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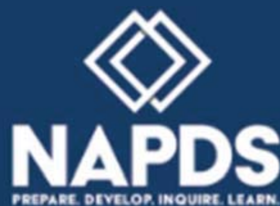
The research journal of the
National Association for Professional Development Schools



School–University Partnerships

The Journal of the
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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

A statement by the Executive Council and Board of Directors of the National Association for Professional Development Schools, www.napds.org, April 2008

The Nine Required Essentials of a PDS© are:

1. a comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;

2. a school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;

3. ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;

4. a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

5. engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants;

6. an articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved;

7. a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration;

8. work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; and

9. dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

School–University Partnerships: The Journal of the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) is published by the NAPDS as a service to members of the Association and others concerned with partnerships between higher education and P-12 schools and their communities. For association information please refer to http://www.napds.org.

School–University Partnerships: The Journal of the National Association for Professional Development Schools is nationally disseminated and blind-refereed. Each issue contains articles written by both university and school educators, usually in collaboration with each other, and highlights policy and practice in the school- university partnership. Please refer to the submission guidelines at the back of this issue for advice to aspiring authors.

THEMED ISSUE: EQUITY IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

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Introduction to the Special Issue: Equity in Professional Development School Partnerships

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Abstract: This article is the introduction to the Special Issue of *School-University Partnerships* entitled Equity in Professional Development School partnerships. The authors provide context as well as their own personal experiences related to equity and PDS work.

KEYWORDS: equity, professional development schools; school-university partnerships

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Introduction

In 1999 I (Drew) was a first year teacher in Williamsburg, VA, in a fifth grade classroom and found myself frequently frustrated, annoyed, and at times angry at the behavior of my students. I had very little training on culturally relevant teaching, students experiencing poverty, and how to handle students who had experienced traumatic experiences. My grade level teammates insisted that students were placed in separate classes by ability for mathematics. As a first year teacher for an hour of mathematics, I worked with sixteen (often less due to absences and tardiness) who had not yet met grade level expectations for third or fourth grade concepts. Nearly all of those students were children of color, while the classes with students who performed better in mathematics were full of mainly White children. While I recall having an uneasy feeling about this I said nothing as a first year teacher and just taught my students. For that I am truly sorry

In 2002 I (Christie) began my career in education in a 4th grade classroom in lower Manhattan. I was a career changer jumping into the classroom while pursuing my masters. I would leave my evening course and immediately be trying to implement what I learned in my class the next day. I often reflect on those years in several ways. My first thought is how much I loved spending each day with my class, I gave all I could in the best way I knew at that point. My second thought goes to what I did not know at that time. Finally, as is often in life, I envision all the things I would have done differently. The last 18 years transformed my understanding and many times produced a mixture of negative emotions as I deconstructed privilege, racism, and falsehoods embedded in my own K-12 education. This work is ongoing, I continue to read texts, listen to presentations, movies, and podcasts to deepen my knowledge of the historical context that systematically produces inequity, how culturally relevant pedagogy is used to bring equity to the classroom, and find colleagues to engage in this work.

Points to Consider

Equity is not Equality

It seems intuitive, but for the longest time the narrative in education was to treat students equally and not to show bias or unequal treatment to any students. While that concept has shifted dramatically in the past two decades there is a need in both professional development and teacher education programs to operationalize what that looks like. While education continues to focus on the ideas of differentiation and using data to drive instruction, teachers need to consider what equity looks like in terms of students' cultural and personal strengths and backgrounds as well as their academic strengths and backgrounds. In your own context, how are you promoting equity-based approaches to teaching?

Advocate for Access to High-Quality Education

There is a need for educational leaders, especially those working in the context of school-university (PDS) partnerships to consider how to ensure that all students from Pre-Kindergarten through College have access to high-quality education. At times schools and universities may lower the expectations for specific groups of students, which in the end has more of a negative impact on them. The National Council for Teachers of Mathematics statement on Access and Equity contends that all students deserve access to a "high-quality...curriculum, effective teaching and learning, high expectations, and the support and resources needed to maximize their

learning potential (NCTM, 2014).” For all of us involved in education that should be a goal for all of us in all subject areas.

Our Own Learning is a Journey

Both of us share a passion for education and recognize this path is a journey. We also value the need to provide ourselves with opportunities to discuss issues related to equity and anti-racism. In both of our cases we appreciate the words of Dr. Richard Milner’s book *Start Where you are but Don’t Stay There (*2010). We feel that our learning about issues related to equity and anti-racism are in fact a journey and we do not and may never not be experts in these areas.

Drew: My journey in learning about equity has led to a lot of guilt and shame about my privileged background as well as reflection about how I could have been a more equity-based teacher during my time in the classroom. As I continue to read, watch videos, and reflect on ideas related to equity-based teaching, I continually feel the need to think about how I can apply what I have read or learned into my daily work. For example, after reading Lisa Delpit’s *Multiplication is for White People* (2012) with my seniors last fall I was struck with her concept of a “warm demander” which describes how teachers need to be warm and loving towards their students, yet simultaneously demand that students work hard and give their best effort. As I work with future teachers, current teachers, and students weekly, I continue to think about whether my actions are warm and demanding in terms of keeping expectations high for everyone who I work with.

Christie: My journey also includes guilt and shame about the ways in which I could have and should have created space for difficult conversations and made a more equitable classroom. When I begin to overwhelm myself with these thoughts, I take comfort in Maya Angelou’s quote “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” On this journey, I have committed to continue the work of knowing better and doing better. Social justice and creating an equitable classroom means knowing better in a number of areas. For me, it has meant interrogating our history with multiple sources and questioning why so much of what I consider critical information for social justice was left out of my own education. It is reading Ijeoma Oluo’s *So you want to talk about race* (2019) for guidance and understanding. This process of knowing better causes me to consistently pause, reflect, and research. I share this process with my students, colleagues, and family as we collectively seek to do better.

The Benefit of Talking and Collaborating about Issues of Equity

In the spirit of the NAPDS 9 Essentials (NAPDS, 2008) there is a need to consider who is on your team as you strive for and advocate for equity-based teaching and address issues in your context that are inequitable. When we talked about putting this special issue together one of our goals was to provide a place for educators to visit to learn about how school-university partnerships are working on topics related to equity. Our hope is that you may use these articles as a springboard to continue to examine how you could infuse more principles related to equity-based teaching into your own context.

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SEED "Seeds," "Stories of Injustice," and the equity ideals of our partnerships: A program in formation and pre-/in-service teachers as bridges to equity

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Michelle Lague, George Mason University
Paula Cristina Azevedo, George Mason University

Abstract: The authors of this case—and the team of school- and university-based educators with whom we partner in a secondary education (SEED) program at George Mason University in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States—are committed to the notion that all teachers have an obligation to orient their curricula around ideals of justice. In this article, we share the deliberations of our faculty and partnering mentor teachers from our sixteen-school partnership network as they appealed to NAPDS Essential #1 to consider "social justice" as one of the program's core principles. In addition, to integrate a social justice stance into the pedagogies of our English teacher candidates, we have asked them to explore notions of equity via "Story of Injustice" narratives, which eventually serve as the foundations for their first lesson planning efforts. In this article, we present the results of a seven-year study of the justice concepts identified by 138 preservice English teachers. Through the examples of our program development and course instruction and this taxonomy of concepts of injustice, we hope to help move teachers and our field—both within and outside of school-university partnership and Professional Development School contexts—closer to these equity-oriented ends.

KEYWORDS: clinical educators, equity, mentor teachers, professional development schools; school-university partnerships, social justice

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SEED "Seeds," "Stories of Injustice," and the equity ideals of our partnerships: A program in formation and pre-/in-service teachers as bridges to equity

University-based teacher educators increasingly consider taking social justice stances in their endeavors, in and across school-based clinical experience and university classroom settings. They appreciate that an equity approach to teaching is connected to the political and social contexts of our schools, communities, and nation (Boggess, 2010; Kaur, 2012). Equity-oriented endeavors seem more important given the ways in which the xenophobic rhetoric of our current US presidential administration has been normalized (Lugg, 2017; Rethinking Schools, 2017). In response, the authors of this article and the team of school- and university-based educators with whom we partner in our university's secondary education (SEED) program where we serve as the program coordinator (Zenkov) and instructors (Azevedo and Lague) are ever more committed to the notion that all teachers must orient their pedagogies around justice ideals (Hyteen & Bettez, 2011; McDonald, 2008).

The foundational principles of public education in the U.S. and a growing range of studies, practical standards, and professional association policies support an equity orientation to teacher education. Additionally, the first "Essential" of the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) notes that school-university partnerships should be guided by missions "broader in outreach and scope than the mission of any partner…that further the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community" (NAPDS, 2008). In this article, we briefly share how our program faculty—including this manuscript's first and third authors—and partnering school-based mentor teachers have begun to consider social justice as one of the program's five core program principles (its "Seeds"). We then spend the bulk of this manuscript detailing how, as a part of this consideration of an equity approach to teacher education efforts in school-university partnership contexts, we have attempted to integrate a social justice stance into the structures of our English education track.

We address two questions central to this special issue of *School-University Partnerships*: "What efforts are currently ongoing around the work of equity-based teaching in the context of PDS or school-university partnerships?" and "How can PDS and school-university partnerships serve as mechanisms to those who are working in areas of equity-based teaching?" Specifically, we do so by addressing the research question "With what conceptions of injustice do future teachers begin their journeys into the teaching profession?" by examining the injustice notions that candidates have explored via their first assignment (the "Story of Injustice") in their initial methods of instruction course. Through the examples of our program development and course instruction and the taxonomy of concepts of injustice in our study's findings, we hope to help move teachers and our field—both within and outside of school-university partnership and Professional Development School contexts—closer to these equity-oriented ends.

Literature Review

Virtually all teachers and teacher educators face an increasing number of standards and assessments by which they and their students are held "accountable" (Kapuskta, Howell, Clayton, & Thomas, 2009). While politicians often steer our field toward diminished concepts of curriculum and more efficient but less authentic forms of assessment, educators have considered

social justice ideals as foundational objectives (Esposito & Swain, 2009; Oakes, Lipton, Anderson, & Stillman, 2018). An equity orientation to PK-12 classroom instruction and teacher education is supported both by the underpinning principles of US public education and by a growing range of professional association policies and scholarly studies.

Our social justice teaching and teacher education orientations have been informed by multicultural and social studies educators (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015) via the concept of "equity literacy" as well as by anti-oppressive teaching practices (Kelly, 2012). Echoing the stances of many teachers and teacher educators, as English teachers and teacher educators we have welcomed the intensified justice focus in the current standards of the National Council of Teachers of English (Golden & Bieler, 2018; NCTE, 2013), our primary professional association. To inform our study, we reviewed bodies of literature on two related topics: First, conceptions of social justice in teacher preparation; and, second, methods of integrating social justice into teacher preparation structures.

University-based teacher education programs have long considered questions about schools' objectives and their efforts to promote a democratic society (Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2013; Zeichner, 2009). Examinations of the impact of teacher education programs on their graduates' instruction—including their focus on justice issues—have often led to queries about the quality and quantity of these effects (Kirkland, 2014; Tinkler, Hannah, Tinkler, & Miller, 2014). It seemed important, then, that we begin with an understanding of what scholars and teacher educators have meant by "social justice," if it is to be viewed as central to teacher educators', classroom teachers', and school-university partnerships' work (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2016).

Universities around the United States have documented histories of integrating social justice ideals into their teacher education courses and clinical experiences (Picower, 2011). In these programs, "social justice" addresses notions of critical consciousness, K-12 teachers' evidence-based and equity-oriented instructional practices, and skills required by school leaders to enact social justice (Dover 2013; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Studies indicate that justice pedagogies promote improved achievement among students from minority cultures (Francis, Mills, & Lupton, 2017); researchers speculate that such pedagogies are effective because they encourage teachers to adapt their instruction to students' needs (Han, Madhuri, & Scull, 2015).

Scholars have identified "markers" of teaching for social justice, including the implementation of curricula that integrate a range of perspectives, appreciate linguistic and racial diversity, and demonstrate comfort with modeling equity in their classrooms (Agarwal, Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, & Sonu, 2010). Dyches and Boyd have articulated a "science" of social justice teacher education in what they term "Social Justice Pedagogical and Content Knowledge" (SJPACK), which includes three domains: Social Justice Knowledge, Social Justice Pedagogical Knowledge, and Social Justice Content Knowledge (Dyches & Boyd, 2017). English educators are among the most ardent supporters of a social justice approach to instruction, which challenges entrenched aspects of adolescents', family and community members', and teachers' relationships to literacy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Dunn, VanDerHeide, Caughlan, Northrop, Zhang, & Kelly, 2018).

While many scholars have identified the "what" of equity-focused educator preparation, others have explored the "how" of these endeavors. Numerous researchers consider the notion of teacher "identity" as central to justice-oriented teacher education efforts (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008;

Mirra, Filipiak, & Garcia, 2015). Preservice teachers are not "blank slates" and come to teacher education programs as fully developed individuals (Obenchain, Balkute, Vaughn, & White, 2016). Dyches and Boyd (2017) explained the importance of connecting social justice-oriented teacher preparation curricula with teaching identity, calling on preservice teachers to adjust their orientations to the world, represented by the stories we tell our students and ourselves. Teachers who are more conscious of their own experiences are more able to adjust this frame (Chubbuck & Zemblys, 2016), and learning to reflect on one's own experience with injustice reinforces the concept that teaching is never an impartial act (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016; Richards & Zenkov, 2015; Zenkov & Newman, 2016).

Noting incongruities in social justice definitions in teacher education, Alsup and Miller (2014) aimed to outline an effective guide to assessing a teacher's "social justice disposition," operating with the hypothesis that "dispositions are shaped by pre-dispositions" (p. 200). Scholars have illustrated how equity orientations do not function in isolation from teachers' subject areas disciplines (Coffee, Fitchett, & Farinde, 2015). Frederick, Miller, and colleagues have assessed how new teachers might best transfer the justice pedagogies they learn in their teacher education programs into their teaching practices (Frederick, Cave, & Perencevich, 2010), speaking to our own study of teacher candidates' development of social justice orientations.

The Secondary Education (SEED) Program and the "Social Justice" Seed

Over the past six years, faculty members in the George Mason University secondary education (SEED) program—including two of this article's authors, Zenkov and Azevedo—have explicitly considered the "Nine Essentials" of NAPDS (NAPDS, 2008) in an intentional and developmental manner. We have attempted to translate these into our program structures, which include sixteen partner schools (eight middle and eight high schools) where candidates complete the bulk of their three-semester sequence of clinical experiences. We have focused on Essential #1 and the integration of social justice into our program, echoing the efforts of universities and colleges across the United States (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Reagan, Chen, & Vernikoff, 2016). Across these programs, "social justice" addresses notions of critical consciousness, K-12 teachers' evidence-based instruction oriented toward creating equitable schools, and specific skills required by school leaders to enact equity-centered assessment practices (Dover, 2013; North, 2008).

Our program's and partnerships' efforts to advance equity in schools and beyond have resulted in the identification of not just one orienting ideal—social justice—but in the selection of five "Seeds":

- Social Justice
- Inquiry and Reflection
- Advocacy and Agency
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Relationships with and Respect for Students

We understand these to be both principles to which our program, its teams of university-based and school-based teacher educators, and our partner schools are committed, as well as ideals that our graduates should work to enact during our program and throughout their teaching careers (Cochran-Smith, Ell, Grudnoff, Haigh, Hill, & Ludlow, 2016). Over the past year, we have engaged with faculty, students, and partner school mentors and administrators in a series of

discussions to define these notions and reflect on how they might best be integrated into all elements of our minimum four-semester licensure/master's degree track (Zenkov, Lague, & Azevedo, 2020).

For each of these "Seeds," then, we considered the following questions in sub-committees of program-affiliated university- and school-based personnel:

- To what readings, organizations, etc. might we appeal to best develop our own and teacher candidates' understandings of this principle?
- What will our teacher candidates produce as evidence of their growing understandings of these "Seeds"?
- How might this principle be integrated into our program—at application, across key assignments in our course sequence, and in clinical experiences?
- What will this "Seed" look like in our partner school and mentor selection processes?
- What is the evidence of these principles with which our students should be familiar—beyond their classrooms?

This "Seed" links to more than the concept of "equity" named in NAPDS Essential #1. It also has bases in notions of culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies, student and teacher "voice," teacher leadership, and Participatory and Youth Participatory Action Research principles and methods (Castro, 2010; Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Jong, Terrell, Barnatt, & McQuillan, 2009). We are also appealing to the foundational work of "Teaching Tolerance" to inform our integration of the "Social Justice" Seed, and we have identified a number of other educator preparation programs and the University of Michigan's TeachingWorks, all of which look to social justice as an orienting ideal.

Social Justice and Our English Education Track

While our overall program's and partnerships' considerations of these social justice ideals are at an early stage, our integration of an equity orientation is much more complete in our English education track, for which Zenkov (this article's first author) serves as the lead faculty member and from which Lague (the second author) graduated and now serves as an instructor. As secondary and English educators, we have welcomed the heightened focus on social justice principles found in the current standards of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2013), but these are far from the only equity notions that influence English teachers' and English educators' work. In fact, the history of justice-focused literacy instruction is protracted, and one with which many English teachers, teacher educators, and scholars have engaged (Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Lazar, 2013; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Williamson, Rhodes, & Dunson, 2007).

For our integration and examination of these justice ideals in our English education track, we reasoned that if equity approaches are to become foundational in both teacher education contexts and middle/high schools, scholars need a responsive understanding of the ideas of "justice" with which pre-service English teachers are operating (Destigter, 2008; Fowler-Amato, LeeKeenan, Warrington, Nash, & Brady, 2019). As well, we have speculated that equity ideals might matter to these future teachers and these principles might be more effectively incorporated into their instructional orientations if we began our program—via the first English instruction methods course that we co-teach—by calling on them to explore the notions of injustice with which they are most familiar. To enact this premise, for the last seven years we have asked

preservice teachers to examine and narrativize these ideas via a "Story of Injustice" assignment, which eventually serves as the foundation for their first lesson planning efforts.

Methodology

Conceptual Framework

We recognize that promoting an equity approach to teaching cannot be separated from the political and social contexts of our nation, communities, and schools (Anderson, McKenzie, Allan, Hill, McLean, Kavira, Knorr, Stone, Murphy, & Butcher, 2015). In addition, we conceive of English teachers' social justice notions as examples of what Meyer and Land (2003) have called "threshold concepts": many future teachers struggle to adopt a social justice stance, because they fail to recognize that education is inherently focused on improving the human condition. We rely on the hypothesis that if equity approaches are to become foundational in both teacher education contexts and middle/high schools, scholars need a responsive understanding of the ideas of "justice" with which pre-service English teachers are operating (Fowler-Amato et al, 2019).

Our research and pedagogical conceptual frameworks are rooted in the belief that no instruction should occur without an appreciation for students' life and learning experiences and that all curricula should honor youths' and pre-service teachers' perspectives on the topics to which we are introducing them (Gay, 2012; Lee, 2011). We were cognizant of these considerations as we developed the "Story of Injustice" assignment and designed this first component of what is now a longitudinal study of preservice teachers' and early career teachers' concepts of and pedagogical implementations of justice. We are committed to the notion that all English teachers, who often focus on youths creating texts, engaging with, and generating concepts, have an obligation to orient their pedagogies around ideals of equity (Bieler & Burns, 2017).

Study Context and Participants

We have examined the "Stories of Injustice" of 138 pre-service teachers who were enrolled in a master's licensure program at our very large, diverse mid-Atlantic U.S. university and completing clinical experiences in one of sixteen partner schools. Despite this diversity, the majority of candidates were White females in their early 20's, which is similar to teacher preparation programs nationwide. Most indicators suggested that formal education and educational institutions were highly valued in our students' communities, although the disenfranchisement and disengagement patterns often seen in impoverished communities were also clearly present.

Project and Study Implementation

To introduce future English teachers to social justice-oriented pedagogies, we call on them to develop "Stories of Injustice" as the first element of multi-genre compositions, through which they document an equity-oriented subject of their choosing with texts they craft (e.g., this Story of Injustice, a justice-focused research essay, and a poem) and select (e.g., visuals, social media, research reports, etc.). In the syllabus, the project is described as an "exploration of a justice-related topic related to English instruction you want to learn about and share with your future students," in part "to consider how our teaching work can help to make the world a more

just place." Candidates are asked to compose this story in a form that they would call on their future students to both read and write, with content that they expect these young people might encounter in their lives or should experience in the school curriculum. We assign candidates the task of considering "injustice" rather than "justice" issues because they are eventually required to detail how they and their future students might address these injustices, on personal levels in the poems they craft and via structural means in the research essays they compose.

We read these 138 stories using qualitative research methods to catalogue the topics of injustice pre-service teachers identified (Creswell, 1998). We further analyzed all data through an extensive coding process (Saldaña, 2013) based on these emergent themes. First author Zenkov completed an initial analysis of story topics, and second author Lague conducted the second stage of qualitative analysis processes by collecting notes while closely reading each story to track emerging themes. We were in near complete agreement on these topics, as most authors explicitly named the topics in their stories and because the majority of stories (81.2%) addressed multiple issues, increasing the likelihood that we would identify at least one common topic.

As we read and analyzed the stories, codes emerged organically and thematically, allowing Lague to create the language for specific codes. For example, she observed that several stories included adult bystanders who were unsupportive of adolescents facing injustices or seemed to perpetuate the story's injustice; this pattern begot the code "complicit adults." Though some stories had only one clear theme, most addressed two or three distinct issues; no story was given more than four topic codes.

In the final stage of our analysis, Lague used Google Sheets to organize the consolidated topics by each of the seven semesters from which data were collected. Codes were separated from their stories but remained organized by respective semesters for later trend analysis. We alphabetized codes in Google Sheets by semester and counted manually. We then combined codes in a separate Google Sheet to count overall occurrences across all seven semesters. This resulted in the identification of 75 topics, which we detail further below.

Findings

We identified 75 distinct topic codes, 32 of which had more than three occurrences across the 138 total stories. For the analyses and findings we share in this manuscript, we considered ten distinct themes, each of which occurred nine or more times. We calculated the occurrence percentage of each of these topics from this tally of stories of injustice (see Table 1 for frequency and definitions).

Table 1: Topics from Data Analysis

Top Topics	Definition
Identity = 15.22%	Forming or deforming of a person's identity
Racism = 15.22%	Discrimination against someone who belongs to a minority group
Bullying = 13.77%	Related to ongoing harassment of someone
Complicit adults = 13.04%	Facilitated, perpetuated, or ignored by a trusted adult
Family injustice = 11.59%	Abuse, neglect, or a decision perpetrated by family member
Complicit teacher = 8.7%	Facilitated, perpetuated, or ignored by a teacher
The Other = 8.7%	Related to a fear or hatred of an "other"
Sexism = 7.97%	Unequal treatment based on gender, not including sexual violence
Powerlessness = 6.52%	Created by a loss/lack of control over one's situation or actions
Religion = 6.52%	Based on or due to a person's religion or a difference in religion

In the remainder of this section, we examine some of the most frequently occurring and often merged topics, elucidating these with excerpts from candidates' stories.

Identity and Racism

Nearly one third of the stories portrayed either "identity" or "racism"—in some cases, identity shaped by race or racism. These two topics were the most familiar catalysts for candidates' formative moments of developing understandings of injustice. Interestingly, while these two topics were the most popular, their pervasiveness may actually make them the most nuanced and personal; stories with these topics were often lived events and seemed to influence not just the author's conception of justice, but of themselves as people.

