the 'hood." She paid him no attention and then later he blurted out "what do you have against the 'hood?!" directly looking at her. The student teacher reported that she ignored the offending student, but informed her cooperating teacher. While the student teacher said this was an isolated incident, she mentioned the word "colored" was used in class by teachers and students when referring to BIPOC members of the school community, indicating an anti-Black and racist classroom culture.

Case Analysis: Recognizing the Bias

1. *Who are the stakeholders?*

The stakeholders in this case include the Black PST, the CT, the White student saying the microaggression and the other students in the class.

2. What is the microaggression? Is it a microassault, microinsult, or microinvalidation?

The offensive comments made by the White student about "the 'hood" and the use of the word "colored" are microassaults. The White student made these explicit comments consciously and directly at the Black student teacher, making it clear that he has an explicit bias against Black people and a stereotype of a "hood" that he deems to be negative as he changes his voice and mocks the student teacher.

3. *What is the intent of the person(s) in this case?*

Most likely this student thought he was being "funny" and wanted to create an atmosphere where others felt like laughing or chiming in to this racialized joke (microassault) to draw attention to race and make BIPOC feel marginalized within the classroom. The comments

directed toward the student teacher and the use of the word “colored” create a divisive classroom environment filled with intimidation.

4. *What is the impact? Who is harmed and how?*

The student teacher is harmed because the White student is not interrupted and the student teacher does not feel as though she can speak up during the attack due to the power dynamics and lack of allies and support in the classroom. As Sue et al. (2019) reminded us, her experience of and with these microaggressions can create feelings of threat, isolation, and painful emotions. The White student is able to shift control from the student teacher by creating an environment that feels hostile, uncomfortable, and filled with White supremacy and power.

We do not know if there were other students of color in this classroom, but we assume that any student that overheard this was impacted by the racialized joke and uninterrupted verbal assaults. If students of color were present, they would be directly harmed, and most likely impacted daily by this White student and others that join in on the racial jokes and evocation of White power. When microaggressions are not disrupted, they can impact the emotional well-being of those harmed and lead to negative feelings and internalized racism.

Microinterventions: Responding to the Bias

5. *What could you do next? Who could you reach out to for support?*

The PST most likely experienced immediate feelings of pain and isolation as the CT didn’t address the student at that moment. She reached out to the CT, but nothing was addressed and the overall climate of allowing references to “colored” people is oppressive and difficult to manage. This is exacerbated by the power dynamic that exists between a student teacher and their CT. Perhaps the CT did not speak up because she felt that behavior management is something the PST needs to learn as the student teacher. However, it is important to recognize

the problematic framing of this thought, as research shows that we must not "ask people of color to educate or confront perpetrators when the sting of prejudice and discrimination pains them" (Sue et al., 2019, p. 131). In this case, it is necessary to disarm the microaggression by letting the White student know this is unacceptable behavior and then set limits and state the values of the school. The PST should not be responsible for this, but could reach out to an advisor or program coordinator to help facilitate a conversation with the principal, CT, and student.

Discussion

Redressing bias, discrimination, and inequity in social studies classrooms can occur in multiple ways. This section discusses three specific ways to redress bias in social studies classrooms to interrupt and challenge microaggressions, specifically in the critical cases above. One, responding to interpersonal bias, is a key factor, but should be further buttressed by teaching a curriculum that provides a more complete understanding of groups and individuals who have been historically marginalized. For example, one way to redress the antisemitism described in case one is to develop curriculum that involves teaching multiple perspectives and experiences of being Jewish, including power, oppression, and resistance, but contextualized with a more complete history of Judaism and Jewish people, including literature and other media written by Jewish people, and that feature Jewish characters situated within stories that do not center oppression or violence. Of course, Jewish history is replete with examples of political violence which should not be ignored, but to center these events alone, flattens the complexity of Jewish identity and leads to further dehumanization.