"I'm aboard a plane 50,000 feet above the Atlantic Ocean. I'm headed to a place that is apparently my home, although I haven't been there since I was eleven years old," one preservice teacher—M—began in an account of injustice entitled "Alien." This individual was the author and narrator of this story, and his tale was crafted in the form of a letter—written from the sky—relating currently unfolding events, which he was already recognizing would forever define his identity. The letter continued:

> When you are eighteen and 21 you can't go anywhere where they require an ID because you won't get in. So your friends stop calling you. You can't buy a video game for your little brother because it's rated "Mature" and you don't have an ID. Things as simple as boarding a plane or applying to college become nightmares because you can't put in the nine-digit code to success.

> All these things seem insignificant but they have a psychological effect on you. You're scared to do anything. You're scared to reach out for help when you're trying to figure out how to get into college. You don't trust anyone enough to let them in and let them help you figure out what to do when you leave high school. Because if you get in trouble or if anyone finds out what you are, you'll be deported with no questions asked. You have no rights. Since *you* are illegal, by default everything you *do* is illegal.

The statement "[s]ince *you* are illegal, by default everything you *do* is illegal" summarizes the far-reaching consequences of one's identity being dictated by immigration status. An injustice is sometimes a reality that is embodied, beyond an individual's control.

"I didn't see at the time, to my eternal shame," a White preservice teacher—P—wrote of a time she was not attuned to the terror felt by a Black mother during a laser tag birthday party taking place in a suburban neighborhood where the preteen boys were left to roam the streets with plastic guns. The racism was not the author's, though one could contend the privilege of peace of mind enjoyed by the author was part of the architecture of racism. The primary example of racism in this story was another unspoken reality: the debilitating fear among Black Americans that they will be shot by police or, at the very least, treated differently by other community members, even at children's birthday parties.

Like "Alien," this story offers not only the notion of injustice of which a future teacher was aware, but her reflection on that concept:

> The injustice, to me, is not just that my friend could not sit and knit and chat like the rest of us. It's that she could not count on the world to protect her son if he is out of her reach, like I can. She cannot expect all teachers where our children go to school together to see past the color of his skin and see his intelligence first.

P connects her idea of injustice—illustrated by an innocuous event, a birthday party, accessed through her lens as a parent—to her future teaching practice: she believes teachers serve all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or other facets of their identities.

Religion

"Religion" was a concept that overlapped with several of the topics and was present in 6.52% of stories. One of the most compelling examples of these stories opened with lines from the famous Muslim poet Rumi's "Life & Death": *I gave my word/at the outset to give my life/with no qualms/I pray to the Lord/to break my back/before I break my word.* The author—Z—goes on to connect the reader to her/his spiritual roots in a way that seems impossible in the narrator's community.

Z explains that the narrator, Faheem, "was inspired by the story of Ahmed Mohamed – the 14-year old Sudanese boy who was arrested for bringing a homemade clock to school" in Irving, Texas in 2015. The timepiece was mistaken by school authorities for a bomb, leading to a local and eventually a national public uproar. Faheem faces "othering" by his community as a Sudanese American, but he feels this exclusion even more deeply as a Muslim. This story offers a glimpse into Faheem's life after his arrest as he wonders what will happen to him in the future because of Islamophobia.

> Faheem thought about Sudan. His thoughts of his homeland were only in his imagination; he had never been there. He thought about his grandfather who, at age

> fourteen, walked six miles out of Shatoy in search of the British school, only to be captured and brought back to the Khalawie school in his village. His grandfather who loved science. The gentle old man who had held his hand and pointed up to the stars, quietly reciting a Sufi poem under his breath:
>
> *I've come again*
> *to break the teeth and claws*
> *of this man-eating*
> *monster we call life*
> *I've come again*
> *to puncture the*
> *glory of the cosmos*
> *who mercilessly*
> *destroys humans*
>
> The early morning light splintered though the tiny window between splotches of dirt and grease and illuminated a galaxy of swirling dust particles. He gazed up at the swirl, imagining himself as a single particle of dust on a vast plane. He longed to feel that small again.

All of the stories students shared about religion described a threat to the narrator's beliefs that led them to consider "breaking [their] word [to God]," as in the Rumi poem. This pattern suggests that when preservice teachers consider their experiences with religion, the injustice often lies in the doubts they cannot control.

Complicit Adults

The remaining top ten topics—stories of injustice related to bullying (13.7%), sexism (7.97%), family injustice (11.59%), and powerlessness (6.52%)—also spoke to the centrality of power and control in these preservice teachers' senses of what is just. The majority of stories took place either from the point of view of an adolescent or as a reflection on an event that happened during adolescence—a time when most young people do not get to choose much of what happens in their lives.

Across these stories, teacher candidates shared their perception that the people who do have power or control are typically trusted adults in their lives, including teachers and parents. These are the people who are supposed to be the most reliable: yet an unnerving number of stories—nearly 25%—characterized teachers and other adults as complicit actors, not always unwitting agents of injustice, who betray the narrator or perpetuate injustice simply by doing nothing to stop it. One such story, "A Lesson in Bureaucracy," began with strings of vulgar language. It is soon revealed that the narrator, the person enduring this language, was a 17-year old girl sitting in her Calculus class listening to the high school boys who sat behind her, loudly discussing their sexual conquests:

> I constantly dreaded third period where I spent an entire class uncomfortable and wanting to be anywhere but there. I wished I had some way to warn or protect these nameless girls, yet I was powerless. Every other day I was granted a reprieve thanks to our block scheduling, but I always arrived in my fifth period Calculus class with my stomach in

knots, having spent an entire period stressed and hoping that the teacher would notice just once.

He never did.

The most common action of these "complicit adults" was their choice to ignore the problems experienced by the young people for whom they are responsible, and it is that choice that makes the injustice so impactful to the writer or narrator. The author of "A Lesson in Bureaucracy" states, "Teachers should be there for their students and aware of what is going on in their own classroom. Above all, teachers should be advocates and supporters of students. To do otherwise is perhaps unforgivable." While there were many stories of injustice that portray adults and teachers making questionable —and occasionally unforgivable—decisions, we also found that adults in these stories could be forces for justice.

Discussion

Our program faculty and school partners—university- and school-based teacher educators—continue to consider how we might integrate an equity orientation into our courses, clinical experiences, and partnership structures. We have been guided by the grandest ideals of schools' democratic purposes, as well as by NAPDS Essential #1 and a growing body of professional standards that speak to a justice "standard."

As an illustration of our program's most successful and comprehensive consideration of these equity ideals, the stories composed by these preservice teachers provide insight into the diversity of their ideas about and experiences with injustice and into their developing notions of what might make the world a better place for their future students. The distinct topics affirm that, despite a generally common demographic, these future teachers bring with them a variety of views. Additionally, the majority of stories depicted incidents involving *intersecting* injustice-related issues, revealing the complexities of teacher candidates' perspectives, the complicated nature of injustice, and the flexible frame of mind teachers need when working with a social justice stance.

The instructional and research project we have conducted with our English teacher candidates began with the mission of helping these teachers consider the nature of a social justice orientation to their pedagogical practices—to take such stances from rhetoric to reality. It is clear that we must continue to consider the existing equity notions that our fields have identified and determine how to link these concepts to teacher candidates' ideas and how to enact these in our classrooms. The 2009 CEE Position Statement Beliefs about Social Justice in English Education proposes that educators "must teach about injustice and discrimination in all its forms" with the goal that ensuring that "each student in our classrooms is entitled to the same opportunities for academic achievement regardless of background or acquired privilege" (Commission for Social Justice, 2009). The 2010 NCTE Resolution on Social Justice in Literacy Education echoed this proposal and acknowledged the "vital role that teacher education programs play in preparing teachers to enact and value a pedagogy that is socially just" (NCTE, 2010). And NCTE's 2013 standard called on teacher candidates to "plan and implement English language arts and literacy instruction that promotes social justice and critical engagement with complex issues," while

recognizing that such concepts of justice had to be rooted in students' individual and collective histories and identities (NCTE, 2013).

This, then, may be the most promising concept of "bridging" that our project has revealed. These preservice teachers already appear to be grounded in many of the difficult and the hopeful realities of teaching: they believe that youths' experiences with injustice are painful, complex, and personal, but that these are also signs of solidarity. They recognize that adults and teachers can choose to position themselves as intermediaries between their personal experiences with and conceptions of injustice and the realities of their students to find common ground and opportunities for action (Dantley & Green, 2015). J, the author of one of these stories, reflects on this: "The truth is that life is mostly set by the nebulous circumstances out of your control, like your race, gender, class, sex."

Though some of these teacher candidates' stories were works of fiction, many (68%) were personal accounts, drawn from moments of injustice preservice teachers had encountered in their lives or communities. All stories illustrated points of concern for these individuals as they were beginning to form their new teacher identities. We wonder if this trend shows a tendency for new teachers to see the injustices faced in the past as "cautionary tales," and that perhaps these pre service professionals are picturing the kind of teacher or adult they never want to be, for the sake of their future students or other vulnerable people in these young adults' lives.

Our now seven-year long consideration of teacher candidates' stories also reveals part of these individuals' journeys from human being to teacher, and perhaps back again. We believe we know these teachers and writers—the students whose work we have read and analyzed—better through their stories. We recognize that, though our intention was to study teacher candidates' conceptions of justice, these stories are more than ideas. And while we have reduced them to their core themes, as teachers, teachers of teachers, and readers we long to honor these stories as the personal experiences they represent.

We continue to consider what form the social justice "Seed" will take in our program's courses, clinical experiences, partnership elements, and beyond. And we continue to engage with additional pools of English teacher candidates, collecting new stories, gathering their ideas about justice, and reviewing the first lesson plans they craft in our course. We are aware that the results on which we have reported here represent only the foundation of our program's and these new educators' interests in and efforts to integrate justice into teacher education and their instruction. We hope to build on this foundation, and we have just completed a follow-up study of these English teacher candidates in their early years in the profession, gaining insight into the structures of schools—inside and outside of school-university partnership and PDS contexts—that support early career teachers' efforts to engage in social justice-focused instruction. We look forward to sharing these findings in future manuscripts.

The most important point of calling on a school-university partnership-based program (comprised of English, math, science, and social studies educators) to integrate such equity ideals and of asking future teachers to articulate their conceptions of injustice may be that we create opportunities to find the common ground of such equity-oriented inquiries, in our middle and high school and college courses—and, indeed, in the teaching profession. The awareness we develop as the result of such reflections might lead to justice-focused pedagogical practices and actions in and across our schools, universities, and communities. Considering the "Seeds" of justice alongside our faculty, partner schools, and students and calling on future teachers to

narrativize injustice are just some of the ways for us—teacher educators, teachers along a professional continuum, and young people—to eventually *see* justice in our classrooms and communities.

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Context Matters: Cultivating Dispositions of Responsive and Equitable Teachers for Urban Schools

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Abstract: The relationship between teachers' dispositions for teaching and the various contexts in which these dispositions are acquired is related to successful teaching in urban schools. This qualitative study explores the intersection between the context of urban experiences (program directed and field based) and its function in teacher candidates' dispositions. John Dewey's transactional theory of knowing (1938/1963) offers a framework to explore teachers' dispositions in relation to experiences, actions and consequences for urban teaching and learning. Nineteen teacher candidates from a K-5 certification and ESOL endorsement program were interviewed individually after program completion about understandings of urban school contexts and teachers' dispositions. Teacher candidates viewed teachers' dispositions as important and something they should be mindful of. Teacher candidates expressed that during teaching (actions) dispositions may change based on the teaching context and the students (reflection on experience). Experiences in the teacher preparation program appeared to cultivate core dispositions associated with effective teaching and learning in urban schools such as responsiveness and a commitment to equity. The clinical experiences in partner urban classrooms also provided them with experiences and reflections on understanding the context of instruction in ways that influenced their enacted dispositions (e.g., resilience) that were associated with urban schooling. We found a strong connection between teacher candidates' dispositions and their preparation experiences, their reflections of those experiences and their desire for learner-centered action.

KEYWORDS: clinical practices, equity, teacher dispositions, teacher beliefs, urban schools

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

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Context Matters: Cultivating Dispositions of Responsive and Equitable Teachers for Urban Schools

Teacher preparation programs concur that knowledge of subject matter along with the appropriate pedagogical skills serve as the foundation of good teaching when preparing teachers for service in urban schools (Bair, 2017; Van Driel & Berry, 2012). All teachers, especially those in urban schools, must be prepared to take advantage of the different experiences and academic needs of a wide variety of students as they plan and teach (Cochran-Smith, 2011; Grant & Gillette, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Milner, 2011; Sleeter, 2001, 2015). Teacher educators also recognize that knowledge and skills alone do not make one an effective teacher (Cochran-Smith, 2002; Kindle & Schimdt, 2011; Nieto, 2003; Walker, Brady, Lea, & Summers, 2004). Teachers' dispositions, which include their tendencies to act based on beliefs, values, attitudes and prior experiences, are the driving force for teaching and learning in urban classrooms.

The study of dispositions for effective teaching has become a key topic of reform in public schools, teacher accreditation standards, and teacher education programs over the last few decades (CAEP, 2013; Diez, 2007; InTASC, 2013). Dispositions are used to illustrate the importance of ensuring that teacher candidates understand their salient role in shaping the lives of students and possess the reflective processes appropriate for achieving student success. Focusing on teachers' dispositions suggests that teachers enter the classroom with an entrenched and complex system of beliefs, attitudes, personalities, commitments, and values based upon their personal experiences (Hasslen & Bacharach, 2007; Splitter, 2010; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). This belief system impacts how teachers interpret and filter their response to academic content and subsequent instructional practices (Many, Howard, Hoge, 2002; Ratcliff & Hunt, 2009, Ritchhart, 2002). Nespor (1987) argues that teachers' beliefs play a major role in defining teaching tasks and organizing knowledge relevant to those tasks as teachers make sense of the contexts where they teach. Nespor also suggests that examinations of teachers' actions require attention to their goals and their subjective interpretation of classroom processes.

Scholars have long recognized that context plays a significant role in teaching practice. Dispositions are highly and inevitably situational (Sadler, 2002) and connect to "particular kinds of tasks, contexts, and materials" (Carr & Claxton, 2002, p. 11) in "particular contexts *[sic]* and at particular times" (Katz & Raths, 1985, p. 8). Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provides an understanding of teachers' dispositions as they comprise a "set of socially, historically, and bodily inscribed dispositions – including attitudes, values, and ideas – that a person acquires unconsciously over time through socialization in particular fields of activity and social life" (Fellner & Kwah, 2018, p. 520). As teachers are oriented to the practices of a particular context, teachers' dispositions, or the trends in teachers' behaviors, are determined by the social, cultural, and political contexts of past and present lives within the unique dimensions of the community and learning environment in which they are situated (Warren, 2018). The relationship between teachers' dispositions for teaching—including personal theories and philosophies—and the various contexts in which these dispositions are acquired is significant to the discussion of successful teaching in urban schools.

Researchers have previously found that the context of instruction influences teaching practice (Darling-Hammond, 2014). It is also known that teachers' dispositions influence teachers' decision-making and subsequent actions. In another study, it was determined that

intentional school-based teacher preparation practices can support the development of beliefs and dispositions for effective educational practice (Truscott & Obiwo, in press). Still, there is a need to extend this work by exploring the intersect between the context of urban experiences (program directed and field based) and its function in teacher candidates' dispositions.

This study utilizes John Dewey's transactional theory of knowing (1938/1963) as a framework to explore teachers' dispositions in relation to experiences, actions and consequences for urban teaching and learning. The next section includes a discussion of transactional components of knowing for teacher preparation; that is, the function of experience, reflection and action in urban schools.

Experience and Reflection

A central concept of Dewey's transactional theory of knowing is the notion of *experience*, or the transaction of human beings with their environment (Vanderstraeten, 2002). Teachers enter education with experiences, both personal and formalized through teacher preparation programs, that influence their dispositions about people, learning, and how the world should work (Carroll, 2007; Richardson, 1996). Clinical practice and other school-based experiences are features of quality teacher preparation programs and school-university partnerships (AACTE, 2018, Darling Hammond, 2014; Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) argue that teacher learning occurs through the development of knowledge-*in*-practice:

> From this perspective, the emphasis is on knowledge in action: what very competent teachers know as it is expressed or embedded *in* the artistry of practice, *in* teachers' reflections on practice, *in* teachers' practical inquiries, and/or *in* teachers' narrative accounts of practice. (p. 262)

Teaching, therefore, is a responsive craft that is situated and constructed in response to the different variables of everyday life in schools and classrooms. In a Deweyan sense, this type of experimentation is the only way that we can learn anything at all (Biesta, 2014). To improve teaching, teacher candidates need strategically placed clinical experiences to enhance and make explicit the tacit knowledge embedded in experience through their observations, reflections, and interactions with mentor teachers and an array of diverse students (Berry et al., 2008; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Moore (2003) contends that clinical experiences provide opportunities for teacher candidates to try new things, practice instructional decision making and reflective thinking, interact with the school community, and ultimately, strengthen their practice. These clinical experiences are extremely important for future urban teachers who will have the benefit of equity-based teaching.

Teacher candidates learn through reflection of these experiences. Reflection can be described as "a meaning-making process that moves us from one experience to the next with a deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas" (Rodgers, 2002, p. 845). Connecting across experiences is key to teacher learning. In one study, Durden & Truscott (2013) illustrate the connections between teacher candidates' reflectivity (or the act of making reflections) while learning to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students and their development as new culturally relevant teachers. They concluded that preparing new teachers requires the careful cultivation of educators who consider teaching as a

highly contextual and complex act and can reflect critically on their practice. They also found that purposeful teacher education experiences, both university-based and clinical experiences, build important personal and professional references that teacher candidates drew upon:

> The intersect between what PSTs [preservice teachers] bring and what teacher educators provide is extremely important because we found that PSTs naturally draw on their own personal experiences when making reflections but *also draw on* what they see and experience around them as they learn to be a teacher. With guidance, these connections can be powerful learning tools. (Durden & Truscott, 2013, p. 80)

Teacher education programs should be purposeful in helping teacher candidates examine their knowledge and beliefs about the world and themselves as they struggle with new ideas and are exposed to different beliefs throughout the process of learning to teach (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Grant & Gillette, 2006; Talbert-Johnson, 2006). Dewey's theory of transactional knowing implies that for educational growth to occur, teacher candidates must continually reorganize past experiences in light of new ones. Reflection serves as a powerful tool and a systematic way of thinking for teacher candidates that broadens the relationship between what is thought to be known and new experiences. In this learning process, dispositions can effectively develop into habits when means and ends are reciprocally determined through action (Biesta, 2014; Dottin, 2009).

Action as Equity-Based Teaching

John Dewey's (1938/1963) philosophy and his transactional theory of knowing emphasize that learning is embedded in experience. From this perspective, knowing is understood as "a way of doing" and our understanding of the relationship between our actions and their consequences (Biesta, 2007). Effective teachers are instrumental in establishing educational opportunities by laying the foundation for student learning (Diez, 2007), and therefore, teacher actions resulting from experience and reflection are critical for what happens in classrooms.

Multiple studies contextualize urban schools as meeting places of culture and community that are densely populated by diverse students of varying ethnic, racial, linguistic, and geographical origin (Welsh & Swain, 2020). And yet while the urban school context is characterized by culture and community, unequal and inadequate educational outcomes are still persistent (Darling Hammond, 2014). In a review of empirical articles focused on the preparation of teachers for urban contexts, Anderson and Stillman (2013) argue that the urban context represents "sites of contestation" in which different people bring different individual and collective understandings (p. 7). Attending more fully to the complexities of the urban context and culture involves attending to learners, to the social and situated nature of their learning, and to relationships between their lives and the schooling experience. Equity-based teaching recognizes these complexities and centers students, culture, and community.

Teachers' dispositions about students and their communities can significantly shape the expectations they hold for student learning and influence equity-based teaching. Teacher candidates' experiences do not occur in a vacuum, nor are they productive without support and guidance in using these experiences to cultivate dispositions associated with equity-based teaching. There is a need to examine the context of urban experiences in relation to teacher candidates' dispositions. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore teacher candidates'

perceptions about teacher dispositions, and whether they believe that the context of instruction impacts dispositions, and subsequently actions. This work builds on research that argues that context matters when considering transactional components that extend the boundaries of context beyond brick and mortar. The guiding research question for this study is: *What are teacher candidates' perceptions about teacher dispositions in relation to the context of instruction?*

Methods

The Context of Teacher Preparation and Teacher Candidate Participants

The teacher education program in this study is a one-year alternative certification program at a large southeastern urban university committed to preparing and supporting teachers for urban schools. The program uses equity-based pedagogies through cross-curricular applications using a cohort and school-based model. Teacher candidates who completed the program were eligible to receive K-5 teaching certification and a teaching endorsement for work with English Language Learners from the state credentialing body.

The teacher preparation program's mission statement expects that all program graduates should be pedagogically competent, equity-oriented, caring, and empowered individuals. During preparation, teacher candidates were charged with serving as change agents inside and outside the classroom. The teacher preparation program uses Ladson Billings' *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Students* (1994, 2009) as an anchor text and three core tenets for all experiences: (a) academic success, (b) cultural competence, and (c) critical consciousness/sociopolitical critique. Teaching emphasizes the value of students' skills and abilities for academic learning. Teachers help students appreciate and celebrate different cultures and take learning outside of the classroom by pushing students to critique cultural norms, values, and institutions in order to create positive change. Teachers also situate themselves as learners and promote collective empowerment in their school learning communities.

The teacher preparation program places student learning at the center of all school-based activities and evolves to meet the needs of the school. The majority of the teacher preparation activities occur in local urban schools who prioritize equity-based practices and were long-term partners with the department. Teacher certification courses (e.g., literacy, classroom management, social studies, science) are taught at the partner schools in various semesters. Teacher candidates participate in a co-teaching and collaboration model with trained mentor teachers for prolonged clinical experiences during both the school year and summer- and community-based camps. Mentor teacher training emphasizes engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness. Both mentor teachers and supervisors, who are retired teachers and administrators from the local urban schools, observe teacher candidates. Supervisors attend regular faculty meetings and direct curriculum revisions, assessments, and program development. During the summer, teacher candidates also gain clinical experience in literacy and science summer camps hosted by the local urban schools and teacher education program.

Based on the gap in the literature regarding teacher candidates' dispositions and their perceptions of experiences in a teacher preparation program focused on urban schools, this study explored the perceptions of the 19 teacher candidates who participated during the 2014-2015 academic year. Teacher candidates represent a diverse group compared to other traditional teacher preparation programs within the same institution with ages ranging from 23-60 and the

majority (73%) self-identifying as being from a minoritized racial or ethnic group such as "Black" or "Hispanic". However, as is the case nationally, the majority of participants were female (National Center of Education Statistics, 2019).

Data Collection and Analysis

At the end of the program, and before they assumed their first teaching positions, teacher candidates were interviewed individually using directed questions and probes exploring what they knew about teachers' dispositions and how teachers' dispositions might differ depending on where they taught. The semi-structured interviews included a series of 20 questions regarding the teacher candidates' experiences in the classroom and teacher preparation program. Two questions specifically about teachers' dispositions were used in the analysis of this study. The questions include: (1) What are your thoughts on teachers' dispositions? and (2) Do you think teaching dispositions can differ depending on where you teach? Why or why not? All individuals were audio-taped, transcribed by a third-party and de-identified to maintain confidentiality. In asking teacher candidates to talk about teaching dispositions, researchers avoided directing teacher candidates to a particular definition of teachers' dispositions in order to remain open to the multiple perspectives but similar educator preparation experiences.

The transcripts were first read by each researcher independently to identify meaning units for analysis. A meaning unit could be a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph that directly related to the context of urban schooling and teachers' dispositions. Researchers compared these units and agreed upon 46 meaning units for coding. Next, each meaning unit was coded by each researcher independently to develop initial open codes using the elemental methods of descriptive and In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2015). Researchers then compared and discussed the codes and built consensus on what constituted a code (e.g., caring). This coding agreement was then applied to all meaning units again. The next level of analysis focused on examining open codes for patterns in frequencies, redundancies, and outliers resulting in the development of categories. Finally, an analysis of the relationships between, and among, categories resulted in overarching themes concerning perceptions about the role of context and teachers' dispositions. A data matrix was constructed that housed meaning units and independent & combined codes and served as an audit trail of all phases of analysis. Throughout the coding process, each researcher maintained analytic memos to promote researcher reflexivity (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). The analysis was determined to extend beyond acknowledgment that teachers' dispositions matter. Multiple cycles of independent analysis, mutual agreement on developing arguments, and interpretations derived directly from the data supports an understanding of how context (preparation & practice) influences dispositions and importantly, how the experiences of the settings influence dispositions-in-action.

Findings

Overview of Findings

At the end of the urban teacher preparation program, teacher candidates were asked to discuss their thoughts about teachers' dispositions. The majority (13 of 19) of teacher candidates viewed teachers' dispositions as important using words such as *critical, crucial*, and *important* when defining them. Teacher candidates described dispositions as impacting how a teacher performs and, thus, something that teachers should be mindful of. One candidate explained,

> "So, I think as a teacher, I think that you have to just really be mindful of your own dispositions when you come into the classroom and maybe leave a lot of your personal ones at home, if they exist, and be open minded enough to maybe change those based on your students and be kind of progressive."

This statement illustrates the connection between experience, reflection and learner-centered action.

The majority of teacher candidates (16 of 19) stated that dispositions change based on the context of instruction, but not always. Close analysis revealed that teachers refer to what we coded as "core dispositions" that serve as a foundation for their teaching purposes and actions, no matter the instructional setting. These core dispositions may not, or should not, change depending on the context of instruction. However, candidates expressed that during teaching (actions) dispositions may change based on the teaching context and the students (reflection on experience). These expressions represent enacted dispositions bound by context. The next section provides description of how the context influences the enactment of core dispositions for emerging educators.

Perceptions of Teachers' Dispositions

Context & Experiences

When asked a question about context and teachers' dispositions, 17 of 19 teacher candidates reported that teachers' dispositions differ depending on where one teaches. We did not direct the interview to any particular level of context (classroom, school, district, community, state, nation). However, the majority of respondents referenced the classroom or school (17 of 19), and many candidates (15 of 19) talked about students ("kids") directly. A learner-centered focus was a strong theme found in the discussions.

The teacher candidates' experiences in the schools during their preparation program appeared to influence their ideas about teachers' dispositions and context. The urban schools used for school-based activities were considered more challenging by teacher candidates than those found in other communities. When asked whether they thought dispositions changed based on where they taught while in the program, most candidates said "yes" and then described contextual conditions that necessitated the need for change such as a lack of resources, teacher isolation, administrative policies, and parental involvement. At first, such references to negative attributes of urban schools gave us pause. However, further examination of the data found that the teacher candidates did not appear to hold deficit views of the culture of schools. Instead, they described them as *different* from other schools and just hard to teach in. The culture of students also emerged as a prominent influence on the need for dispositional change. Because many of the teacher candidates equated dispositions with practices (rather than beliefs that influence actions), they described the importance of being flexible and adaptive to meet the expectations of diverse contexts as a difference in dispositions based on context. They remarked that they needed to be "ready" or "willing" to change to meet the needs of students. Teacher candidates strongly believed that in order to be responsive to student needs, their dispositions needed to change.

Despite the fact that most teacher candidates (17 of 19) thought dispositions differ depending on the context, others said that dispositions should not differ based on the context, and/or that dispositions differ for some teachers, but not for them personally. In this sense, the

proposition that dispositions differ depending on the context is viewed negatively. One teacher candidate expressed, "I feel like teaching dispositions shouldn't be different for that *core* (emphasis added) part of what you're showing to the students. I really don't feel like that should be that different, depending on what school you go to." Teacher dispositions considered "core", or those that should not change, appear to be those that generalize across contexts, although learners as a subset remain the center of the consideration.

The Enactment of Core Dispositions

Core dispositions are those that were described by teacher candidates as important for teachers and ones they believed should not change, but might. Several candidates (6 of 19) talked directly about core beliefs using words like "foundation", "who you are" and "sense of self" suggesting that these dispositions do not change or differ depending on the environment. Analysis revealed two core dispositions in this study: Responsiveness and Equity.

It is important to clarify that in this study core dispositions are uniquely different from teacher candidates' references to personality traits (which some scholars may consider as core). Teacher candidates mentioned personality traits such as "enthusiasm", "patience", and "warmth" when describing teachers' dispositions as illustrated by this candidate comment,

> "I think it's important to – I guess I think in my disposition, I try to be very positive and very upbeat in the classroom. I think that's important, especially working with younger kids, because – I don't know. It's just something about being that light in the classroom is helpful, especially when you're the teacher."

Although many of the teacher candidates included personality traits when talking about dispositions, only 3 of 19 respondents mentioned personality traits when talking about dispositions suggesting that personality traits and core dispositions may not be the same.

In addition to describing personal and professional beliefs that appear as core, we found that these teachers' dispositions serve as the impetus for dispositions associated with practice or action within a given context. We coded these teachers' dispositions as "enacted". As one teacher candidate asserted, "I think also though that the teacher is who they are at the core. And I think it's just having the right type of environment to be able to express that." Two associations between core and enacted dispositions were found in this study: 1) responsiveness (core): classroom management (enacted); and 2) equity (core): resilience (enacted). These enacted dispositions are described next in relation to the perceptions of the context that bound them.

The majority of teacher candidates in this study associated teachers' dispositions with teaching practices and actions rather than as the antecedents to instructional decisions. The following quote illustrates the strong connection between dispositions and practice.

> "Yes. I think that it can differ for sure because I think also that sometimes, you know, you may have to – you can handle a situation one way in one place with a certain set of kids and then if it's another place with another group of kids, you know, same situation you might have to handle it a little bit differently. . . . So again, and that goes back to being responsive and connected, knowing your students, knowing what they respond to, and you know, how effective you can be with them."

Because candidates viewed teachers' dispositions as teacher actions, their beliefs and attitudes, as they related to the act of teaching, were bound by the context in which instruction took place. Pattern analysis found a strong connection between perceptions of the culture of the

school and students and the enactment of being responsive. Teacher candidates' work in the teacher preparation program appeared to cultivate core dispositions associated with effective teaching and learning in urban schools (responsiveness and equity). The clinical experiences in partner urban classrooms also provided them with experiences and reflections on understanding the context of instruction in ways that influenced their enacted dispositions associated with urban schooling. One example of this is in the area of classroom management.

In this study teacher candidates' descriptions of the need for classroom management was related to their concerns for being responsive. The following comment illustrates this point, "If I am a strict teacher, that's okay to be more strict. But understanding all the time that you need to teach every child, need to treat every child differently according to where they come from." The need for, and importance of, classroom management is one example of how enacted dispositions were influenced by teacher candidate perceptions of the context. It is not surprising that candidates considered classroom management as important to them. Novice teachers often report classroom management as an area they felt needed the most support. However, the teacher candidates in this study described their need to shift their dispositions, and not just their practices, related to management. We acknowledge that it is not clear as to whether their associations of classroom management with responsiveness were influenced by their observations of others while working in the schools, or their own development of learning to be responsive. Nonetheless, the context of experience appears to influence teachers' dispositions in complex ways.

Teachers' dispositions serve to initiate action and that does not occur in isolation. In this study, teacher candidates actively thought about classroom management in particular ways in order to maintain their need to remain responsive. Another example of how the context influenced enacted dispositions is in response to equity, another core disposition.

Equity as a core disposition was revealed through descriptions of importance of culture, and specifically being culturally responsive. The majority of teacher candidates (15 of 19) referred to some aspect of being culturally responsive as they talked about the need for contextually specific dispositions. An example is illustrated in this description by one teacher candidate, "We have to be culturally responsive. So, depending on who is in our population, we may have to use different strategies." Other teacher candidates described the importance of assuming responsibility in the face of challenging settings,

> "I think some stressors may be different . . . but your job, I think it is always going to be the same. It's what you decide to do with that responsibility and that opportunity. There is this, you know, it's kind of an honor to be with someone's and several people's children. I think you're highly responsible for them. So, I think you have to take it as a very serious thing."

Still other candidates argued that dispositions may need to change in order to keep a check on biases and challenge stereotypes of schools they may be unfamiliar with, thereby addressing equity head on. To demonstrate, one teacher candidate stated,

> "[T]eachers are people and so we always have those biases and those ideals that we come into a school with, . . . especially if you are teaching outside of a culture or a neighborhood that you are familiar with. It can definitely have a detrimental effect. So I think it's all about being culturally responsive – making sure that you have good

information instead of just coming in with your preconceived ideas and your stereotypes."

Yet, teacher candidates also described challenges to their commitment to equity in response to the work environment with examples of difficult policies, limited resources, and finding other educators who advanced equity-based teaching. As candidates described why dispositions needed to change, they did so in response to their perceived need to keep equity at the forefront of their teaching practices. Words such as "stay true", "stay positive", and "stand on beliefs" represent what we term as the enacted disposition of resilience.

In summary, we found that teacher candidates believed that dispositions are contextually bound and that although there are core beliefs that teachers share across different types of teaching settings, these dispositions may look different when in practice. Teacher candidates viewed teachers' dispositions as important and something they should be mindful of. Candidates expressed that during teaching (actions) dispositions may change based on the teaching context and the students (reflection on experience). Teacher candidates' experiences in the teacher preparation program appeared to cultivate core dispositions associated with effective teaching and learning in urban schools (responsiveness and equity). The clinical experiences in partner urban classrooms also provided them with experiences and reflections on understanding the context of instruction in ways that influenced their enacted dispositions associated with urban schooling. We found a strong connection between teacher candidates' dispositions and their preparation experiences, their reflections of those experiences, and their desire for learner-centered action.

Discussion

Teacher candidates' descriptions of dispositions and teaching contexts appeared transactional in nature suggesting that while individual beliefs undergird teachers' dispositions, the actions resulting from these dispositions serve as experiences guiding and guided by those dispositions. These experiences coupled with reflectivity about expectations, teaching purpose and outcomes (aka, "means-ends" connections) further develop teacher candidates' "habits of mind" (Dottin, 2009; Katz, 2002, 1993). The connection between teacher candidates' dispositions and their preparation experiences, their reflections of those experiences and their desire for learner-centered action have implications for the types of productive strategic field experiences needed in teacher preparation. We acknowledge that "different school contexts shape the learning opportunities available to teacher candidates" (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016, p. 487) and argue that teacher preparation programs should be deliberate in the types of experiences offered. Teacher preparation programs who take advantage of rich diverse urban teaching and learning settings for clinical practice must recognize that with equity-based teaching come teacher beliefs and dispositions that matter (Durden, Dooley & Truscott, 2016; Durden & Truscott, 2013; Lazur, 2013; Murrell, Diez, Feiman-Nemser, & Schussler, 2010; Paris & Alim, 2014). School-university partnerships can offer opportunities to build the types of experiences that support the cultivation of teachers' dispositions that can benefit students, teacher educators, mentor teachers, and emerging teachers (AACTE, 2018; Truscott & Stenhouse, 2018). These relationships propel mutual goals of preparing teachers who can implement complex teaching practices successfully (Zeichner, 2010).

The idea that some dispositions may be perceived as core suggests deep-rooted, stable ideologies. This brings to question what constitutes a "core" belief and the implication of generalization across settings (e.g., openness, care). It also calls into question whether some "core" beliefs are grounded in prerequisite understandings, beliefs, values and commitments (Haberman 1995; Haberman & Post, 1998; Williamson, Apedoe, & Thomas, 2012). In this study, two core dispositions surfaced: the notion of responsiveness and the importance of equity. However, we found that core dispositions when enacted are influenced by the context of instruction and agree with Hammerness & Matsko (2012) who claim that "knowledge about context can and might be *particularized* for specific settings" (p. 575).

Teacher candidates strongly believed that in order to be responsive to student needs, their dispositions needed to change. The presence of responsiveness as a described teachers' disposition is not surprising given the fact that this cohort of emerging teachers completed a teacher preparation program that built coursework and experiences around cultural relevancy and equity-based teaching. The finding that teacher candidates reported responsiveness as a core, or foundation, disposition supports our argument that context matters and that teacher preparation programs can be the first context that new urban educators experience.

The focus on classroom management in relation to being responsiveness makes sense and is supported by other studies. Classroom management is a common area of concern for new teachers, especially those working in schools that serve low socioeconomic populations (Schafer & Barker, 2018). The goal of responsive classroom management is to shift from a traditional, teacher-centered understanding to an understanding of classroom management as complex, multifaceted, and student centered (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009; McCaslin & Good, 1998; Schwab & Elias, 2014). In order for teachers to implement classroom management techniques that both bring order and at the same time remain responsive to students, teachers must have knowledge of their students' cultures, understanding of the broader social, economic, and political systems in education, and development of a caring classroom (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran, 2004). A case study by Schafer & Barker (2018) explored four urban teachers' use of responsive classroom management in urban schools and reported that "Although all four teachers had different personalities, they had similar core beliefs and expectations that guided their similar classroom management methods" (p. 34). In this sense, responsiveness as a core disposition may have served as the foundation for approaches to classroom management considerate of the learning context and sensitive to the culture of the school and students. However, we are cautious of this inference. It is also possible that as new teachers their concerns about management were more related to their own needs to maintain control. Further, we agree that discussions of management issues need to avoid stereotypes about differences in social and cultural expectations (Hammerness & Matsko, 2012) and envisioning urban classrooms as chaotic spaces necessitating discipline.

Resilience is another enacted disposition associated with equity. Johnson and Kardos (2008) report that new teachers enter the profession, in part, because they have confidence in their abilities to "make a difference in the lives of their students" (p. 456). Indeed, other researchers describe the drive of teachers to persist in efforts to support student learning as a factor in why teachers remain in challenging educational settings (Patterson, Collins & Abbott, 2004). Among many common characteristics that describe excellent teachers includes teachers who are "resilient in the face of difficult situations" (Nieto, 2005, p. 4). Resiliency and

persistence also are identified as critical teaching dispositions for urban teachers (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Patterson, Collins, & Abbott, 2004; Williamson, Apedoe, & Thomas, 2012). Williamson, Apedoe, & Thomas (2012) argue that teacher preparation and support can facilitate "deep context-knowledge and context-conscious mindsets" which allows new teachers to learn dispositions and practices that will disrupt the norms that reproduce inequity (p.1191).

Both the notion of responsiveness and the importance of equity are foundational for asset-based pedagogies such as culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), culturally relevant practices, and culturally sustaining practices. A recent study found that a focus on the need for learner protection and authenticity were teachers' dispositions found associated with equity-based pedagogies. "Learner protection (or putting learners first) was characterized by child-centered statements and references to learning that is connected, authentic, relevant and empowering. Authenticity also emphasized relevance, connection and sense of genuine learning opportunities for students" (Truscott & Stenhouse, 2018, pp. 18-19). The significance of this study provides further support for the importance of the learning experience and how teachers' dispositions can be cultivated by them. Ultimately, this supports our conclusions that *targeted* clinical experiences have the potential to nurture those teachers' dispositions associated equity-based practices.

Equally important is that equity-based practices, such as CRP also provide a means for teacher candidates to learn as it occurs. In another study, we found that CRP offered teacher candidates a framework to cultivate dispositions by providing direction for them to develop lessons and teach with the learner in mind within the context of instruction (Truscott & Obiwo, in press). The learner-centered focus fostered dispositions associated with urban learning as teacher candidates used a culturally responsive lens to view schools, communities, students, and their families.

In this study, teacher candidates also believed that dispositions *would need to change in response* to teaching and learning situations, a finding supported by related studies (Buehl & Fives, 2009; Villegas, 2007; White, 2000) and extended by the notion of adaptability of beliefs (see Olafson & Schraw, 2006). Sensitivities to context-specific sociopolitical influences avoids the trap of easily adopting "context-neutral mindsets" (Milner, 2012) and is important for schools and universities who support urban communities. We also acknowledge that teachers who believe dispositions differ depending on the setting do so based on epistemic beliefs that every context is unique thereby considering that "every student, teacher and situation are different from every other, and all are in a constant state of change. Because people are changing constantly, so are situations" (White, 2000, p. 291). The idea that dispositions can be both core and responsive within a given context presents a paradox reported by others (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). We, however, argue that the function of experience, reflection of that experience and the desire for learner-centered action represents enacted core dispositions that cannot be anything but contextually bound.

Finally, envisioning the complexities of the urban classroom coupled with a professional commitment to support all student learners implies a level of sophisticated reflectivity usually found in more experienced teachers, not new ones. The teacher candidates in this study did not describe dispositions, nor the context, simply. Indeed, these newly certified educators demonstrated sensitivities to the contexts in which they saw their futures as teachers. In doing so, personal and formal experiences nurtured dispositions associated with successful urban practice

(e.g., learner focused, responsive classroom practices, equity-based). This study is supported by other research suggesting that new urban teachers embrace a professional ethical and moral obligation to help students find success and view their advocacy for student learning as integral to their daily lives (Barker, 2016; Warren-Grice, 2017).

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Culturally Relevant Teaching in a PDS: Talking about Race in a Early Childhood Setting

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Abstract: The United States, once characterized as a melting pot, is a mosaic composed of various cultures and races. The U.S. Census predicts that by the year 2060 the U.S. will be a plurality nation; meaning there will be no majority race. The nation's schools are where the mosaic of race can be seen in one place. Scholars have documented the impact race has on students and teachers alike. According to research, race impacts students' schooling, specifically student academic success, peer interaction and relationships, as well as student-teacher interactions. Whether we like it or not, race plays a significant role in education. This article depicts work that Michele, university teacher education and PDS liaison, and Ali, Kindergarten teacher, conduct as they engage in culturally relevant teaching. This article also seeks to add to the dearth in the literature that highlights the criticalness of engaging in culturally relevant work in an early childhood context as this specific area tends to be neglected in research and theory.

KEYWORDS: culturally relevant teaching, early childhood education, equity, professional development schools; school-university partnerships

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

Introduction

Each of us is born into a culture. We grow up in that culture and are socialized in that culture. We live, eat, and breathe that culture, often without even realizing how our cultural ways of being impact everything we do, what we believe, and our stereotypes and biases that often go unexamined. York reminds us, "Even though our culture may be invisible to us, it shapes the way we view the world, process information, learn, communicate, and interact with others" (2016, p. 77).

We teach what we believe. Effective teachers employ culturally relevant pedagogy in their classroom practices. Culturally relevant teachers understand that self-examination is essential for providing just, equitable learning experiences for all children regardless of their cultural, linguistic, racial, or sexual orientation (Souto-Manning, 2013). These teachers also understand the importance of getting to know their students, their students' families (biological and non-biological), and the many networks of support (Myers, 2013) that are operational in students' lives. In addition, these teachers are knowledgeable about the many ways to integrate curriculum seamlessly in a culturally relevant framework. Culturally relevant work seeks to deconstruct hegemonic ideologies and "re-member" (King and Swartz, 2015) history through the voices and experiences of minority individuals.

School-university partnerships provide a means for bridging theory and practice, and at the center of effective school-university partnerships is a commitment to long term collaboration, trusting relationships, and mutual involvement in the production and use of all research and funding opportunities (Tseng, Eastlon &, Supplee, 2017). The University of South Carolina (UofSC) Professional Development School (PDS) network consists of 21 active schools in five local districts and is one of the largest and longest-standing Professional Development Schools networks in the nation. The schools in our network provide spaces for our pre-service teachers as they work collaboratively with classroom teachers to sharpen their teaching skills and meet university course requirements. The classroom teachers support our pre-service teachers as they try novel ideas that align theoretical concepts learned in their university courses with opportunities to practice them in embedded experiences in PK-12 sites. The University of South Carolina and Meadowfield Elementary School (MES) have been in a partnership for thirty years. This is one of the longest partnerships in the network with thirty years of collaboration. Over that time, there have been several changes in personnel within the partnership, but what has remained constant is a high level of mutual trust and commitment to the work within the network.

One goal of this article is to describe the work that takes place in this PDS network in which Michele (author 1), university teacher educator and PDS liaison for MES, and Ali (author 2), kindergarten classroom teacher, deliberately engage in related to culturally relevant teaching. Another goal of this article is to address the dearth in the literature that speaks specifically to the importance of conducting culturally relevant work in an early childhood (specifically grades Pre-k through 3) context because this area tends to be under-researched and under-theorized (Volk, Harris, Glover, & Myers, 2016).

Ali graciously opened her classroom doors to allow Michele to host the embedded culturally relevant pedagogy course for undergraduates enrolled in the elementary education professional program at UofSC. As a result, the undergraduate students in Michele's course have opportunities to engage in well-designed clinical experiences with guided practice in this authentic classroom setting. The undergraduates get weekly opportunities to work side by side

with Ali's kindergarteners as they learn and try out techniques and strategies for engaging young learners in culturally relevant ways and receive immediate feedback from Michele and Ali. The undergraduate students have opportunities to work with this exemplary teacher as Ali uses quality literature as a springboard for powerful Socratic seminars. While participating in the Socratic seminars, early childhood students discuss topics such as race, class, gender, family composition, and ableism, just to name a few.

Culturally relevant pedagogy creates an avenue to address biases, stereotypes, and prejudice while promoting the appreciation and celebration of one's own culture, as well as that of others. Carefully selected, quality literature serves as a great resource in culturally relevant classrooms. Because children's literature typically reflect societal attitudes about diversity, power relationships among different groups of people, and various social identities, it is important to present children with a wide range of quality literature that reflects them and their families as well as people who are different from them and their families (Derman-Sparks, 2010). Because there are limited amounts of multicultural books published yearly, it is important to choose books of high quality to include in classroom libraries. Derman-Sparks (2010) offers the following table guidelines for doing so.

Table 1: Guidelines for Selecting High-Quality Multicultural Books

Guidelines
• Check the illustrations.
• Check the storyline and relationship among characters.
• Look at the message about different lifestyles.
• Consider the Effects on Children's Self and Social Identities
• Look for Books About Children and Adults Engaging in Actions for Change
• Consider the Author's or Illustrator's Background and Perspective
• Watch for Loaded Words
• Look at the Copyright Date
• Assess the Appeal of the Story and Illustrations to Young Children

Our article opens with a description of the context in which the work took place. We then provide a review of the literature that supports the development and continued refinement of our work. We highlight the research that espouses the need for quality university-school partnerships (Henrik, Munoz, Cobb, 2016; Penuel, Allen, Coburn, & Farrel, 2015). We also share the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy, which directly impacts our work (Gay, 2010). We then invite the readers into Ali's classroom as she describes one Socratic Seminar that focused on race. We finally conclude with implications for the field of teacher preparation.