Two, microinterventions can redress bias and discrimination in social studies classrooms. For example, they might include the ways PSTs and teacher educators can center marginalized perspectives, histories, and communities to enact a more inclusive and representative social

studies curriculum. We argue that teachers and teacher educators must be intentional and thoughtful in their inclusion of historically marginalized voices and experiences (An, 2020; Vickery & Duncan, 2020), as well as in their interrupting and correcting of inaccurate historical representations and fake news (Journell, 2021). Only "including," however, may lead to more harm and additional microaggressions if not done well, such as including Black history only in the period of enslavement and a White-washed version of the Civil Rights Movement (Busey & Walker, 2017). We advocate instead for considering a framework that centers and sustains voices, experiences, and stories of underrepresented and marginalized groups in social studies. For example, the Teaching Hard History framework (Learning for Justice, 2021) and King's (2020) Black historical consciousness framework offer themes, objectives, questions, materials, teaching resources, and activities to comprehensively teach Black histories in the social studies curriculum.

When teaching about religion, Subedi (2006) cautioned that "the lack of candid conversation about religions, particularly concerning multiple beliefs and practices, produces stereotypes" (p. 227). Therefore, a singular focus on the political history of religion in social studies limits opportunities for important interpersonal dialogue. Tanenbaum, an organization committed to combating religious prejudice, provides curriculum that support interpersonal dialogue about religion and religious identity, as well as religious conflict resolution. Elementary and middle school students may benefit from engaging in Tanenbaum's Religions in My Neighborhood (2021) curriculum, focused on developing dialogue about religious diversity within a community.

Critical citizenship education necessitates meaningful inclusion of LGBTQ+ voices, histories, experiences, and stories; however, only seven states have included references to

LGBTQ+ people and groups in their social studies standards (Camicia & Zhu, 2019). Maguth and Taylor (2014) argued that meaningful social studies instruction related to LGBTQ+ individuals, events, perspectives, and contributions requires simply sharing, "the truth about the people we already talk about in social studies" (p. 25). As a start, Maguth and Taylor suggested incorporating an exploration of the "worldviews, lifestyles, and advocacy of individuals like Jane Adams [sic], Alexander the Great, Susan B. Anthony, Harvey Milk, James Baldwin, J. Edgar Hoover, Langston Hughes, Walt Whitman, and Eleanor Roosevelt" (p. 25).

Three, the curricular and societal issues mentioned above necessitate systemic change, a key factor in redressing bias, discrimination, and inequity in schools. For example, one possibility is challenging traditional, normative notions of social studies education dominated by White voices and experiences, what Chandler and Branscombe (2015) called "white social studies," toward a more critical democratic citizenship education (Kinchloe, 2001; Swalwell & Payne, 2019; Wheeler-Bell, 2014). We argue that building to macrointerventions, or systemic transformations that impact groups or classes of people (Sue et al., 2019), versus individual teachers enacting interpersonal or everyday changes in their lessons, will lead to greater curricular transformation. Increasing the number of teachers and districts that use counternarratives that center the experiences of historically marginalized populations will lead to a more complete and complex social studies curriculum. We must prepare social studies PSTs to create and implement transformative social studies curriculum while interrupting microaggressions and macroaggressions in their classrooms and schools.

Conclusion

Our goal is to interrupt the implicit and explicit bias and trauma taking place in schools by cultivating and sustaining bias-free and discrimination-free communities (Gorski & Swalwell,

2015). This requires an understanding that when sustaining a bias- and discrimination-free community, it is the basic responsibility for everyone in society to recognize, respond, and redress bias. We must work together to ensure a school community exists where *all* are welcome and the curriculum is working to challenge structures that uphold White supremacy.

We operate under the hope of Dr. Maya Angelou's wise words, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better;" therefore, this article works to share critical cases from the field in ways that help teachers, PSTs, and teacher educators to do better. Our goal is not to attack teachers, but rather, to support teachers in the challenging work they do everyday and pause to consider how their words and actions impact the PSTs and youth in their classrooms. We recognize that with knowledge comes the power to transform young people's lives, and with this, we take great responsibility as teacher educators.

This article seeks to transform ways of doing school, constructing curriculum, and enacting pedagogy to reflect the experiences and knowledge of historically marginalized students, families, and communities. We hope this practitioner piece, and a manuscript that details our Microaggressions Workshop (Kavanagh et al., 2021), will inspire other TEPs who are engaged in this work to collaborate on professional development for all stakeholders that is focused on implicit/explicit bias and microaggressions in P-16 settings (Fleurizard, 2018; Schwartz, 2019; Souza, 2018). This collaborative work contributes to informing effective and sustainable processes that address inequity, diversity, and biases when sending PSTs into schools.

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