Context

Meadowfield Elementary is an urban 4k through 5th-grade school with approximately 750 students. In the school, 65 percent of the students are black, 21 percent are white, 8 percent are Latino/Hispanic, and 6 percent identify with two or more racial groups. Approximately fifty-four percent of the students identify as males, and forty-six percent identify as females. The faculty composition is slightly different, consisting of 89 percent females and 11 percent males. Of those, 67 percent are white, 25 percent are black, 2 percent are Latino/Hispanic, and 4 percent identify with two or more racial groups. The school has a 78 percent poverty index, 17 percent of the students identify as students with special needs, and 10 percent of the students require ESOL services.

Synthesis of the Literature

Our review of literature on school-university partnerships reveal that partnerships established with regards to long term collaboration, trusting relationships, and mutual involvement tend to be highly effective (Tseng, Eastlon &, Supplee, 2017). The literature also includes roadblocks to avoid when creating partnerships. One such roadblock is the one-sided relationships in which researchers come into school settings, conduct their research, and then leave. The researchers benefit but the school and teachers do not benefit overall. The literature also warns to avoid forming partnerships that are built on competing needs where the school wants a quick fix to a problem and the researchers want a site to use for long-term research goals. The partnership that currently exists between UofSC and MES is mutually beneficial to the elementary school and the university. The current partnership grew out of the principal, Ms. Lisa Davis' concern that her faculty, predominately white, middle-class women, needed to become more informed on ways to build culturally relevant, anti-racist curriculum that centered the needs of the ever-increasing diverse student body at the school. The other side of the partnership grew out of Michele's need for a site to host the undergraduate embedded culturally relevant courses as she worked alongside highly effective teachers engaged daily in culturally relevant, anti-racist pedagogy.

We also reviewed the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (1994) maintains that culturally relevant pedagogy is an approach that is designed to empower students so that they are more equipped to critically examine educational content and process and to determine how it can be used to create a more democratic society. Culturally relevant teaching uses the cultural knowledge of the students and transcends the negative effects of the dominant culture. It empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The three tenets of Ladson-Billings' framework: academic success, sociopolitical consciousness, and cultural competence (2006) demand that we support students in these domains as we seek to create a more just world. Other scholars, namely Paris and Alim (2017) built on Ladson-Billings' work to help us conceptualize a new framework: *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (CSP). According to Paris and Alim, "CSP seeks to perpetuate and foster--to sustain--linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation" (pg. 1). Their work asks that we view students as whole and not broken and that those students thrive in schools in which diverse, heterogeneous practices are sustained and valued.

Unlike Ladson-Billings and Paris and Alim, Milner (2010) shifts the focus from students to the educators when addressing issues of cultural competence and sustainability. He posits that educators need to build cultural competence to effectively educate students, particularly students from urban areas. Milner identifies three principles that culturally competent educators must possess. When describing culturally competent educators, Milner (2010) purports that educators must build and sustain meaningful and authentic relationships with students, recognize the multiple layers of identity among their students and confront matters of race with them, and perceive teaching as a communal affair and work to create a culture of collaboration with colleagues. Educators, who employ culturally relevant practices in their rooms, view their students' cultures as assets to their students' individual successes. Ali uses her students' cultural ways of being in the world to build curriculum for and with them. She is a culturally competent teacher who develops and maintains meaningful, authentic relationships with her students; she recognizes the multiple layers of identity her students embody and is not afraid to engage in conversations about race. For Ali, teaching is a communal endeavor.

Many educators erroneously believe that discussions about equity issues, race, and racism should not be discussed in early childhood settings (birth to grade three). As a result, there is not voluminous research on culturally relevant pedagogy in early childhood settings. In this article, we explain how Ali, an early childhood teacher, uses quality literature to effectively facilitate conversations with her young learners regarding race as they engage in Socratic Seminars. In the section that follows, Ali describes her unit on race titled, It *Don't Matter If You're Black or White*, which was taken from Michael Jackson's hit song of the same title.

It Don't Matter If You're Black or White: Kindergarten Students Talk About Race

"You can't play with us because you are Black," says one little White boy to Nathan, a little Black boy. For the sake of anonymity, I will use pseudonyms instead of the students' actual names. Nathan breaks down in tears and both boys run to my table to tell me what happened. Before I can handle the situation, a white male colleague interjects, "Hey man, he can play with us. We don't do that in this classroom. That was back in the day, not anymore." When this incident occurred, it sparked the need to create a curriculum with my students to help them explore issues of race.

As we began the unit, my kindergarteners were seated in their usual spots on the rug in the front of the room. The UofSC undergraduates stood in the back of the room with notebooks in hand ready to capture notes. My kindergarteners know that they can speak freely without having to raise their hands because we have established this as the protocol when we engage in Socratic Seminars (Buehl 2016). A seminar is a formal group discussion led by a facilitator using questions based on a text the students study and analyze. Each seminar takes place on the large group, circular rug in the front of our room. Students sit in what's called a "seminar circle" with the teacher-researcher (me) sitting on the outside. During the seminar, students are asked to look at the speaker, take turns to speak, connect to the text, and agree or disagree with one another's responses. As the facilitator, my job is to ask questions, remind students of seminar procedures, and to redirect them when they lose focus. The first question for each seminar is done where we go around the circle and each child answers the question with one word. This is then followed by questions that ask them to expound on their responses. The goal is to probe a little more deeply into their thinking.

I began our discussion on the topic of race by asking, “What do you know about race?” I did not define the term *race* because I wanted to see how they would define the term. Given that I had just won in a foot race outside, I assumed they would use that experience and connect the question to the physical action of racing. I was surprised by the answers I received. Students responded by saying race referred to differences, something you can see, different people, being nice, and being kind. I then pulled out a chart that I made. On the chart, I drew circular smiley faces and shaded them four different skin tones. I then asked what they thought when they saw someone with each skin tone. Table 2 shows their responses for each color.

Table 2: Students’ Reactions to Pictures of People with Different Skin Colors

Light brown	**Pink**	**Yellow**	**Dark brown**
Friends	Mom/dad	Good	Bad
Handsome because he is brown	Good/bad	He looks like me	Most robbers look like this
Holding a purse	Engineers	Engineers	Only robs people
Good/bad	Racecar		Ugly because he is dark
Firefighter	Drivers		You can’t see their face
Police	Pretty because they are pink, and you can see their face		
Overall comments: Race is friends, mixed colors, mixed people, different people, colored people			

What stood out the most was their thoughts on the lightest skin tone and the darkest skin tone. For the lightest skin tone, the students commented that a person with that skin tone could be a good or bad person. They commented that the person was pretty because he/she was pink and that it was easier to see that person’s face. For the darkest skin tone, the kindergarteners said that the person was automatically bad and ugly, citing the dark skin tone as the reason for the person’s ugliness.

During the second week in this unit, I read to the kindergarteners on Monday through Thursday the book, *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz. On Friday morning, we sat in our seminar circle to discuss the story as I facilitated the Socratic seminar. To begin this conversation, I asked the students to describe themselves using terminology they heard me read in the book. They used such terms as chocolate, peachy, and/or vanilla. They then went on to explain why they chose a particular color. Most explained that they chose a certain color because it represented their skin tone. When students were asked if they would change their skin tone, most

replied, "No." When asked why, they explained that their families liked it, or because they wouldn't look like their families anymore, or because God made them that way. Only one student said he would change from chocolate skin to peach because he wanted peach skin.

Students were asked what they thought when they saw someone with different skin tones. Their replies were mostly positive. They remarked that it was okay to be friends with that person. Students were also asked if they thought people are as different on the inside as they are on the outside, and to explain. There was mutual agreement among these young learners that people were the same on the inside and the outside and that they could all be friends regardless of their skin tone. Finally, students were asked why they thought the author, Karen Katz, wrote this book. They suggested it was written to talk about colors and to get others to understand the colors of different people. Students also mentioned that we should treat people kindly regardless of their color.

As a part of the unit, I also interviewed four of the students to collect more data. The interview lasts approximately 10 minutes. The other students were engaged in the writer's workshop when I conducted the interviews. For the sake of anonymity, I will use the pseudonyms (Lauren, Nathan, Daniel, and Barbara) instead of their actual names. The students were chosen at random and consisted of two girls and two boys. Lauren is white; Nathan, Daniel, and Barbara are black. Throughout the interview, Barbara and Deborah slowly began to lose interest and made fewer comments. They only answered questions directed towards them explicitly. Most of the interview was dominated by Lauren and Nathan and was more of a discussion between the two of them.

During the interviews, the students described their race based on the color of their skin. Barbara described herself as brown whereas Nathan and Daniel described themselves as Black. I asked the students what the difference was between Black skin and brown skin. Lauren stated, "They were kind of different because brown is a lighter color than Black." She went on to comment that people with brown skin were still considered Black people. Barbara introduced the topic of being friends with people of a different race and the other students all agreed that anyone could be friends. Barbara commented, "You can be friends with someone who has different skin than you." We then discussed what it meant to be brown skin, Black skin, or White skin. Nathan commented that being brown meant people were nice and could be friends with White skin people. He also noted they could all be a family because skin color didn't matter. We went on to discuss if being their skin color was hard or easy and why. Nathan said, "Being a little brown boy is easy because little brown boys are nice to little brown girls, but that doesn't mean you have to be friends with little brown girls." He went on to explain that brown boys could be nice to White boys and girls. We then discussed how people sometimes treat others because of their skin color. Nathan chimed in again and stated, "The whole class is my family. They play with me and share toys with me." Nathan doesn't believe that he is ever treated differently because of his skin color inside or outside of our classroom. I then asked the students whether all brown skin people are treated fairly or not. Both Lauren and Nathan agreed that they were not. Lauren explained that a long time ago Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was not treated right. She referenced the bombings of his home as well as his brother's by White people, just because they were Black. Neither Lauren nor Nathan believed that White people currently still behaved in this manner. They both made references to the past when discussing the mistreatment of Black people by White people. For instance, they spent several minutes discussing slavery and

Abraham Lincoln, who Lauren credited with freeing Black people. Nathan believes that slavery could return; however, he exclaimed that the military would fight because they fight for justice. We discussed families and if family members had to have the same skin color or not. Both children did not think families had to have the same skin color, but they could. The interview concluded when the students were ready to go back to the writing workshop.

After two weeks of reading anti-bias, culturally relevant children's literature, and discussing race, I brought the students back to the whole group carpet, and I created another chart to determine what the students learned about race. Once again, the chart was divided into the same skin colors as before. Table 3 shows the students' responses.

Table 3: Students' Reactions to Pictures of People with Different Skin Colors After Activities

Light brown	**Pink**	**Yellow**	**Dark brown**
That's me	It's me	Me	Good/bad
Firefighter	Hire people	Officer	Nice
Teacher	Doctors	Nasear	Author/illustrator
Doctor	Regular people	Baker	Friend
Both good and bad	Police officers	Both good and bad	Student
Friends	Not always good	Mom/dad	
Darker	Girls/boys	Boy/girl	

After two weeks of reading anti-racist, culturally relevant literature and openly discussing issues regrading race, I found the students' perceptions of the darkest colored shifted. They were more affirmative when they no longer saw it simply as bad and ugly. Based on their conversations during interviews, seminars, and daily interactions, I believe the children's perceptions of race did make slight changes. Students began to see the darkest skin person as equal to the lightest skin person. Students also began to connect race to other topics. For example, as we worked on family composition, students suggested not all family members have the same skin tone. Through this study, it became clear the students did not reference nor connect with current situations with race, such as Black Lives Matter, the recent killing of George Floyd, ot other incidents in this current context, yet they often brought up discrimination in schools and referenced Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. By the end of the unit, the students had mostly positive self-images and positive thoughts regarding other races.

It Does Matter If You're Black or White: Undergraduates Write About Race

As a part of my PDS liaison work, I teach a three-hour, embedded culturally relevant pedagogy course at Meadowfield Elementary School. This course is the first course that our students take in their professional program during the fall of their junior year. We intentionally offer this course as it is intended to lay the foundation for all of the other courses in the program. When creating the course, I built on the work of Gorski' (1999) to develop a three-part framework. The framework focuses on the introspection of self, introspection of teaching, and introspection of society. Through this framework, we spend the first eight weeks engaged in self-introspection. We discuss social class, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexuality, ability, family structure, etc. This is critical in helping the undergraduates see themselves as cultural beings and how the identities they occupy either privilege or oppress them. This is important because as Souto-Manning avers, "The ways we make sense of our identities affect our students' learning experiences" (2013, p.12). The next five weeks of the course are dedicated to introspection of teaching with the goal of teaching the undergraduates how to create a student-centered curriculum to make learning more engaging, relevant, and interactive (Nieto and Bode, 2018). The final week of the course is dedicated to introspection of society. During which we closely examine the current social context in society and create action steps and advocacy plans to address those social problems individually or as part of a group. The goal is for the undergraduates to expand their learning beyond the walls of the classroom and to take on a local or national social justice issue that they would like to address.

During each class session, I follow the same four-part structure: lecture, classroom visit to Ali's room, group discussion and activity, and then a discussion of the implications for them as future educators. Throughout the semester, I work closely with Ali to ensure that my students have ample opportunities to align the theoretical knowledge they gain from my lectures with the practical application of those theories as they observe Ali teaching her kindergarteners. My undergraduate students (Tall teachers) are paired one on one with Ali's students (Small teacher) to work with them for approximately one hour each week across the span of the semester. The tall teachers and small teachers find space to work together in Ali's room or in my classroom onsite at MES. In the section that follows, I will describe an assignment that my undergraduates worked on as we observed in Ali's room during the two weeks when Ali and her students focused on race as an identity factor.

Ali shared the encounter that happened on the playground with me. She informed me that she needed to do a unit with her kindergarteners on race. It was not in my immediate plans to focus on race with my undergraduates at the time, but when Ali mentioned the incident, I made the necessary adjustments to my original plans. During the lecture, I polled my undergraduates to determine how many believed that race was a biological or a social construct? Not surprisingly, a resounding eighty-five percent believed that race was biological. I shared with them that race was indeed socially constructed (Kendi, 2019) and greatly impacts every aspect of our lives. I told them that we would spend the next few class sessions learning more about race as a social construct and racism as a form of oppression. Sensoy and DiAngelo assert, "Very few Whites believe that structural racism is real or have the humility to engage with peoples of Color about it openly and thoughtfully (2017, p.149). This was important to consider because I was the lone Black professor among twenty-one undergraduates who identified as White. My students and I spent two weeks uncovering the structural nature of oppression

through racism, and we focused on white supremacy. I read aloud high-quality children's literature to them. Some of the books included, *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Tyler, *Let's Talk About Race,* by Julius Lester, *The Color of Us,* by Karen Katz, and *Black is Brown is Tan* by Arnold Adoff. While learning these important concepts, my students and I also spent time in Ali's class as her five-year-olds grappled with important issues regarding race and racism. My students were also given the assignment to capture notes when observing in Ali's room, reflect on their notes, and then write a paper detailing the implication this has for them as prospective teachers. I will share a few excerpts from some of my students that capture the overall patterns evidenced in many of their final projects.

Invisibility of Racism

An analysis of my students' assignments revealed that they believed that racism can be invisible. They mentioned that racism is embedded in the fabric of society and often is not noticeable unless it involves blatant direct violent acts perpetrated by one individual or group on another individual with less power. My students posited that all individuals have biases and prejudices. They felt that through honest, self-introspection one must explicitly examine his or her biases and prejudices and work to outgrow them in order to promote a more just and equitable classroom. They also hold the opinion that racism cannot only be associated with violent individual acts committed against persons of Color; it must also be seen as the systematic structures that are in place that oppress certain groups of people while at the same time privileging others. One student wrote,

> By socializing people to believe that racism only occurs through big explicit acts of hate or violence, society is telling peoples of Color that they are of lesser value than a White person. Children grow up learning that racism can only be violent and are taught to accept the negative portrayals of their race within society. Because these portrayals are not seen as racist, people may feel less inclined to call them out on the harm they are doing to peoples of Color and society as a whole. In my future classroom, I think it will be important for me to be conscious of the messages I portray to my students. It will be important for me to not subtlety reinforce prejudices and stereotypes through my words and actions.

From this comment, the student takes the position that he or she must first be cognizant of how his or her words and actions have the potential of promoting unintentional messages. Becoming critically conscious (Gay, 2010) and continuously engaging in self-examination is a useful practice for culturally responsive teachers to employ. Another student wrote,

> An interesting concept that was specifically discussed was that of colorblind racism, where society is encouraged to pretend like they don't notice race/racial differences, and that everyone is equal. However well-intentioned this method may be, it denies the existence of racism overall and therefore makes it nearly impossible to discuss or spread awareness about.

This student's comment sheds light on the concept of colorblindness and how that often prevents people from actually being able to address racism in constructive ways. If one pretends something does not exist, one can never fully address it in a way that matters.

The Harm of Racism

Racism is harmful and can exert negative effects on the self-concepts, health, and well-being of those who are targeted. Racism affords unfair advantages in many facets of one's life. My students understood the negative effects that racism causes. One student wrote,

> To eliminate the negative effects of racism, people need to understand the harm it causes by recognizing all people have prejudices, therefore, contributing to racism. In the classroom, teachers can put the effort into recognizing their own prejudices and biases before allowing them to affect the learning experiences of the students.

This student also stresses the importance of examining one's biases and not allowing those biases to negatively affect the learning experiences of the students in one's class.

Racism Cannot Exist Without Power.

A final concept that was an event in the students' responses was the notion that racism cannot exist without power. They understood that there were clear dynamics of power in play in a racialized system. They also mentioned certain groups (white, wealthy, heterosexual, able-bodied males) were usually given privileges that others were not afforded. The students mentioned that those who are in power often exert that power and authority over others. One student shared,

> Racism could not exist without power, that is why it is not just the effects of individualized acts. One singular person does not have enough power to be considered a dominant group. Racism is combining prejudice with power, everybody has prejudices so reducing racism to an individual act is simply incorrect. It is when combined with the power historically given to Whites in America that racism comes alive.

My undergraduates, unlike Ali's kindergarteners, assert that it does matter if you are Black or White. My students understood the social, historical, and ideological concepts associated with race and racism. Ali's students were too young to articulate issues of race and racism beyond that of skin tone, acceptability, and fairness. Both groups did; however, echo that there was no place for racism in a just, equitable society. For instance, one of Ali's students commented, "People are the same on the inside and we could all be friends no matter what color we are." My students went a little deeper and mentioned the importance of self-introspection. They knew this was necessary to ensure that their practices are equitable and just for all students. One student shared,

> I never viewed myself as a racist because I had friends of all races and was even considered the minority race at my high school. However, what I did not realize was the higher structures in play that oppressed other races. Even if I was not acting on those discriminations, I still had the privileges the higher structure gave

me, thus putting African-Americans and other minorities at a disadvantage. As a teacher, I hope to seek out these inequalities that are put in place and find a way to remove them from my classroom.

Implications

This paper shared two examples of efforts to discuss race with Kindergarteners and undergraduate teacher candidates in the context of a school-university partnership. There are multiple implications related to this work. It becomes even more innumerable when the partnership provides opportunities for teachers in preparation to have first-hand embedded clinical experiences in which they experience the bridge from theory to practice related to the use of culturally relevant pedagogies. I am only going to briefly highlight a few of the most salient implications in this section.

Early childhood students can engage in critical discussions. Ali knows that it is important to engage her kindergarteners in culturally relevant pedagogy because even at this early age, children are cognizant of differences in language, race, gender, and physical abilities. At the age of two, children begin to describe themselves and other people by physical characteristics such as skin color. By ages three and four, children begin to develop positive and negative associations with the color of their skin. Five and 6-year-old children begin to identify stereotypes and use insults such as name-calling 80% of the time during a disagreement (Tatum, 2003).

Culturally relevant teachers do not ignore the ethnic identities of his/her students. Culturally relevant teachers understand the importance of truly seeing the cultural and social diversity that exists among his/her students and capitalizes on those aspects to re-center the curriculum (Baines et. al., 2018). A teacher's beliefs are evidenced in his/her daily practices. The beliefs about children serve as the undercurrent for the intentional moves that a teacher makes when he/she plans engagements, arranges the classroom, and selects resources.

A culturally relevant teacher includes aspects of his/her culture and aspects of the students' cultures in the classroom. In order to do this, the teacher builds sustainable relationships with students. Relationship-building begins on day one when the students first enter the room. The teacher designs specific classroom engagements to learn more about the students and for them to learn more about him/her.

Culturally responsive teachers foster safe spaces for students to engage in dialogues about inequities. Children are bombarded each day with messages regarding race, gender, ethnicity, and/or language through media outlets, social media platforms, and friends, family, and nonfamily members. A culturally responsive teacher fosters safe spaces where children can dialogue about inequities and take on the role of activists in their school and communities. These teachers use high-quality literature as a springboard to help children engage in critical conversations. They are not afraid to address the difficult histories and topics that so many others shy away from day in and day out.

Conclusion

The University of South Carolina and Meadowfield Elementary have a long and strong partnership. The current work being done within the partnership of UofSC and MES is beneficial

for both partners. The school has an onsite liaison who provides onsite, continuous professional development, teaches courses, develops curriculum, and offers feedback for the faculty and staff on culturally relevant pedagogical strategies and techniques. In return, the administration provides the liaison/ teacher educator a space to offer the undergraduate and graduate courses in which students are immersed in classrooms where they experience authentic alignment between theory and practice and get immediate feedback. Building effective school-university partnerships takes time, but the benefits are immeasurable.

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Reconceptualizing Barriers as Opportunities: Responding to Challenges in Equity-Based Teacher Preparation

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Abstract: In this article, four teacher educators outline the barriers they face regarding equity, diversity, and teacher preparation across two large, public educator preparation programs in Virginia. Some specific barriers discussed include the higher attrition rate of teachers of color, ill-prepared teacher candidates and their respective mentor teachers, and a lack of psychological safety, due in large part to micro-aggressions experienced during clinical experiences. Following this description are specific examples of challenges that we reconceptualize as opportunities to develop a diverse pipeline of equity-focused teacher leaders through school-university partnerships. Opportunities discussed include redefining *teacher educators*, the importance of mentorship fit and matching, partnerships and sustaining relationships, and building equity-focused teacher leaders. The discussion and implications indicate the impact that reconceptualizing these barriers can have on the school community.

KEYWORDS: *Clinical Practice, Equity, Inclusion, School-University Partnerships*

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

Reconceptualizing Barriers as Opportunities: Responding to Challenges in Equity-Based Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare candidates to effectively serve diverse communities and families through coursework or through clinical work (Graue, 2005; Zeichner et al., 2016). This is, in part, because coursework and clinical work often exist as fragmented pieces of a curricular puzzle, rather than integrated components. Many programs require co-requisite, parallel "field experiences" and coursework, but even these do not always position faculty alongside teacher candidates within diverse school settings. Faculty often lack the deep and nuanced knowledge of the context in which candidates are asked to practice what they learn in coursework. Yet, teacher candidates must have deep understandings of their students' challenges and strengths, as well as their students' communities and cultures if those teachers are to be effective in their work (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012). As four teacher educators in two large, public institutions that prepare teachers to serve in the largest and most diverse regions in Virginia (and the nation), we recognize these structural and systemic challenges. Our informal and formal collaboration across institutions is a response to what we see as a moral imperative; we must support and prepare a diverse pool of teacher candidates who, in turn, will effectively serve diverse school communities. Effectively prepared teachers serve as the direct resources who can help narrow the opportunity gap that results in the so-called "achievement gap" (Darling-Hammond, 2015).

Over the past few years, multiple calls for the refinement of clinical practice provided guidance for this work. Recent accreditation requirements emphasize this work in CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2019) Standard 2: *Clinical Partnerships and Practice.* Within this standard, the first component, *Partnerships for Clinical Preparation,* defines shared responsibility as continuous improvement that encompasses mutually agreed upon expectations for candidate entry, preparation, and exit, connections across theory and practice, coherence across clinical and academic components of preparation, and shared accountability for candidate outcomes. The AACTE (2018) Clinical Practice Commission's report is particularly useful as a guiding document for approaching this partnership work. Providing clear definitions of clinical practice, roles, and structures, the AACTE report clarified distinctions between dated, less effective models of field placements in teacher preparation, and integrated clinical practice that honors university-based (faculty), school-based (mentor teachers), and boundary-spanning (coaches and supervisors) teacher educators who can, collaboratively, integrate coursework and effective, contextualized teaching practice.

The AACTE (2018) report addresses the current systems and structures that underlie the silos we find ourselves within, but we found that guidance incomplete. Building memorandums of understanding, clarifying roles and responsibilities, as well as convening partners are all necessary, but the implementation of this work requires intentional practices that build, strengthen, and sustain individual and organizational relationships. To be candid, this work is messy and not linear because human beings are messy creatures who work in communities with difficult histories of inequity and injustice. Organizational relationships between schools, school divisions, and teacher preparation programs require consistency across the quality of interactions and clinical practice, but consistency should not mean standardized models. As Parker et al. (2016, p. 43) remind us:

> High quality clinical practice cannot be mandated in a one-size-fits-all manner and does not need to look the same in every context. In fact, it is this mindset that often hinders innovation, halts progress toward real reform, and creates a dichotomous view.

In this article, we reconceptualize challenges related to clinical practice and equity as opportunities to develop a diverse pipeline of equity-focused teacher leaders through school-university partnerships. Focusing on Virginia, we make clear how our state context represents national trends while also acknowledging the contextually bound aspects of our work that may not apply beyond this region. We share our experiences as organizational examples of partnership work, as well as the literature that inform our practices, in the hope that this may provide models and scaffolded support for colleagues who want to engage in similar processes.

Barriers to Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline and Equitably Serving All Students

Students of color comprise 50% of U.S. public school enrollment, yet only 20% of the national workforce are teachers of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Virginia's demographic data look quite similar; students of color comprise 49% of the student population, while teachers of color comprise only 21% of the workforce (Report from the Task Force on Diversifying Virginia's Educator Pipeline, 2017). It is worth noting that Virginia's "educator pipeline is becoming more racially homogenous over time" (Report from the Task Force on Diversifying Virginia's Educator Pipeline, 2017, p. 2). Only 17% of first year teachers in Virginia identify as Black or Hispanic (Miller, 2018). Compared to their white colleagues, Black and Hispanic teachers exit the teaching positions in Virginia at much greater rates (Miller, 2018). This is especially visible in years three and five, notably when Virginia teachers may move from a probationary to a continuing contract status. School divisions may choose to move teachers from a probationary to continuing contract in year three or year five. In year three, Black and Hispanic teachers exit at rates of 22% and 18%, respectively, while white teachers exit at a rate of 13%. In year five, Hispanic teachers in Virginia exit at a 20% rate, while Black teachers exit at 15%; white teachers' exit rate is approximately 12% (Miller, 2018).

These attrition rates are especially concerning because historically underrepresented students benefit from having teachers with similar characteristics or background, as this helps to establish a better connection between teacher and student (Dilworth & Coleman, 2014). Increasing the number of teachers of color in a school setting can provide positive diverse examples to students of color and thus these teachers could become beacons of change (Dukes, 2018). As students are exposed to a diverse range of teachers, they often begin to see more positive potential outcomes for their own futures. This representation provides historically underrepresented students with a greater sense of inclusion within their school. Their improved sense of community may increase academic and social achievement (Atkins et al., 2014).

Why then might attrition rates among teachers of color be significantly higher than white teachers? In addition to facing day to day challenges of teaching, teachers of color have been the target of injustice, lack of administrative support, lack of mentorship, lack of recognition, and isolation (Matthew, 2017; Ingersoll & May, 2011). Novice teachers, regardless of their race and/or ethnicities, need extra support to learn and adjust to the social norms and community culture where they accept employment. However, novice Black and Latino teachers face an additional workload challenge as they are often assigned classes with challenging student behaviors or learning challenges that cause them to feel overwhelmed (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Furthermore, when school staff and leadership lack cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge, we also see a lack of policy and practices that support the implementation of professional development focused on inclusive and equitable pedagogical practice. This absence of familiarity, knowledge, and skill leads to lack of sense of belonging and self-efficacy among teachers with backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities that are not represented among the majority of the teaching workforce (Lee, 2015). While working conditions contribute to teacher attrition, inexperienced leadership and exclusion from faculty decision-making are also significant causes of attrition among teachers of color. Underrepresented teachers express often feeling as though they are undervalued and feel a lack of sense of belonging (Bristol, 2015).

In our work across Virginia, we regularly observe examples of lack of safety, marginalization, and lack of respect that must be addressed to stem the attrition rates of, and psychological harm to, teacher candidates of color. We also notice discrimination and micro-aggressions that occur in partner school settings that serve as a catalyst for our work; we feel compelled to affect positive change. While we don't yet have large scale evidence that confirms (or disconfirms) our experiences that white teacher candidates leave schools that serve diverse and homogeneous populations of historically marginalized/underserved communities, our teacher preparation programs in Virginia wrestle with this additional challenge.

Inequity in Clinical Experiences

Urban and diverse school partnerships are necessary because they provide experiences with complex, interrelated issues, including poverty, racial and ethnic diversity, and bureaucracy. There exist reports of positive change (e.g. increased preparedness, motivation, commitment, and cultural competence) when preparing teacher candidates with an understanding of the community and analysis of the school setting as part of culturally relevant pedagogical preparation (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014; Anderson & Stillman, 2013). In these settings, candidates have the opportunity to develop self-efficacy, commitment and cultural competence necessary to be successful as they accept employment in similar communities (Anderson & Stillman, 2011).

Inexperienced and Unqualified Teaching Workforce. White, middle class teacher candidates are often unprepared for teaching in urban communities with low-income, children of color because they lack necessary cultural competencies (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017) and have minimal experience with language diversity and teaching in a linguistically diverse classroom (Faltis & Valdés, 2016). Teacher preparation programs can be disconnected from the context of diverse clinical experiences, and may not adequately address the gaps in "skills, knowledge and experiences…required to successfully serve low-income youth and youth of color" (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017, p. 76). In order to adequately prepare teacher candidates for the realities of teaching in any setting, many educator preparation programs place teacher candidates in some schools with student populations that represent historically underserved and/or diverse communities. Clinical experiences in such settings may build a candidate's capacity for cultural competence by working with diverse learners. However, there exists evidence that these experiences may perpetuate and reinforce misconceptions and biases about students of color and urban school settings as well as confirm deficit thinking. Teacher candidates placed in these settings without intentionally scaffolded opportunities to analyze the placement and their

responses to it express decreased confidence and low self-efficacy in their skills teaching diverse learners (Abramo, 2015; Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Further, candidates hold negative perceptions of teaching in diverse and urban settings due to inequities found in their clinical experiences such as lack of resources, understaffing, underprepared teachers, and high turnover (Abramo, 2015; Anderson & Stillman, 2013).

White, middle class teachers often serve as mentors for teacher candidates, potentially unfamiliar with current research and practice to effectively serve diverse student populations as funds for professional learning opportunities were reduced following the recession a decade ago. Nationally, over six percent of teachers in urban schools are uncertified (Cardichon et al., 2020). Over 17% of teachers in schools with high percentages of students of color are new to the profession and nearly 19% of teachers in urban schools are in their first or second years (Cardichon et al., 2020). In practical terms, this means that large percentages of teachers in urban and diverse school settings don't hold the qualifications (certification or experience) to serve as effective mentors for teacher candidates.

Some mentor teachers recognize micro-aggressions and address them with their colleagues and/or administration, while many of the classroom teachers with whom we work don't recognize them as problematic, lack the language or skills to respond, or serve as the perpetrators of such micro-aggressions. Unlike our current candidates, enrolled in coursework that prepares them to be culturally competent and responsive educators, many of our experienced educators have not had this preparation. This is similar to mentor teachers who welcome future teachers into their rooms, but have not seen integrated clinical practices; they lack the conceptual knowledge of their role as school-based teacher educators or the skills to enact such a role.

Anecdotal data in multiple teacher education programs across one university indicate that there are increasing instances of micro-aggressions (Hopper, 2019; Sue et al., 2007) witnessed and/or experienced by candidates in clinical experiences. For example, candidates report mentor teachers or other building staff who perpetrated *micro-assaults*, *micro-insults*, *and micro-invalidations.* A *micro-assault* would be something akin to a teacher indicating in a high school English class that Judaism is not a religion; an elementary teacher telling a Spanish-speaking child to go back to their own country; white, rural, upper elementary students calling a practicum student of Asian descent an ethnic slur). An example of a *micro-insult* may be comments made to a general education intern not to spend too much time in planning lessons for their students with disabilities because they are not able to learn. An example of a *micro-invalidation* would be a school culture where many students wear confederate flags on their clothing and most parents fly confederate flags on their cars. Candidates feel at a loss as to how to handle these events when they occur because of the power differential between them and experienced, licensed teachers.

Distrust and Psychological Safety

Changing behavioral patterns requires candid, courageous conversations. In order to have courageous conversations about these interactions, candidates, university supervisors, and their mentor teachers need to build trust and feel psychologically safe with one another. That is distinctly challenging for teacher candidates placed in schools with systemic obstacles such as those we described above. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) defined trust as, "an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter

party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (p. 189). In opposition to trust is distrust that Schultz (2019) described for schools in three categories: relational (interpersonal), structural (top-down decision-making), or contextual (historical interactions) distrust. Distrust is often associated with a lack of psychological safety, but psychological safety has an added element of how valued and comfortable an employee feels in that work setting (Edmondson, 2004). It is the personal perception about how others would respond to their actions. Edmondson (2004) describes it by the question one would ask themselves, "If I do it, will I be hurt, embarrassed, or criticized?" (p. 242). And if the answer is yes, then this indicates a lack of psychological safety for the individual to interact within the group. Trust and psychological safety are related constructs that can affect various behavioral and organizational outcomes.

Schultz (2019) explained that when distrust, rather than trust, is prominent, teachers are not treated as professionals with top-down decision-making, which leads to teacher attrition on a national level. This may be of importance when considering Virginia's teacher and leader attrition rates; distrust is reported across school buildings, especially within those buildings that house historically underserved student populations. Distrust and a lack of psychological safety intersect with clinical placements in which micro-aggressions systemically occur, creating significant challenges to create effective, innovative, and integrated teacher preparation coursework and practice.

School-University Partnerships as Opportunities to Address Barriers

We view these barriers (distrust, inexperienced and unqualified mentors, and structural challenges across universities and schools) as opportunities for university-based teacher preparation programs to redefine partnerships and to respond to broader challenges around inclusive, equitable school communities in our region. In order to effectively prepare candidates, partnerships can be established to help them learn and practice within the complexity of the many contexts they will need to understand including the classroom, school, community, sociocultural contexts, as well as professional, state and national policies (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014). Likewise, "merely placing them in such contexts does not guarantee opportunity-rich experiences nor intended learning" (Anderson & Stillman, 2011, p. 459). At first glance, an opportunity might be for clinical experiences to take place in only schools that have sufficient resources and faculty with high teaching efficacy, but an ideal context might not serve the important role of preparing candidates adequately within the complexity of the contexts that they will likely face in their careers. Challenging environments with appropriate supports can help candidates develop culturally responsive professionalism by navigating the system (Abramo, 2015).

Focusing on the placement itself is important, but we also learned the value of capacity building across diverse school settings by providing effective professional learning opportunities for potential mentor teachers, coaches, and supervisors working in these settings. Anderson and Stillman (2011) recommend partnerships with exemplary, equity-minded cooperating teachers, with structured and informal learning opportunities for mentor teachers, as the model to address existing barriers. Building the human capacity by empowering our school-based colleagues opens opportunities for effective clinical practice in spaces where it might not currently exist. In the following paragraphs, we describe how we, four teacher educators, and the institutions in

which we work reimagine partnerships as opportunities to create ongoing, multi-tiered professional learning to support evidence- and equity-based teacher preparation and induction.

Teachers as Agents of Change

We rely on our classroom and school building partners to do the work that matters most for preparing skilled, culturally competent educators (mentoring and coaching them in real classrooms), but we must recognize that our colleagues work in complex contexts and received varied preparation experiences along their career paths.

Redefining "Teacher Educator". We view every experienced educator guiding a teacher candidate or novice teacher as a colleague; mentor teachers, coaches, supervisors, and faculty are all teacher educators. Our mutually beneficial partnerships position us to contribute different expertise and knowledge to the relationship, but we understand that those based in schools function within systems that have different incentive structures, policies, and community expectations than those of us based in colleges and universities. We saw the need to translate our programmatic foci on equity and implicit bias training to teacher-leadership development. We recognize that this description may connote a deficit lens; that we look at our classroom-based colleagues from an ivory tower in which we graciously (condescendingly) provide outreach and new knowledge. However, participants in a true mutually beneficial partnership must consider how university-based teacher educators can facilitate research-based, timely professional learning and school-based teacher educators (mentor teachers and coaches) facilitate deeper, nuanced understandings of the context.

Consortium partnerships, with multiple universities and multiple school divisions, are effective structures for collaborative creation of professional development workshops. Two of us are fortunate to have a long-standing collaboration with seven school divisions and three other institutions of higher education. Together, we have built multiple mentorship workshop curricula that we collaboratively facilitate to mentor both teacher candidates and novice teachers. These workshops provide teachers with skills and tools to develop mentorship relationships rooted in culturally competent practices. We use program evaluation to consistently review and revise any existing programs.

Often housed in different departments, teacher preparation programs and administration/leadership preparation programs are also well-aligned partners in this larger work. Reaching across the hallway, so to speak, we found opportunities for collaboration. For example, we designed professional learning that concurrently empowers school-based teacher educators (mentor teachers, coaches, and university supervisors) while better serving both preK-12 and university students. Building on educational leadership literature, we designed and implemented coaching workshops to facilitate professional learning and work among school building and division teams; this work aligned understandings and skills across roles in divisions. This work helped us redefine teacher educator and move away from titles assigned by human resources offices to instead focus on the work in which we all engage to facilitate positive change in pedagogical skills. For example, we all facilitate coaching conversations, serve as models of effective practice, and evaluate candidate skill development. Our titles don't adequately describe the skills we enact as we provide guidance and feedback along a continuum of practice.

Teacher-Leaders and Teacher-Candidates: Making the Match

One of the keys to successful placement between mentor teachers and teacher-candidates is the focus of universities and school divisions working *with* one another, instead of *unto* one another (St. John et al., 2018). Relatively little research has been conducted on the national landscape of the teacher candidate placement process and how matches for candidates and mentor teachers are made (St. John et al., 2018). As we discussed earlier, teacher candidates, mentors, university supervisors, coaches, and faculty need to feel psychologically safe in order to thrive. Therefore, dedicated time must be allotted to building their partnership. Ideally, mentor teachers, coaches, supervisors, and teacher candidates are matched based on compatible characteristics. We designed open-ended questions for teacher candidate placements that we share with school building leaders: 1) What do you hope to learn/gain during this internship? 2) Describe the context in which you aim to teach following your teacher preparation program. Building leaders can then share these open-ended questions and candidate responses to match candidates with mentors who find their ideas resonant and whose skills complement candidates' areas of strength as well as areas in which they identify for growth.

We also know how important fit can be for mentoring and coaching roles; effective teaching is only one component of effective coaching and mentoring (Allen et al., 2006a; 2006b; Carter & Francis, 2001). One way of determining fit is through an application process that requires unannounced observations of potential mentor teachers that also involve follow up reflection questions that highlight their coachability and willingness to relinquish control of their classroom. In addition, surveys that underscore a mentor's strengths, areas of challenge, and non-negotiable aspects of teaching (i.e. mentor teacher will not use sarcasm with students) help inform the matching process. Lastly, a "matching party" where mentor teachers and teacher candidates are asked to come together to meet and mingle is another example that has been used when gathering information to make informed decisions for best fit.

However, we recognize how difficult matching can be, especially in schools and/or endorsement areas with higher rates of workforce attrition. When compatible matching cannot take place, we use surveys, such as the Sharing Hopes, Attitudes, Responsibilities, and Expectations (S.H.A.R.E), to help facilitate communication about each individual's beliefs and their alignment with other members of the clinical practice teammates. In our experiences across teacher education programs, we observe the potential and effectiveness of building resilient, professional relationships by coaching all individuals engaged in clinical practice partnerships; by helping our colleagues and candidates communicate with humility and responsiveness (as opposed to reactiveness), we see positive learning outcomes for everyone.

Teacher-Leaders and Teacher-Candidates: Building and Sustaining Trusting Relationships

Partnerships in classrooms will inevitably lead to disagreements and conflicts, so planned protocols we practice before problems arise help facilitate courageous conversations. In addition, a coach or university supervisor whose job facilitates the partnership between the teacher candidates and mentor teachers can help facilitate challenging conversations by being a neutral third party. Ongoing reflection logs between mentor teachers and teacher candidates that are checked by the coach or supervisor is an additional opportunity to reflect on and grow their practice and partnership.

Trust between a mentor teacher and candidate is a developmental progression that takes time and should include effective communication strategies on how to both give and receive feedback. We view the concurrent teacher preparation and teacher-leadership learning described above as an opportunity to develop a common language focused on culturally responsive pedagogy and equity. Such a common language (and the strategic ways in which we prepare teacher-leaders to engage and use it) creates opportunities to build trust with teacher candidates by addressing inequity as they experience it in clinical placements.

Equity-Focused Teacher-Leaders

Observing and collaborating with cooperating teachers who model antiracist and equity-minded instruction, engage in responsive practice, advocate for youth, and reflect critically on issues regarding race and racism, may help candidates to put their theoretical and pedagogical preparation into practice and have a strong impact on the type of teacher they will become (Anderson & Stillman, 2011). These placements can provide opportunities to develop "pedagogical integrity grounded in ideological clarity" (Anderson & Stillman, 2011, p. 458). Research suggests that clinical practice partnerships need to be maximally educative so that they are tailored to the needs of the individual (Anderson & Stillman, 2011), including cultural and linguistic matching (Strage et al., 2009). A candidate's complex background including class, religion, prior experiences in school and social justice, and racial consciousness will influence their learning during clinical experiences (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Anderson and Stillman (2013) indicate that a cultural match "is both possible and productive for learning" (p. 41), and there is evidence that candidates of color working with teachers of color are more committed to teaching in urban schools, exhibit culturally responsive teaching practices and increase their ability to meet the needs of students of color. On the contrary, a candidate of color who has an experience with a lack of diversity can feel less powerful than white candidates at the same site.

As institutions of higher education and school divisions begin to look into the best ways to advance equity, developing a program to match future teachers of color with practicing teachers of color is an opportunity that may help attract and retain more diverse candidates into the field. Given our state's challenge regarding teachers of color and attrition rates, we seek opportunities to place candidates in schools with building leaders of color and/or matching them with coaches or supervisors of color. We also note the importance of knowing the team of educators with whom a candidate will work. For example, we suggest placing candidates on a grade level team that includes a teacher of color if we cannot identify adequate numbers of effective or experienced mentor teachers of color. Teacher education programs can also create affinity groups for their teacher candidates to feel supported in a safe space to promote personal and pedagogical growth while navigating the many barriers within the education system (Pour-Khorshid, 2018). In central Virginia, multiple university teacher preparation programs partner with a non-profit organization dedicated to mentoring and providing financial support to African American teacher candidates and novice teachers. Each of these opportunities has the potential to overcome the barriers in our current education landscape, but both time and resources must be invested.

Implications

Clinical practice partnerships require time to create, strengthen, and sustain organizational relationships necessary to support effective educator preparation. Yet this time is important, given the tremendous potential of effective partnerships to effectively prepare future teachers, support novice teachers, and, ultimately, serve the diverse P-12 students in our schools (AACTE, 2018; Parker et al., 2016; Zeichner et al., 2016). As we work towards greater co-construction of school-university partnerships, we can learn from some existing successes, such as the importance of a joint venture, a long-term commitment, and collaboration because of a shared investment in student learning in Professional Development Schools (Gebhard, 1998). However, we make note of the flexible and malleable structures needed to sustain this work (Parker et al., 2016), particularly in contexts such as ours in Virginia; the complex history of schools, race, and equity require learning from and adapting such models. Some clinical practice partnership opportunities can take place in the university classroom. Examples may include working with model teachers to develop video footage of classroom teaching, footage of interviews with exemplary teachers sharing their thinking and decision making, and sharing examples of materials and student work, which can be powerful tools for candidates to learn how to work with diverse communities (Anderson & Stillman, 2011). Partnerships can include P-12 students interacting with candidates as evidenced by a study with low-income high school students of color having a powerful impact on learning in a school university-partnership where they shared their lived experiences and interact with candidates in college classes (Brown & Rodriguez, 2017). Sleeter and Milner (2011) suggested that, “programs to support university students of color typically offer financial and academic support as well as social and cultural support to combat alienation on predominantly White campuses” (p. 85). Our partnerships with area non-profits and philanthropic organizations provide opportunities to better serve candidates of color in our predominantly white institutions.

The approaches we share here focus on creating equitable opportunities for teacher candidates with diverse backgrounds. We recommend embedding culturally responsive teaching and leadership development into ongoing professional learning, developing a program to match future teachers of color with practicing teachers and leaders of color, and building psychological safety and trust among clinical practice partners; these multi-faceted approaches to clinical practice partnerships will help teacher candidates, and their P-12 students, to thrive. We encourage our colleagues to consider these approaches while engaging their school and community partners from a place of humility and inquiry; this work is most effective when we consider the unique strengths of each partner and the varied ways we can collaboratively create and sustain true partnerships.

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How One School-university Partnership Designed Learning Experiences to Propel Equity-based Teaching Forward in the PDS Context

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Abstract: This paper will discuss the efforts of one school-university partnership in providing individualized, high quality professional development in the form of a 9-credit, graduate course certificate program in culturally proficient leadership to in-service teachers across 3 schools in the university's PDS network. The researchers document their collaborative efforts in (1) developing the certificate program; (2) designing and implementing the graduate course work; and (3) using culturally responsive, anti-racist leadership tools to promote teacher awareness and critical reflection of issues related to equity, access, and social justice teaching (National Association for Professional Development Schools). Reflections on program implementation and student outcomes are also shared.

KEYWORDS: cultural competency; cultural proficiency; equity-based teaching; graduate education; reciprocal professional development.

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community.
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need.

How One School-university Partnership Designed Learning Experiences to Propel Equity-based Teaching Forward in the PDS Context

Introduction

Embedded in the Standards for Maryland Professional Development Schools, is the expectation that formal Professional Development School (PDS) partnerships in Maryland engage in reciprocal relationships across all stakeholders (Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16, 2003). For example, while the PDS provides a site for teacher candidates to integrate and apply the knowledge they gain from university coursework, university faculty are expected to become immersed in the school, providing on-site coursework for teacher candidates, and professional development activities for school-based staff related to articulated school improvement goals. Additionally, local school systems and partner universities in Maryland are encouraged to ensure the alignment of the curriculum and best-practices between schools and teacher education programs. By extension, the PDS informs curriculum development within the university teacher preparation program, and also acts as a "laboratory for demonstrations of best practices and introduction of new pedagogical techniques" (Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16, 2003, p. 3). This structure allows university faculty and students to participate in walk-throughs and classroom observations that provide authentic opportunities for promoting connections between theory and practice.

At the national level, PDSs, have experienced numerous benefits resultant of their partnerships (Beal, Niño, Alford, Armstrong, Gresham, Griffin & Welsh 2011; Breault & Breault, 2012; Cozza, 2010; Pellett & Pellett, 2009). In their synthesis report, Snow and colleagues (2016) identified five research-based outcomes associated with reciprocal partnership efforts. They included: (1) greater professional confidence in teacher candidates; (2) improvement in teacher candidate perceptions of themselves as future professionals; (3) more demonstrable teaching skills on the part of teacher candidates; (4) improvement in the quality and/or frequency of formative assessment for teacher candidates; and (5) improvement in mentor teachers' teaching practices. They also identified three emerging outcomes in their research: (1) PDS program participants make better teachers; (2) K-12 students participating in PDS programming demonstrate higher achievement; and (3) PDS experiences promote improvement in the quality of college/university courses (Snow et al, 2016).

In Maryland, PDS partnerships are considered "ever emerging entities" that are developmental in nature, and designed to address the unique needs of *all* partners associated with the PDS, not just teacher candidates (Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K-16, 2003, p. 4). Examples of reciprocal partnership efforts in this university's network have included leadership opportunities for school-based teachers such as peer coaching, mentoring, and teaching as an adjunct faculty member at the university. In addition, university faculty have taken advantage of opportunities to stay connected to the realities associated with teaching and learning in local schools and classrooms to better inform university course work. Local school system personnel have gained a better understanding of the teacher candidates they will eventually recruit, and as a result, more accurately anticipate the potential needs of first year teachers. Faculty and staff who have worked in PDSs have also reaped the professional benefits of collaborative efforts launched by the university and the school system to ensure that ongoing

professional development initiatives such as graduate course work are ongoing, data-driven, collaborative, and job-embedded.

This reciprocal and fluid context is what prompted this school-university partnership to initiate and develop a 9-credit, graduate certificate program in culturally proficient leadership for in-service teachers across 3 schools in the university's PDS network. It was during a PDS strategic planning meeting that the principal of one PDS partnership asked if the university would be able to offer graduate coursework in culturally responsive teaching practices to interested in-service teachers. This request prompted a series of meetings between the university and the local school system focused on making the principal's request a reality. Over a 6-month period, university and local school system personnel met to develop graduate coursework that would eventually meet the stated and anticipated professional needs of interested in-service teachers who worked at the school.

The purpose of this descriptive article is to share our journey in planning and implementing the certificate program in culturally proficient leadership. In addition, we discuss the use of educational tools to promote self/other awareness and critical reflection. Student learning outcomes that showed promise in making permanent, positive changes in meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students are also shared. Finally, we reflect on what we learned through an evaluation of student learning outcomes as we continue to modify and refine the program for future cohorts of in-service teachers.

Literature Review

Developing Cultural Competence

Despite the fact that cultural and linguistic diversity increases among students in America's public schools with each year that passes, the teaching population continues to remain mostly white and middle class. Statistics indicate that approximately 83% of America's teachers fit this description (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Conversely, the number of racial and ethnic minority students in schools is rapidly increasing each year (Biscoff & Tach, 2018). Students of color now make up the majority of students attending public schools for the first time in U.S. history (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Although many intersections of cultural identity exist, the most profound historical intersection found in today's schools is race and culture (Jacobsen, Frankenberg & Lenhoff, 2011). It is well documented that the longer Black and Brown students remain in school, the wider the achievement gap grows between them and their white counterparts (Reardon, Kalogrides, & Shores, 2018). As American classrooms serve more racially diverse students than ever (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020), educators will need increased support in gaining and sustaining the cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to reach all students, but especially those who have been historically underserved in public education.

In addition to an educator's knowledge, skills, and attitude, it is becoming comparatively important to consider the impact of the educators' race on pedagogy, student experiences, and academic outcomes (Crowley, 2019; Hill, 2014; Whitaker, 2019). Initial studies of this notion have found that African American students, in particular, have more favorable academic experiences and academic outcomes when taught by at least one educator who shares their racial identity, making the awareness of racial identity and cultural competency critical considerations in teacher development (Figlio, 2018; Will, 2018).

According to the National Education Association (2016), cultural competence is defined as having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry. This understanding informs and expands teaching practices in the culturally competent educator's classroom.

A growing body of educational research supports the necessity of culturally competent educators (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Nord, 2014; Lopes-Murphy & Murphy, 2016), the effective implementation of culturally responsive and equity literate teaching practices (Gay, 2018; Gorski, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2006, 2014), and the development of culturally proficient schools (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2013; Bakken & Smith, 2011). In addition, the ability to deliver culturally relevant instruction and lead culturally proficient schools shows promise in closing the opportunity gap (Clark, 2017; Wachira & Mburu, 2019).

Researchers have made a strong case for the necessity of adopting culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching practices, and culturally sustaining pedagogies when working with racially and ethnically diverse student populations (Chen, Belle, & Nath, 2018; Vanessa, 2018; Griffin, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014; Boykin & Ellison, 2008; Cammarota & Romero, 2009). According to Ladson-Billings (2014), cultural competence is necessary for teachers if they are to maximize the learning for all students in their classrooms. Cultural competence is about learning about oneself and others in light of society's larger social systems to make transformational decisions about how one chooses to live now and in the future (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

For teachers, becoming culturally competent extends far beyond learning about the static cultural backgrounds of students; this type of knowledge is often one-dimensional and can lead to stereotyping entire groups of students on the basis of one common cultural element, such as race (Milner, 2011). As part of their extension on Ladson-Billing's work, Paris and Alim's (2014) recent introduction to culturally sustaining pedagogy challenges educators to reposition their pedagogies to focus on the contemporary and evolving practices and knowledge of communities of color in an effort to showcase them as assets in the development of pedagogy. According to Paris & Alim (2014), "youth cultural and linguistic practices are of value in their own right, and should be creatively foregrounded rather than merely viewed as resources to take students from where they are to some presumably 'better' place, or ignored altogether" (p. 87).

Acquiring cultural competence is a developmental and comprehensive process that takes sustained time and effort (Bennett, 1993; Sue, 2001; Blakeney, 2005; Hammer, 2012; Moule & Diller, 2012; Lynch, Swarts & Isaacs, 2017). It is not achieved through attending a single training, reading a book, participating in a shotgun professional development session, or taking an isolated course; rather, it is a *process* by which educators take time to think, reflect, decide, and act as they respond to environments that are shaped by their diversity (Lindsay, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2013). In order for educators to develop the knowledge and skills needed to promote equity in schools, transformative learning must be considered. According to Brown (2006), "transformative learning changes the way people see themselves and their world" (p. 84). It guides learners to better understand themselves in relation to others and the systems that

promote status quo thinking. Transformative learning has the potential to bring about a change in one's perspective and mindset (Brown, 2006; Mezirow, 1997).

Professional Learning Considerations for Developing Culturally Competent School Leaders

Grounded in the works of Brown (2004, 2006); Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997); Diem and Carpenter (2012); Gooden and O'Dohery (n.d.); Lindsay, Robins, and Terrell (2009); Shields (2010), and Singleton and Linton (2006), Spikes (2018) thematically summarizes four essential components of transformative professional learning in developing culturally competent and racially conscious school leaders. These components include the following: (1) setting the stage, (2) building trust, (3) adopting an inside-out approach, and (4) endorsing transformative leadership practices.

In *setting the stage* for instructing and developing culturally competent leaders, the instructor/facilitator must consider establishing group norms/ground rules for interactions among participants. These norms serve as guidelines in promoting meaningful conversations about potentially difficult topics. They also ensure a safe and respectful environment that promotes transparency and allows for vulnerability. While there are many examples of guidelines outlined in the literature, one of the most widely used is Singleton and Linton's (2006) *Courageous Conversations about Race*. Their protocol establishes four foundational agreements that frame all participant interactions: (1) staying engaged, (2) expecting to experience discomfort, (3) speaking your truth, and (4) expecting/accepting non-closure. Once these agreements are introduced by the instructor/facilitator, it is expected that they be revisited frequently with participants to ensure fidelity when challenging conversations arise (Spikes, 2018).

The second component focuses on *building trust* among participants. In order to promote a learning environment where participants can feel safe to learn, reflect, and grow without being judged, Spikes (2018) suggests that the instructor/facilitator position her/himself as both facilitator *and* learner, sharing personal examples of roadblocks and blindspots s/he has faced in her/his ongoing, personal competency journey. Demonstrating compassion and discussing how we all have been socialized by systems that privilege some and oppress others is integral in moving away from inadvertently communicating that individual intent perpetuates the racism, classism, heterosexism, etc. that continue to exist in all of society's institutions. Spikes (2018) suggests using activities such as cultural artifacts, *I Am* poems, and name-tents, to help promote trust among participants. Important to note is that trust-building activities remain ongoing throughout the professional learning experiences that are shared among participants.

The *inside-out approach*, Spikes' (2018) third suggested component, emphasizes learning about one's self before exploring the social systems at play, or the self in relation to those systems. Once participants begin to understand that they are cultural beings who embody cultural identities based on their experiences, they can embark on the process of self-discovery. Activities promoting an inside-out approach to self-knowledge and understanding can include, but are not limited to racial autobiographies, diversity lifelines, and cultural portraits. In providing opportunities for participants to learn about others and their experiences, Spikes (2018), suggests the use of strategies such as rational discourse, educational plunges, life histories, and cross-cultural interviews. He also suggests using documentaries, video clips, and the literature to shed light on differing perspectives. Once participants begin to understand themselves as racial and

cultural beings, it is then time to address race as a sociopolitical construction and a system of oppression. Introducing concepts such as race, power, privilege, oppression, socialization, implicit bias, and macro and microaggressions opens the door for critical reflection and discussion about the impact of the sociopolitical context on individuals and communities. Activities such as taking Harvard's Implicit Association Test, participating in the Privilege Walk, and watching/discussing the documentary, *13th*, can reinforce participants' understandings of the social systems at play in the lives of all people.

Finally, Spikes (2018) highlights *transformative practices* as the final phase in which participants engage. This component focuses on the job-embedded tasks that will aid participants in transforming their schools. Examples of activities that can be considered are equity audits, community-based audits, classroom and curriculum audits, lesson planning, and activist action planning. Introducing templates that can guide participants through the process of these activities are valuable in framing participant evaluation and implementation.

Using Spikes (2018) literature review on research-based, professional learning experiences that assist in developing culturally competent and racially conscious school leaders, this paper will discuss the efforts of one school-university partnership in developing and implementing learning opportunities focused on culturally competent leadership through university course work in the form of a 9-credit graduate certificate program.

Background on PDS Partners

Local School System Partner

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) is one of the three largest school systems in Maryland. Historically, BCPS was classified as both a suburban and rural school district. BCPS now has characteristics of urban, suburban, and rural school districts. There are approximately 108,000 students who attend school in the district. Nearly half of all students enrolled in the district participate in the free and reduced meals program. The racial breakdown of the students consists of the following: 44.4 % White; 38.6% Black; 6.6% Hispanic; 6.3% Asian; 3.6% two or more races; and >1.0% American Indian/Alaska Native and/or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Approximately, 4.2% of the population represents English learners (ELs), making BCPS a majority nonwhite school system. This is a drastic demographic inversion from 30 years ago, when the district was 87% white. When collaborative PDS efforts to create the certificate program were initiated, a system-wide focus of BCPS was promoting equity in its schools and in developing cultural competence in its teachers and administrators.

University Partner

Notre Dame of Maryland University is a small liberal arts college set in a metropolitan area. The university formally partners with BCPS to include seven state-endorsed professional development schools (PDSs) where its pre-service teachers gain the clinical experience necessary to earn degrees as educators. In addition to its commitment in preparing pre-service teachers for the profession, a major emphasis of the PDS model at this university is the collaborative focus on the professional development needs of the in-service teachers who currently work in the seven BCPS–PDS partnerships. Because the development of cultural competence in its teachers was a school improvement goal for most of the PDSs with which the

university formally partners, the university offered the 1-year, graduate certificate program opportunity to all teachers who worked in these partner schools over a 3-year period.

Participants/Teachers Enrolled in the Graduate Certificate Program

Certificate program participants over a 3-year period consisted of 29 in-service teachers. All participants were female and identified as U.S. citizens. Sixty-one percent of the teachers identified as white; 39% of teachers identified as black/African American. Sixty-two percent of the teachers worked in secondary schools, and 38% worked in elementary schools. Age ranges of the teachers included the following: 38% were between the ages of 22 and 30; 29% were between the ages of 31and 40; 16% were between the ages of 41 and 50; and 17% were between the ages of 51 and 60. The highest level of education for 34% of participants was a bachelor's degree, followed by 63% with a master's degree, and 3% with a master's degree plus 30 credits. Participants' years of teaching experience ranged between 2 and 24. Seventy-nine percent of the participants held tenured positions; 21% served in non-tenured positions.

Development of Graduate Certificate Program

The 9-credit graduate certificate program was titled, *Culturally Proficient Leadership*. To ensure cohesion and alignment in the adoption of equity/social justice frameworks and philosophies to frame each course, both school system and university partners collaborated to design the curriculum for each of the courses in the nine-credit certificate program. Parties representing the school, the school system, and the university met over a 6-month period to plan the coursework which included the learning objectives, student outcomes, learning activities, and performance-based assessments for each course. Textbooks and readings for each course were also selected collaboratively. One representative from each party agreed to co-teach the courses – that is, 3 instructors co-taught all 3 of the courses offered in the program. The nine graduate credits in the program were offered and completed within 1 academic year: that is, over a 10-month period, with the first course beginning in September of the school year and the last course ending in May of the same school year. Three cohorts of in-service teachers – 29 total – went through the graduate certificate program over a 3-year period.

Each course ran for 10 weeks. Classes took place in the evenings between the hours of 5:00 and 9:00 p.m., one night per week. While most of the coursework was offered in a face-to-face setting, some of the sessions were accompanied by online components. In addition, courses were offered on-site at local PDSs. Each year, a new site, in a different geographic location in the school system, was identified to host the year-long courses. The local school system and the university worked together to offer the courses at reduced rates. When tuition reduction (determined by the university) and reimbursement amounts (determined by the local school system) were considered, teachers paid a fraction of the cost they would have ordinarily have paid for each of the graduate courses. The program was advertised to all seven PDSs in the university's network via email and word of mouth. In-service teachers from three of the seven schools opted to participate in the program. Seven teachers total participated in the program during the first academic year; 14 participated in the program during the second year; and eight participated in the third year.

Development of Coursework for Graduate Certificate Program

Coursework was taught through the following developmental stages: desire, awareness, knowledge, practice, and advanced practice. These were consistent with the school system's delivery of professional development opportunities to in-service teachers focused on cultural proficiency and equity. These stages were also consistent with the university's focus on prerequisite coursework as preparation for more application-based coursework in graduate education.

Some of the major philosophical and theoretical frameworks addressed in the courses included problem-posing pedagogy, anti-racist teacher leadership, critical race theory, intersectionality theory, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching. Prominent researchers and academics used in the courses included Freire, Singleton and Linton, Crenshaw, Lynn, Nieto, Ladson-Billings, Gay, Pollock, Wise, DiAngelo, and Delgado. Assessment tools that promoted measurable teacher outcomes during the courses included the following: racial autobiographies, personal reflections, equity dictionaries, personal cultural analyses, reflective practitioner projects, curriculum revision projects, community wealth walks, and collaborative research projects.

Development of Initial Course: Introduction to Educational Equity and Cultural Competency

The first course in the program was titled, *Introduction to Educational Equity and Cultural Competency*. This course was built upon the desire, awareness, and knowledge stages of professional learning. It focused on the development of reflective practices that seek to unearth individual beliefs in relation to educational equity and access. Participants were introduced to a comprehensive analysis of the historical frameworks undergirding access to educational equity in American schools. The course also provided an examination of various qualitative and quantitative data points – locally, regionally, and nationally – that sought to challenge the current belief systems about public schooling. This foundational course set the stage for participants in understanding the inside-out approach embedded in the desire and awareness stages of professional learning. During the course, participants were expected to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop working knowledge about major trends and systemic issues related to equity and excellence in public schools;
2. Critically examine personal social belief systems and self-reflect upon personal racialized histories in relation to equity and access;
3. Learn common language and research-based protocols to facilitate open dialogue with colleagues and students about difference, equity, and excellence in education.

In addition to several contemporary journal articles focused on building awareness and knowledge of equity and access, the following texts were required: *When Treating All the Kids the Same is the Real Problem* (Johnson & Williams, 2015), and *Data Strategies to Uncover and Eliminate Hidden Inequities: The Wallpaper Effect* (Johnson & LaSalle, 2010).

In this course, three major assignments were used to engage participants in building personal capacity and an inside-out developmental approach to learning. The first assignment was a Macro Level Scavenger Hunt. This assignment asked participants to engage in an informational "scavenger hunt" to analyze examples of systemic racism and the types of macro level aggressions that our students, their families, and their communities can experience throughout

their lifetimes. Examples included health, wealth, employment, housing, government surveillance, and incarceration. Participants then analyzed the impact of these inequities on student educational outcomes, and their role as disruptors of the "systems" at play in their students' lives.

The second assignment was a Racial Autobiography. This assignment asked participants to construct a personal autobiography using race as the lens in analyzing their past, present, and future lived experiences. The final assignment was the development of a 'Leading for Equity' TED Talk. As the culminating assignment for the course, participants were asked to communicate their vision of who they are – and who they are becoming – as equity leaders in a 5-minute TED Talk to the class. They were asked to share specific insights they gained about themselves, and goals they would set in the future as they built their capacity to become equity leaders in their school systems.

Development of Second Course: Critical Race Theory in Education

The second course was titled, *Critical Race Theory in Education.* This course built upon the desire, awareness, and knowledge stages emphasized in the first course. It focused on the development of Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework to investigate how race and racism are organized and operate within the educational systems in the United States. Participants examined the foundational scholarship upon which the theory was based, and used the central tenets as lenses to evaluate present practices in schools and school systems. This course provided an historical overview of Critical Race Theory and asked participants to consider the following inter-related questions: How are racial, gender, socioeconomic, disability, and orientation inequalities produced, re-produced, and maintained in educational institutions and society? In what ways is Critical Race Theory used as an analytic tool to explain and address policy, reform, and practice? During the course, participants were expected to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine the development of Critical Race Theory as a theoretical construct in law, society, and education;
2. Analyze the tenets of Critical Race Theory to inform, question, and evaluate pedagogy;
3. Evaluate the intersectionality of Critical Race Theory with contemporary constructs, and other critical theories.

In addition to several contemporary journal articles focused on the application of Critical Race Theory in education, the following texts were required for the course: *Everyday Anti-Racism* (Pollock, 2008), and *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education* (Lynn & Dixson, 2013).

The course included 4 major research-based assignments. The first assignment was titled Assumptions Reflection. Assigned at the start of the course, this assignment asked participants to respond to a series of questions about their perceptions of different groups of students who appear in their classrooms, and later analyze how those assumptions could act as roadblocks in building relationships and designing instructional environments conducive to student learning. The second assignment – Critical Race Theory Tenets Application and Analysis – asked participants to analyze several anti-racist strategies from Pollock's *Everyday Anti-Racism* text, using the tenets of CRT as a lens in their analyses. The third assignment was a Critical Race Theory Intersectionality Research Presentation. For this assignment, participants

were assigned to small groups to research an identity intersectionality topic to enhance their understanding of race across races, and the intersection of race with other identities. Intersectionality criticism topics included Fem Crit, Lat Crit, Disability Crit, Tribal Crit, Queer Crit, and Asian Crit. The research project included three parts: interactive presentation, analysis paper, and presenter post-analysis and reflection. The fourth assignment, a Cultural Proficiency Dictionary, was carried over from the first course. This assignment was ongoing and asked participants to identify at least 25 unfamiliar words that they were able to add to their vocabulary as a result of taking this course. Students listed, defined, and provided an authentic example of each term used in the context for which it was developed.

Development of Third Course: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The third course in the program was titled, *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*. This course built upon the practice and advanced practice stages of professional learning, and focused on the direct application of culturally responsive practices in and outside of the classroom. Participants examined environmental factors, pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment practices to determine how each had the potential to reproduce inequalities or promote success for all students and their communities. During the course, participants were expected to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine literature focused on culturally relevant/culturally responsive teaching;
2. Identify factors that contribute to writing culturally relevant curriculum, implementing culturally relevant pedagogy and assessment practices, and creating culturally relevant learning environments;
3. Evaluate curriculum, pedagogy, assessment practices, and learning environments in light of present practices in their schools and school systems;
4. Develop culturally relevant practices to ensure access and opportunity for all students;
5. Articulate what it means to be a culturally reflective practitioner.

In addition to several contemporary journal articles focused on the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy in education, the following texts were required for the course: *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Gay, 2018), and *Everyday Anti-Racism* (Pollock, 2008).

This course included four major research-based assignments. The first assignment was a Curriculum Revision Project. Participants were asked to select a lesson from their curriculum guide based on a standard they would be teaching within a two-week timeframe. They were asked to rewrite the lesson, incorporating the elements of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) discussed in course readings and discussions. The second assignment – the Reflective Practitioner Project – asked that participants teach the lesson they revised for the Curriculum Revision Project, mentioned previously. They videotaped their lesson and evaluated it based on a rubric designed for evaluating culturally responsive instruction. In addition, they evaluated the lesson of a peer using the same rubric. Time was provided for feedback and discussion in comparing peer evaluations of lessons based on the rubric.

The third assignment was a School Community Observation/Interaction Journal. Participants were asked to spend a day or evening in their school's community observing community norms and values, and interacting with people who called that community their home. They were then asked to journal about the experience, using discussion prompts that allowed them to focus on the community as a fund of knowledge, and as a partner in the education of the children they

taught. The final major assignment for this course was a Personal CRP/Anti-Racism Essay. After having read and analyzed dozens of essays from researchers who each proposed a personal "single action" that educators could include on a daily basis to create culturally responsive classrooms and to counteract racial and social inequalities in schools and society, participants were asked to develop a personal essay that focused on a "single action" they have taken during the past year to promote culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms. Example essays were provided to students from Pollock's (2008) *Everyday Anti-Racism* text.

Reflections on the Evaluation of Program Implementation and Student Learning Outcomes

The course sequence and objectives were designed to take our in-service teachers through a professional learning process that built on their desire, awareness, and knowledge of educational equity in their local school system. Additionally, the aim was to develop courses and professional learning experiences built on the belief that transformational leadership and learning practices are the foundation for teacher growth and development in cultural competency and anti-racist teaching. Each major assignment provided educators with an opportunity to think, reflect, decide, and act as they responded to environments that were shaped by their diversity (Lindsay, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2013). The next section will outline some anecdotal examples of student learning outcomes associated with each major assignment required in the certificate program.

Macro Level Scavenger Hunt

The Macro Level Scavenger Hunt introduced participants to the systemic inequalities that pervade many of the communities in which their students live. Most participants were surprised or unfamiliar with the various facets of systemic racism in society, and the associated micro aggressions faced by students of color. The majority of reflections indicated that the implications for students of color in America faced a "different reality" than most participants faced in school. While many participants indicated that they believed it was the job of educators to empower students to challenge inequitable systems, most participants said that they did not know how to begin to interrupt the systemic factors at play in schools. Through this assignment and during the reflective conversations that followed, the overwhelming majority of participants developed an understanding of race as a sociopolitical construction and as a system of oppression. These insights opened the door for critical reflection and discussion about tangible next steps they could take as educators in disrupting inequitable practices in their schools.

The Racial Autobiography

The Racial Autobiography proved to be one of the most transformative experiences for participants. Understanding the origins of their individual and collective racial stories across race, gender, and generational lines served to build trust and provided a common experience for all, essential components to the inside-out approach to professional growth. Participants indicated the differences shared in narratives when asked to focus on race in recalling experiences in childhood, in schooling, and in their communities. Many highlighted the invisibility of racial differences, or the stark visibility of being non-white. It was also noted that a

lack of racial diversity in many of their childhood experiences led to a lack of racial diversity in their adult relationships outside of work.

'Leading for Equity' TED Talks

In creating their TED Talks, almost all participants indicated that they understood themselves to be on a journey in becoming culturally competent and racially conscious. Many talked about their roles in the perpetuation and/or interruption of systemic inequities in schools. All demonstrated an understanding of common, equity-based language and protocols to begin having courageous conversations with their colleagues, their students, and their families. In addition, many highlighted their commitment to learning more about the inequities to which they were introduced in the first course.

Assumptions Reflection

The second course began with participants sharing their ingrained assumptions and perceptions about the various cultural identities represented in their classrooms. Participants indicated a range of responses from contemporary stereotypes to a lack of instructional or personal experiences with particular student groups.

This assignment set the stage for trust-building discussion about the ways in which race and other intersectional identities sub-consciously or consciously shape societal norms including those associated with schooling. Most participants met with immediate success in deconstructing the stereotypes and the impact on their students. The socialization process was discussed in detail and the majority of participants recognized that each of them had been socialized by oppressive systems in some shape or form. Many participants also noted the importance of demonstrating compassion and an understanding that much of the ignorance associated with race and racism is largely due to institutional oppression and not to individual intent.

Critical Race Theory Tenets Application and Analysis

Many participants highlighted the efforts communicated by the practitioners in the text as useful models in analyzing their own classrooms for opportunities to embed anti-racist pedagogy. Through these assignments, participants demonstrated the ability to apply equity based vocabulary to anti-racist pedagogy, using the tenets of critical race theory as a lens. Vocabulary development and the application of anti-racist teaching strategies became the focal point of their learning in completing these reflections.

Group CRT Intersectionality Research Presentation

This assignment served as the culmination of knowledge and application for the second course. Students were eager to disseminate and deliver the knowledge they collected and created on these topics. Many students thoughtfully reflected on their understanding of these emerging critical theories, pairing race with other social identities such as gender, disability, and sexuality. One participant commented, *'I didn't understand the differences in a common experience until it was racialized.'* Another communicated, *'Protection under the law means something different based on the skin you are in and the zip code of your school.'* A third participant shared, *'I won't*

make the mistake of ignoring race again when it comes to examining experiences I thought would have been common for all children.'

In addition, the majority of participants highlighted the need for a greater understanding of service delivery models to provide access, support, representation, and differentiation of pedagogy grounded in student's intersectional identities, with race at the center. These key understandings are aligned to the transformative practice of discovering that others experience the world differently than they do.

Cultural Proficiency Dictionary

A requirement for each course, students created a Cultural Proficiency Dictionary which included new terms learned through readings and class discussions. The definitions of terms were widely based on participants' internalized understandings of the meanings, coupled with literature that supported these understandings. Terms such as systemic racism, systemic inequity, equity, access, structural racism, intersectionality, whiteness as property, cultural competence, cultural responsiveness, and interest convergence where commonly defined terms found in participant dictionaries. Additionally, as terms were defined, they were used in personal reflections and in context across assignments. Students increased their vocabulary by an average of 75 words from beginning of the certificate program to the end.

Curriculum Revision and Reflective Practitioner Projects

These assignments focused on transformational practices grounded in instructional shifts, beginning with the curriculum. The process of selecting, evaluating, and rewriting curriculum presented a nuanced challenge for participants. They quickly detected areas in their curriculum guides where racial and social identity representation, opportunities for acceleration, and responsive materials were void or limited. Participants viewed this as an opportunity-rich challenge, and were open to the idea of change at the inception. However, during the planning and implementation stages of the assignments, educators reported some cognitive dissonance. This assignment is aligned to what Spikes (2018) refers to as "self to system." One participant commented, '*The standards make sense but, it's difficult to know if the selection of materials will prompt interest and positive learning outcomes for my students*.' Another participant communicated, '*creating verbal assessments of learning is something we have never tried in the curriculum. We always use a device or pen and paper*.' A third participant shared that, '*traditional scaffolds only provide a pathway to the dominant curriculum; the use of different materials that create access changes the road traveled*.'

After reflection, consultation with their peers, and use of their cultural responsiveness rubrics, participants were able to improve the implementation steps and deliver their lessons with fidelity. Many reflected a positive response from their students, but reflected on the extended time it took to create responsive curriculum and lessons.

School Community Observation/Interaction Journal

Upon observation of their greater school community for a day, participants reported being unaware of the community services, popular gathering spaces, and the daily operations of their students' communities. Reflections also indicated a need to understand the unspoken rules, customs, and traditions of their communities in hopes to incorporate some of the positive aspects

in the classroom environment, instruction, and extra-curricular opportunities. Several participants shared their fear and discomfort in "living" in their students' community for a day. These comments led to class discussions that allowed participants to deconstruct their socialized belief systems. Some shared that while they believed the experience was valuable, they did not intend to make a habit of spending any more time than necessary in their students' communities. Others saw the need to spend more time in their students' communities.

Personal CRP/Anti-Racism Essay

The final assignment in the last course asked that participants reflect on a "single action" that they took over the course of the school year to promote a culturally responsive classroom, and/or interrupt racial and social inequities in their school. This final transformational practice sought to help participants see themselves as disruptors of inequitable systems. Participants selected topics such as the following, each accompanied by action steps in moving their idea forward: 1) interrupt the exclusion of marginalized student populations from advanced academics/gifted and talented courses; 2) promote the acceleration of students who received English language learning support services in mathematics; 3) advocate for classroom-based supports for students who had social-emotional challenges; 4) create a 'No-Zero Zone' which provides access to opportunities for remediation for students who miss class time due to absences or excessive lateness. As a part of the assignment, participants were also asked to provide a "try-tomorrow" action step for educators who might read their essays. Some of these "try-tomorrow" ideas included the following:

1. Listen to your students' histories with school and schooling;
2. Ask for multiple racial perspectives before deciding how to discipline a student for a minor infraction;
3. Allow students to lead formative assessments and instructional feedback loops;
4. Ask students to review materials with 'representation" as the focus;
5. Review the language you use in discipline referrals for bias, assumptions, and stereotypical wording;
6. Co-plan lessons with your students;
7. Assist students in leading professional development opportunities for teachers.

Future Learning

The importance of graduate level programs and courses that focus on the development of in-service teachers in the area of cultural competence became profoundly clear during the course sequence. Educators' abilities to engage in conversations about race, culture, and difference is imperative for personal growth, daily instructional decision-making, relationship building, and student achievement in every classroom. Educators need transformative practice experiences that force them to think, learn, reflect, decide, and act on behalf of their students regardless of racial and social differences. These experience and actions must be continuous and authentic to evoke lasting change. The development of these courses also affirmed the notion that becoming culturally competent is a journey, an act of becoming, not a destination (Sue, 2001).

Where We Are Now: Program Growth and Future Development

Over fifty-percent of the in-service teachers who participated in the program now serve in equity-based leadership roles in their schools, or in the school system. One-hundred percent of participants have made professional strides in aiding their schools in becoming more culturally responsive. Some tangible examples of their combined work include leading curriculum revision efforts, initiating equity committees and student diversity clubs, creating community outreach program booklets for parents and families, participating in climate-focused equity audits in their schools, engaging in peer coaching, delivering professional development opportunities, and leading book studies focused on student voice.

Since the development of the initial PDS prompted program, the university now offers a 12-credit Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) approved certificate, recognized by the State of Maryland as a micro-credential. In addition, the graduate courses were used as prerequisites to create a Master's Degree at the university titled, *Leadership in Teaching: Culturally Proficient Leadership*. Finally, the courses developed for this certificate were used to replace and supplement courses that have been offered in a variety of leadership programs in the School of Education at the university.

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Developing Preservice Teachers' Critical Consciousness and Understanding of Community Contexts

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Abstract: As calls are being made to strengthen and expand clinical preparation within teacher education (AACTE, 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2014) and to explore the clinical space as a vital site for exploring and addressing issues of social justice (Jacobs & Casciola, 2016; Mills & Ballantyne, 2016), it is important for teacher education programs to consider how they both pursue these goals and create sustainable relationships with P-12 schools. As equity-oriented teacher educators teaching courses on-site at a professional development school, we position our work at the intersection of social justice teacher education, clinically rich experiences, and mutually beneficial partnerships with professional development schools. In this article, we describe how we designed our course and its engagement at a PDS to help our teacher candidates develop critical consciousness and asset-based orientations towards young adolescents and communities.

KEYWORDS: Clinical practice, equity, Professional Development Schools; social justice; teacher candidates; teacher education

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

The Need for Equity Orientations in Teacher Education

Increasingly, teacher educators assert that preservice teachers should not be positioned as a classroom teacher until they have developed an affirming, complex view of communities and students (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Milner, 2015). Developing this affirming stance is an intricate process which requires teacher education programs to simultaneously engage PSTs in interrogating their own sociocultural backgrounds and beliefs, recognizing systems that perpetuate inequities in society and schools, and building relationships based in authentic care (Valenzuela, 1999) with children and communities.

Given the dramatic divide between the predominant demographic makeup of preservice teachers and the students they will likely teach, it is imperative that teacher preparation intentionally focuses on enhancing preservice teachers' awareness of the ideologies that inform their worldviews. The current cultural moment further exacerbates this need, as deepened divisions across the United States have led to a significant increase in hate crimes in schools (Andrews et al., 2017; Costello, 2016). Further, evidence suggests that the disproportionate rates of discipline for Black students in schools across the United States is influenced by educators' implicit bias and subjective judgments about what appropriate behavior looks like (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Skiba et al., 2002). Because White teachers often recognize their whiteness as normative, rather than as a cultural identity, many develop deficit views of students who they see as different from themselves, frequently characterizing these students as incapable, unaware, or uncaring (Sleeter, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). While this normative way of imagining schools is rooted in whiteness, the dominance of white cultural norms in educational spaces means that teachers of color are not immune to these biases as well (Gilliam et al., 2016). Thus, it is essential for preservice teacher education programs provide opportunities for preservice teachers to consider their own status as cultural beings through critical reflections (Milner, 2015) or autobiographies (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Galman et al., 2010) that require them to critically analyze how their cultural experiences influence the ways they view and perceive students, schools, and the world around them.

Beyond interrogating preservice teachers' backgrounds and beliefs, equity-oriented teacher education programs must also draw attention to the ways in which educational systems too often perpetuate historical and structural inequities. This is particularly important given the way schools and teachers are entwined in these systems (Kumashiro, 2015). Beyond conventional reading assignments, several teacher educators in recent years have written about innovative practices in their own teacher education programs aimed at exposing these historic inequities, including interaction with teacher activists (Solic & Riley, 2019), critical conversations with other preservice teachers with different backgrounds (Damrow & Sweeney, 2019), and critical discourse analyses to deconstruct power structures in the classroom (Land, 2018). In addition to raising preservice teachers' awareness about societal structures, it is also necessary for future teachers to have field experiences in high-needs contexts and with diverse populations (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). In order to disrupt deficit thinking and to avoid perpetuating harmful narratives about the "other," clinical experiences in high-needs schools must be scaffolded carefully and coupled with critical reflection (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Taken together, these components of equity-focused teacher education work to facilitate the development of critical consciousness through praxis (Freire, 1970).

In this paper we share how we partnered with a Title I professional development school in multiple, intentional ways to support preservice teachers' ability to bridge theory and practice as they considered the complex systems and relationships extant within the school community. Meanwhile, PSTs also completed readings and activities that illustrated the social and historical embeddedness of those ecologies. By simultaneously engaging with children and recognizing their many strengths and assets, PSTs were able to challenge stereotypes which are so often attached to members of historically marginalized communities as a result of legacies of oppression. Further, they began to consider how they, as future teachers, could teach boldly and contribute to a more equitable world.

Context

We designed the structures and assignments discussed in this paper as part of a concerted effort to forge a mutually beneficial partnership between a teacher education course we taught in Fall 2018 at a local middle school. We sought to build preservice teachers' asset orientations and critical consciousness while simultaneously providing meaningful contributions to the middle school students, faculty, and staff.

Partnership with Pine View Middle School

This work is situated in a partnership between the college of education at a large, public, southeastern university and the school district in which that university is located. Specifically, we taught this course on-site at Pine View Middle School (pseudonym), a professional development school where Amy served as a professor-in-residence. Her position as a boundary-spanning teacher educator (AACTE, 2018) with deep knowledge of the school and existing relationships with its faculty afforded us as instructors access to explore how the school could be a site for our preservice teachers' learning.

Pine View Middle School prides itself on its award-winning sustainability program, the band's superior ratings, social studies and science fair state-level winners, and a host of athletic accolades. The school's achievements reflect the diversity of student talent, despite the fact that the county in which Pine View resides has the highest poverty rate in our state, and the fifth highest rate in the nation. Racially, Pine View's school population is 47% Black, 38% White, 12% Hispanic, and 7% other. These statistics alone too often invite a deficit discourse about the county and its public schools. As most of our preservice teachers come from White and middle-class backgrounds, we intentionally scaffolded their experiences at the middle school so that they could develop relationships and adopt affirming stances about Pine View students, while also raising their awareness of the systems that affect students and families in the district.

Equity-focused On-site Course

Here we describe a course both of us taught in Fall 2018 on-site at Pine View Middle School, the first of four required courses for middle grades education majors in our two-year program. Students move through these courses in a cohort-model and typically instructors loop with the cohort so that they teach each of these four courses to the same group of students. Although we were instructors of record for two different sections of the course, we collaboratively planned the course and often co-taught together. The participants for this research include 32 preservice teachers composed of 25 students pursuing their bachelor's degree and 7

students pursuing their Master's of Arts in Teaching. Reflecting the demographics of preservice teachers nationally, 26 of the participants were White, 3 were Black, 1 was Asian-American, and 2 were of mixed ethnicity. The majority of students identified as Protestant and middle class.

Course Description

Equity-oriented work is the cornerstone of our Middle Grades Education program. At the beginning of the program, preservice teachers sign a statement of commitment, which includes "taking a critical inquiry stance by questioning the world as it is and how it could be different with a commitment to action towards social justice and equity" and "seeing people, organizations, communities, cultures, and systems as assets." While this focus on equity weaves through the entire two-year program, it is given particular priority in the first course, *Community Contexts in Middle Grades Education*. Written about elsewhere (Hughes et al., 2016), this course aimed for PSTs (1) to recognize the role their own cultural and historical backgrounds play in their perceptions and thinking about children and schools, (2) to understand that as teachers they are embedded in a larger network of systems, many of which perpetuate racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, or ableist thinking and practice, and (3) to consider what actions they can take to cultivate and sustain a more equitable world. Using an ecological approach (Broffenbrenner, 1994; Weiner, 2006), the course encouraged PSTs to resist deficit discourses that place blame on individual students and communities for the so-called achievement gap and discipline disproportionality, and rather to consider how micro and macro systems impact students' schooling and outcomes.

We designed experiences during the course that simultaneously engaged PSTs in considering their own sociocultural backgrounds, the intersection of those backgrounds with legacies of privilege and oppression, and the positioning of young adolescents in multiple, intersecting systems that perpetuate privilege and oppression. Preservice teachers interacted with a variety of texts including the nonfiction book *Outliers* (Gladwell, 2008), young adult novels including *The Hate U Give* (Thomas, 2017), and the documentary *13th* (DuVernay, 2016). These texts provided a foundation for understanding the myth of meritocracy and the ways in which historical legacies are still acting in the present. Additionally, PSTs thought critically about their own sociocultural backgrounds by sharing "culture bags" that included artifacts that represented their identities and by writing autobiographical narratives, which connected their familial and cultural resources with their educational experiences. Before they began interacting with middle school students, PSTs also considered the "danger of the single story" (Adichie, 2009) as well as the role of asset and deficit narratives in the framing of students' contexts and behaviors (Weiner, 2006). We designed the curriculum as a foundation for the preservice teachers' experiences with young adolescents at Pine View Middle School.

Course Engagement with Pine View Middle School

Prior to the start of the course, we collaborated with the principal to determine how the on-site course could be mutually beneficial. We shared our course goals for *Community Contexts in Middle Grades Education* and discussed how our PSTs could both learn from the Pine View community, as well as give back to it. To facilitate this partnership, we designed two structures: Eagle Hours and 7th Grade Buddies.

In order to learn more about the young adolescents at Pine View Middle School and the ecology of the school itself, throughout the semester PSTs each completed at least four service-learning hours, or "Eagle Hours" named in honor of the school's mascot. From chaperoning school dances to babysitting during parent-teacher conferences and assisting in the media center, PSTs got an authentic glimpse into the lives of students and their school community. When logging their Eagle Hours, students were prompted to identify assets they noticed in their interactions and observations of youth, families, and the school community. Eagle Hours provided important insight into young adolescents not just as students but also as young people who are dynamic and engaged in community. In return, the school benefitted from the nearly 150 volunteer hours.

In another intentional move to help develop PSTs' asset-oriented thinking about young adolescents, we developed the 7th Grade Buddies activity. Each week, PSTs worked with the same small group of students in their Math or Science classrooms. While teachers enthusiastically collaborated with our class because they wanted their students to benefit from having more adults working with them, we as university instructors designed the opportunity so that PSTs would have ongoing relationships with Pine View students. After working with students each week, PSTs provided comprehensive, individualized feedback on student progress to the teachers, including an interesting thing they learned about each student that week, as well as an academic asset of each student. These opportunities to engage with the community provided a space for PSTs to recognize the complexity of students and their embeddedness within broader systems acting in both schools and society more broadly.

Methods of Analysis and Data Collection

To learn how the course texts, activities, and engagement at Pine View Middle School influenced the preservice teachers' critical consciousness and asset-orientations, we analyzed assignments from across both that first semester and future semesters to select data sources. The data sources included logs in which PSTs wrote about Eagle Hours and 7th Grade Buddies, final projects from the course; course feedback surveys; and reflections on their learning at Pine View that were written during later semesters in the program after they had experienced field placements in other settings.

We analyzed the data by engaging in multiple rounds of coding (LeCompte, 2000). In the first round of coding, both researchers coded the same subset of data using eight codes developed deductively based on the core concepts explored in this paper. After reaching consistency between the two researchers, we then refined our codebook by combining several codes into broader codes. For instance, we combined the codes "students' assets" and "community/family assets" into one code "student/school/community assets," and "teacher/school assets" and "clinical spaces/learning in a PDS" into the code "learning in a PDS/teacher/school assets." We then coded the remainder of the data. Next, we compiled the relevant excerpts of data associated with each code into a master spreadsheet. We read and analyzed this spreadsheet to consider major themes or dissonances that emerged across the data. The results of this analysis will be expanded upon in the following section.

Developing an Equity Lens in the Context of a PDS

We begin this section by discussing the elements of the course that preservice teachers described as important in developing their understanding of social justice-oriented teaching. Next, we situate this learning within the context of Pine View Middle School, which provided an authentic grounding for PSTs as they developed asset-orientations towards young adolescents and families and also began to interact with young adolescents and community members. This section concludes with PSTs' reflections on how they planned to act upon their budding critical consciousness to contribute to a more equitable world.

Practicing Intellectual Humility

Vulnerability lies at the heart of learning. This can certainly be the case when gaining critical consciousness, as one faces realities about each individual's role in the complicated and often unjust ways in which the world operates. Thus, we began the course by attempting to build a trusting learning community where students would feel comfortable as vulnerable learners. To provide a shared foundation for how the class would collectively engage with social justice concepts, we started our course by reading Sensoy and DiAngelo's (2017) "Principles for Constructive Engagement," a set of norms which lay out commitments for participating in social justice learning in an educative space. Throughout the semester students repeatedly called upon the principle, "You don't know what you don't know: Strive for intellectual humility" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. 166) to acknowledge their lack of awareness about some societal inequities and to humble themselves to learn more.

These principles also pushed students to see beyond their own personal, anecdotal experiences and to look instead for societal patterns. One student explained his progress in being open to learning:

> At the start of the course, I learned how to break down my own defensive reactions and anecdotal experiences in order to learn something new about an opposing view. When I allowed myself to do this, the rest of course, I soaked in as much information as I could about being a social justice-oriented teacher.

Our work with the principles helped to disarm the initial resistance he may have had as he encountered new learning about inequities. Another student reflected on how her own positionality affected her narrow understandings about the world, writing, "I have [humbled] myself at what little I know about others due to my experiences and taken that knowledge to learn and grow into a better person." She, like many others in the class, demonstrated brave willingness to practice intellectual humility in her personal growth. We argue that beginning our course with these principles, which position all people as learners and all knowledge as partial, was a key step to facilitating critical consciousness during the course. Next, we share how the preservice teachers responded as they learned about oppressive structures and policies that perpetuate inequities.

Recognizing Systems at Work in Education

Throughout the course, students examined the ways that schools are situated in a larger network of systems, many of which perpetuate oppressive thinking and practice. This started with an interrogation of ideologies that perpetuate systemic oppression such as the myth of meritocracy, the bedrock of the American Dream. Students read *Outliers* (Gladwell, 2008),

which helped them begin to deconstruct the notion that success is the result of hard work. One student shared, "I realized through this how economically privileged I have always been because of the accumulated advantage I have through my parent's wealth." Statements such as this illustrate that this text helped students realize that individuals' wealth and advantage intersect with systems of race, privilege and oppression.

It was critical for students to personalize their learning and to inquire into the ways their own historic legacy connects to larger systems. Therefore, they critically examined their own educational opportunities and outcomes in an autobiographical narrative assignment that required them to use concepts such as *meritocracy, accumulated advantage, hidden advantage, and cultural legacy* to explain how their educational resources are part of larger societal systems and patterns. As one student shared, writing through this framework "allowed me to look in at who I really am and notice all of the advantages I had never thought about or realized I had before." We organized the class so that this work of analyzing one's own positionality within networks of power, advantage, and oppression occurred prior to PSTs interactions with Pine View students. Complicating their own stories about education, merit, and success and set the stage for PSTs to be able to view young adolescents as individuals equally involved in complex, generation-spanning narratives.

We next turned to young adult literature as a vehicle for exposing how young adolescents and their communities are affected by systems of power. We invited the media specialist at Pine View Middle School, to speak with our students about the importance of young adolescent literature in all classrooms. She shared with students that books could be mirrors, windows, or doors that allow us to understand others' experiences. With this in mind, the PSTs read *The Hate U Give* (Johnson, 2017), which details a Black teenage girl's experience when her best friend is shot by a police officer because the officer mistook a hairbrush for a gun. This book allowed PSTs to explore issues of race, class, power, and criminal (in)justice through the eyes of Starr, the narrator who readers immediately loved. In class, some Black students shared that they identified with the characters' issues, specifically with the different behaviors Starr felt she had to enact in her mostly White private school and her mostly Black neighborhood. Meanwhile, many of our White students shared that this was the first time that they understood the gravity of the "Black Lives Matter" movement. One White student shared with her small group that she comes from a small town where "Back the Blue" signs line the streets, which she had always supported. But after reading *The Hate U Give*, she reconsidered how the presence of those signs likely feels to Black citizens who time and time again experience the pain of hearing about another murder of an innocent person by the police.

Using a young adult novel helped to humanize racial injustice for many of our students, one of whom said that she "found T*he Hate U Give* to be impactful because it really opened my eyes to how much implicit bias (and outright bias) there is in the world." Although news stories about racial profiling and police shootings of Black and Brown men and women surround us, some students admitted in class discussions that they had the privilege of having blinders on and had not paid attention to racial injustice because their Whiteness protected them from having to think about it.

To connect the issues raised in *The Hate U Give* to policies that uphold systemic racism in the U.S., students watched the documentary *13th* (Duvernay, 2016) which chronicles various policies that have exploited and oppressed Black citizens since the abolition of slavery. From the

discriminatory laws related to the ‘crack epidemic’ of the 1980s to mass incarceration, the film traces legacies of systemic racism in the United States through the present day. In her weekly reflection, one White student shared, “*13th* was eye-opening. It was important for me to learn that many people are still being oppressed in ways similar to slavery.” Others tied the movie to the school-to-prison pipeline and the criminalization of Black students’ behaviors. Another White student wrote:

> The *13th* documentary and *The Hate U Give*…helped me to see just how screwed up the system is, and how oppression starts from the time African Americans are children. Now, when I hear deficit thinking comments about students, or teachers complaining about “that kid,” I think twice about how that thinking can lead to severe punishment of students of color, which leads them to even more punishment in their adulthood through the school to prison pipeline.

This student demonstrated that once we see inequities, we can’t unsee them. With her ‘blinders’ removed, she was learning to view the world through an equity lens. Another student noted that she is also now seeing how many systems work together to maintain power for some and oppress others: “This documentary demonstrated how major corporations play a role in mass incarceration [and] made me realize how important it is to consider that we are always participating in a network of systems.” The sweeping historical scope of *13th* was significantly educative for preservice teachers as they found narratives and vocabularies to contextualize modern-day issues in schools and society at large.

This was true, as well, for some Black preservice teachers who prior to watching the film experienced the effects of racism, but had lacked knowledge about the particular histories of systemic racism. After watching *13th*, one Black student wrote about how this film affected him the first time he saw it:

> Before watching this documentary, I would often wonder if the oppression of black people was just something we referred to when we needed an excuse for things not turning out in our favor. I started to believe that all black people could easily rise above the oppression in America and be seen just as important as the majority. I would frequently insist that we, as black people, stop feeling sorry for ourselves and begin to work harder to get what we deserve-- equality. Suddenly, I realized that I too, fell into the notion that we should just overlook injustices in America to unify our nation.

This preservice teacher’s honest reflection about how he internalized the “pick yourself up from your bootstraps” mentality and his ignorance about systemic racism underscores the necessity for teacher educators to attend to the critical consciousness of all students. Other Black preservice teachers shared that while their own lived experience included regularly experiencing the effects of racism, the film helped them understand the policies and the people behind the policies that have actively worked to oppress Black people in the U.S.

After reading *The Hate U Give* and viewing *13th* as a class, students chose a young adult novel to read in book clubs. The book choices illustrated the importance of taking an intersectional approach to understanding young adolescents’ identities and how they are impacted by the confluence of gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, citizenship status, and religion. A large group of PSTs selected *The 57 Bus* (Slater, 2017), a true story about a White, gender nonconforming high school student who was attacked on a city bus by a Black young man in Oakland, California. Some of our students shared their discomfort with

they/them pronouns and a few questioned how they would react if they had a gender nonconforming student. To our surprise, later in the semester, 12 of the 33 students chose to explore issues related to LGBTQ youth in order to be better prepared to support them in their future classrooms. One student explained that she wanted to learn more about transgender youth because, "We, as human beings, like to make assumptions and give opinions on topics we don't have much knowledge on." This assertion connects back to our framing of the course in the Principles for Constructive Engagement (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) and the acknowledgement that "we don't know what we don't know." Incorporating multiple texts, which demonstrated the intersection of larger, systemic issues as they connect to the lives of individuals, provided our students with a basic framework for considering how their own lives intertwine with social narratives and how young adolescents' experiences are influenced by societal conditions.

Considering the Impact of Educators' Personal Beliefs

Beyond examining social patterns, it was essential for our students to understand how their own beliefs impact students. We rooted our instruction around personal beliefs in the ideas of asset and deficit thinking (Weiner, 2006), given that one of our program's core commitments is to see students, families, and communities from an asset-based orientation. Through guest speakers, readings, and personal reflection we worked with students throughout the semester to help them recognize and reframe their own deficit thinking, as well as implicit bias.

Through our school-university partnership, we had a relationship with the school district's director of student support services, Dr. Carter, who we invited to speak with our students about resisting deficit thinking. A former social worker, she spoke highly of the power of home visits. She then shared a drawing of a family's apartment and asked students to describe what they saw. All of the students' comments were negative: *Baby crying and left unattended in the crib. Open pizza box laying around. Iron left on.* Dr. Carter explained that, in fact, this image depicts the night that a single mother found out she got a new job. She had ordered pizza to celebrate and was taking a rest from ironing her outfit for work the next day, and put the baby in his crib to keep him safe since the iron was still plugged in. Students were awestruck. Their interpretations were riddled with deficit thinking as they assumed the worst of this mother.

This image and their innate reaction to it made a significant impact on students who suddenly understood how deficit thinking is ingrained in their ways of viewing the world. One wrote:

> This was extremely eye-opening to me, because I hadn't realized how bad my deficit thinking was. I assumed the worst about everything in the picture, without considering the "why" or the "but" behind any of it. We also touched on this a lot this semester as we entered our placements…I've become so aware of my thinking and I have genuinely tried to be more positive and open-minded and it's been a really great experience for me.

Another student shared this sentiment and admitted, "It sometimes is so easy for me to automatically think negatively about others, and I think that is the case for everyone. We all naturally tend to think badly about others." After engaging in this activity with Dr. Carter, students vowed to make a conscious effort to combat their own deficit thinking and to recognize it in others.

In order for the preservice teachers to see the connection between educators' beliefs and their treatment of children, we next examined implicit bias and its effects in schools. Students

delved into understanding the role of implicit bias in the disproportionate rates of discipline experienced by Black and Brown students in U.S. schools. We shared research indicating that implicit bias starts impacting Black boys as early as preschool (Gilliam et al., 2016) and had them examine the discipline data for our region. Finally, students took the Harvard Implicit Association Test, which assesses if the participant has bias towards or against Black or White people. Through this evolution of activities, several students went from being enlightened about the effects of bias in schools and classrooms to personally affected when recognizing the extent to which they, too, held bias. One student wrote:

> This semester, I have not only learned about these middle schoolers, but also about myself. I have learned more about my bias, which I wasn't really sure I even had. These biases come from how and where I grew up. Throughout this semester, I have worked on decreasing these biases and being a more open person, especially towards my students because you don't know what you don't know.

For a White PST to be confronted with his own bias at the same time that he was forging relationships with predominately Black students was an incredibly powerful experience. This acknowledgement required not only intellectual humility, but also a developing understanding of historical and societal conditions. For this reason, we see the simultaneous investigation of larger systems, interrogation of personal histories, and experiences with young adolescents and communities as necessary for beginning to develop preservice teachers' critical consciousness. In the next section, we will explain how our partnership with Pine View Middle school was a crucial engagement for connecting theory to practice as preservice teachers grew in their critical thinking and asset orientations.

Complicating and Humanizing Middle School Students and Their Communities

Teaching the course on-site at Pine View Middle School provided a microcosm of the systems we discussed in our class for preservice teachers. Due to the demographic divide between many of the preservice teachers and the Pine View students, we wanted to ensure that PSTs' learning about societal power dynamics coincided with building relationships with young adolescents from diverse backgrounds. The combination of learning about systems, exploring the school's larger community, and working with children helped preservice teachers experience praxis. As one student explained at the end of the course:

> I sometimes hear the critique that college education classes show a disconnect from the real world…however, this class disproved this by letting us learn theory in the real world. As we discussed things in class, we got to see them in action through our work with the seventh graders, through our Eagle Hours, or through a simple walk in the hallway.

As his writing suggests, being able to humanize the theoretical concepts we explored throughout the semester was key to preservice teachers' understanding and development and was only possible because of our partnership with Pine View Middle School.

In order to introduce the PSTs to the surrounding Pine View community, we worked early in the semester with the principal to generate a list of community spaces that are important to the families of Pine View Middle School. The preservice teachers then went on a scavenger hunt in the school's surrounding community to visit each place and were asked to think about what each community space revealed about the community's assets. In class discussions, the preservice teachers articulated that the experience helped them see the importance of learning

about a community's resources, illustrated the richness of students' lives, and highlighted the many assets, which exist in the community.

Because a formal clinical experience was not associated with the course, we developed two structures, 7th Grade Buddies and Eagle Hours, to ensure that the preservice teachers were both providing a service to the school and learning about youth and communities at the same time. To start, PSTs were matched with two to three 7th Grade Buddies with whom they worked in a Math or Science classroom over the course of the semester during the independent work time in the classes. This opportunity to forge a relationship with students helped teacher candidates appreciate young adolescents and recognize their assets. Each week PSTs sent the Pine View teachers feedback about individual students' learning during the work session and what the PST thought was "cool" about each student.

Several PSTs commented on how 7th Grade Buddies challenged their assumptions about young adolescents. As one noted, working with 7th graders "helped me to realize that I am really not that different from young adolescents." Dispelling societal notions of young adolescents as otherworldly is a key commitment in our program; we seek for PSTs to embrace the complexity and humanity of middle schoolers. Not only did working with Pine View students challenge preservice teachers' deficit notions of young adolescents, it also helped them see the strengths middle school students possess, as this PST describes:

> I used to think that middle schoolers were really childish, awkward, and crazy. But after spending time in classrooms, I realized that they can be so mature and they're not too different than people my age. Some of my students have so much responsibility at home taking care of siblings because their parents work all day. Some of them have experienced trauma, they carry this with them, and they [are] just so strong.

This statement illustrates how through experiences in the Pine View classroom, this PST came to understand that there is not such a wide gulf between students and teachers, that both live complicated lives and have a great deal to offer one another. While working weekly with 7th graders helped PSTs build relationships with a small group of students, Eagle Hours helped them expand their knowledge of students and their families.

Eagle Hours were designed as opportunities for preservice teachers to provide service to Pine View while simultaneously allowing them to have meaningful experiences in the school community. These informal opportunities to interact with students opened up possibilities for how preservice teachers viewed young adolescents. Working in the media center, one preservice teacher noted that seeing the diversity in books "reminded me that each individual student is different and should be treated as their own person instead of the average student." This opportunity showed her that we should not view young adolescents as a monolith, but rather we should come to appreciate, understand, and appeal to all of their individual tastes.

Eagle Hours provided a plethora of opportunities for preservice teachers to see not only children outside of academic settings, but to see also how Pine View's faculty interacted with students outside of the classroom. For example, every quarter the school offered a school-wide incentive for students during which they could move freely throughout the school to participate in different activities. One preservice teacher who volunteered to help with this event shared how impressed he was to see a school that respected students' freedom:

> Students want to feel as though they can be trusted to do the right thing. The fact that they were not simply cattled from station to station or forced to stay in one station the entire time means that the teachers feel comfortable in trusting the students.

This experience provided an important insight into the relationships between students and teachers: those relationships do not have to be rooted in control, but can be powerfully based on trust and respect.

The preservice teachers also enjoyed opportunities to see how the Pine View Middle School teachers engaged with families. For example, several PSTs volunteered at the Student-led Parent Conferences by greeting caretakers or babysitting younger children so that caretakers could focus on their middle school child's conference. Preservice teachers shared their enthusiasm about seeing so many caretakers and watching their interactions not just with their children, but watching how the school interacted with families. The conferences also provided a window into how the Pine View faculty interact with families and how families interact with one another. Remarking on the class differences among families at Pine View, one student noted:

> While engaging and interacting with families at Pine View, I realized just how diverse the school really was. I know people always tell you not to judge a book by its cover, but I was able to tell very fortunate families from ones that were not as fortunate. They were evenly dispersed, but they all seemed to get the same attention from all the faculty at the school. It was really cool to see the interactions between families.

As indicated here, it was important for PSTs to experience the positive interactions between the school and its families. More importantly, this experience of interacting with families dispelled the myth that families in underserved communities do not care about their children's education. In fact, the PSTs witnessed the great lengths families went to in order to attend their child's conference. PSTs' echoed this recognition as well in their responses to *The Hate U Give,* which depicts the strong bonds of a family. Preservice teachers remarked throughout their reading of the book that their ideas about fatherhood, incarceration, poverty, and education were turned upside down.

Ultimately, as one PST explained, "Working with [the Pine View] students made me realize just how important each [course] essential question is. If I do not know myself and my students, I cannot create a safe space for all of my students." Equity-focused education relies on the willingness of teachers to search within themselves for how they can actively confront structures that perpetuate inequitable outcomes for students.

Teaching Boldly

At the end of their first semester of our two-year program, PSTs read excerpts from *Teach Boldly* (Fehr & Fehr, 2010) and reflected on the actions they could take to cultivate a more equitable world.

Personal Implications

We are writing this article at the end of our two years with this group of preservice teachers and are struck by how deeply our work around deficit thinking continues to influence our students. After being embedded at Pine View for a semester, most PSTs were placed in other schools for their first practicum experience. We had encouraged PSTs to have their "antennae" up for

examples of deficit thinking once they went into schools, and students repeatedly shared with us their surprise at how rampant it is in schools. As one PST explained:

> Now I've seen what we learned in [our class] happening in our placements. Seeing deficit thinking firsthand has made me step back and think about what kind of teacher I want to be. It's easy to say "I won't be that way," but it's different once you're in the school surrounded by other teachers who are constantly speaking in deficits about their students. I've heard teachers say "that kid just doesn't care" or "their parents are poor and never come to the meetings" or "it doesn't matter how much we give them, some kids are just here (on a certain academic level) and they're gonna stay there." I had to push those thoughts to the back of my mind and actively practice thinking about those same kids with an asset-based mindset.

On the heels of spending a semester learning with and from Pine View educators who demonstrate an affirmative stance, preservice teachers were dumbfounded that some educators would share negative views so openly about children and families. Another PST commented on how the prevalence of deficit thinking reflects on teachers and "ultimately affects them negatively and their work ethics. I think I've realized that teachers like that give off a bad image and accumulates negative opinions from others." Recognizing the impact that deficit thinking can have on school communities, these PSTs were intentional about avoiding those conversations in their placements and doing everything in their power to be advocates for their students and emphasize their assets.

Several preservice teachers who started the program with a colorblind ideology ended the first course with a recognition that they must always be "culturally curious" and to "continue to dive into what makes me, me." The commitment to working on oneself as a teacher is foundational to being a reflective practitioner and a lifelong learner. For other PSTs, the course taught them more about themselves than they realized when they started the program, as they completed the first semester with a newfound conviction to continue recognizing and challenging their own biases. One PST shared, "I feel that one of the most important ways to cultivate a more equitable world is to always confront your biases before you enter the classroom…It is important as educators to not only be aware this happens, but to actively confront it." This assertion underscores that awareness on its own is not enough and that it must be coupled with action and advocacy in order to make a difference. While the course was revelatory for some PSTs, for others it strengthened their preexisting convictions towards social justice. One PST explained, "This year has just affirmed for me that the education system in America is influenced by inequities, and that as teachers, we have some degree of agency in creating a classroom and world that is more equitable." At the conclusion of this first course in our program, many of the preservice teachers expressed an eagerness to learn how to develop classroom communities and curricula that support equity.

Curricular Implications

This course did not focus on pedagogy or curriculum design but rather on the types of thinking and understanding that are necessary for teachers to build relationships with students and design meaningful curriculum for students. We assert that creating a space for PSTs to engage in broader understandings of schools, society, and themselves is imperative for cultivating equity-orientations in the pedagogy courses and field placements to follow. Beyond

the work we as educators must always be doing on ourselves, it is also important that we create learning opportunities for our students to critically engage with the world around them. As one teacher candidate boldly stated:

> We need to educate the youth on the inequalities people experience and the reasons that those inequalities are in place. These students, even though they're young, are already beginning to figure out that the world puts people at a disadvantage depending on their race, income, sexuality, and gender. So knowing why these disadvantages are in place is the first step to finding a solution to help change it… These are tough topics to bring up, but I think as educators we have a duty to educate on how the world truly works and encourage them to take a stand on what's fair and right.

This preservice teacher ended the semester believing that the role of the teacher is fundamentally connected to equity work and to the deconstruction of oppressive systems. In this final assignment, many of the other preservice teachers articulated that they were committed to engaging in equity work in their future classrooms, but were yet unsure how to do so. In the semesters that followed this course, we were able to integrate these commitments to equity as we taught the PSTs to design curriculum and build communities of learners in their classrooms.

Closing Thoughts

Throughout this course, our students grappled with information that is often difficult to process both intellectually and emotionally. However, we found that by the end of the course, the preservice teachers felt a sense of urgency to enact equity-oriented teaching. Further, we saw that our course readings, tasks, and engagement on-site at the PDS were not only valuable, equity-oriented learning experiences for PSTs, but also valuable steps in maintaining a mutually-beneficial PDS partnership.

It is important to carefully and intentionally scaffold students' experiences with social justice concepts in order to mitigate potential resistance. We attempted to do this by beginning with texts such as *Outliers* and *13th*, which set up a frame for the ecologies in which both the PSTs and young adolescents exist. Young adult literature proved to be a helpful vehicle for illustrating the concepts we explored, and allowed the PSTs build empathy for characters whose experiences were vastly different than theirs. Once we established a foundation for critical ways to think about children and the systems that affect them, the PSTs began to interact with and start building relationships with young adolescents at Pine View Middle School. Waiting several weeks before working with middle school students helped the teacher candidates bridge theory and practice and humanize the abstract thinking they had engaged in previously in the semester.

We believe that all of these components were necessary for the progress PSTs made with regard to their critical consciousness. It may be seen as unconventional to begin the teacher education program with a course that does not address curriculum or pedagogy. However, by preparing the PSTs to enter their practicum placements and pedagogy courses with complicated insights into the ways that schools, students, and teachers are entrenched in complex cultural and historical systems and legacies, they are better positioned to incorporate equity-orientations in their work as teachers. Further, many of our students had engaged with some of the key concepts of this course in a prerequisite educational foundations course, however, they were able to engage more deeply with them during this course because of the work within the partnership.

Our course and program commitments parallel NAPDS Essential #1 in that we seek to promote equity within schools and the broader community. Teaching the course on-site provided an authentic space for PSTs to map their understandings of systems onto real children, schools, and communities. However, it was important to us to not simply use Pine View Middle School as an educational tool for the preservice teachers; we wanted to be sure that our presence there was also beneficial to the school community. Meeting with the principal of Pine View Middle School to discuss how our course goals aligned with the school's needs and goals resulted in our implementation of 7th Grade Buddies, which provided detailed feedback on student progress, and Eagle Hours, which provided energetic volunteers for school and community events. In each subsequent semester, we have continued to meet with the principal and administrators at Pine View Middle School to consider how we can continue to collaborate in ways that benefit the students, faculty, and staff of Pine View as well as the preservice teachers.

There is a continued and ever-growing need for preservice teachers to enter the teaching profession prepared to engage in equity work and confront oppressive systems and practices. While there are myriad ways to engage preservice teachers in thinking about the historical and cultural embeddedness of problematic practices in schooling, we found that this course, which connected theory to practice in the context of a professional development school partnership, provided a powerful framework for educating equity-minded future teachers.

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Equity-Based Teacher Leaders Facilitating Change within an Urban Professional Development School

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to describe our collective efforts to support inservice teacher learning for equity within the Professional Development School partnership at Hope Elementary. The authors consist of two university faculty members (Jacobs, Burns), a doctoral student who co-teaches coursework at Hope (Haraf), Hope's instructional coach (Bellas), and two teachers/members of the teacher leader academy (Perrone, Holt). This article provides details about our work and implications for others hoping to support teacher learning around equity.

KEYWORDS: equity-based teaching; professional development; Professional Development School

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;

Equity-Based Teacher Leaders Facilitating Change within an Urban Professional Development School

Within the teacher education literature, there are calls to facilitate the development of teachers who are culturally responsive (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), socially just (Cochran-Smith, 2004), and equity-oriented (Gorski, Davis, & Reiter, 2012). There is a need to develop teachers who understand equity as PK-12 students continue to face disparities, bias, and marginalization related to culture, race, language, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status within our nation's schools. Gorski (2017) describes equity as "a fair or equitable distribution of access and opportunity" thus involving a commitment to justice (p.19). Urban school contexts are often highlighted as spaces where conversations around equity need to take place due to systemic challenges such as fewer resources, scripted curriculum, teacher turnover, and transience (Gorski, 2017; Milner, 2012). Professional Development Schools (PDSs), with a rich history of successful collaboration, can serve as potential vehicles for collective efforts to transform low-performing, high-needs urban schools (Rutter, 2011).

From the beginning, calls for PDSs included an emphasis on equity (Holmes, 1990; NAPDS, 2008; NCATE, 2001) as an outcome of the collaboration between PK-12 schools and universities. For example, the 2001 NCATE PDS standards articulated that "PDS partnerships are committed to providing equitable learning opportunities for all, and to preparing teaching candidates and faculty to meet the needs of diverse student populations" (NCATE, 2001, p.1). In addition, Essential One of the NAPDS Nine Essentials explained that PDSs should have, "A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community" (NAPDS, 2008). While some contexts have been able to amplify these social justice goals in their PDSs (e.g. Zenkov, Corrigan, Beebe, & Sell, 2013), widespread attention to equity within the PDS literature is lacking (Breault & Lack, 2009).

The research on equity and PDSs as well as teacher education often broadly focuses on teacher candidates (Beardsley & Teitel, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004; McDonald, 2007; Taylor & Sobel, 2003). There is a lack of empirically-based research on facilitating inservice teacher's understanding of equity in the context of a PDS. This absence is problematic as we know mentor teachers are extremely influential in teacher candidate development (AACTE, 2018; Ellis, Alonzo, & Nguyen, 2020; Izadinia, 2015; Rozelle & Wilson, 2012; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). If teacher candidates are to develop in their understanding of equity, they will need mentor teachers who are also committed to this work. Therefore, supporting the learning of inservice teachers within a PDS around equity is key to the learning of teacher candidates and PK-12 students (Polly, Reinke, & Putman, 2019; Zenkov et al., 2013). The purpose of this article is to describe our collective efforts to support inservice teacher learning for equity within the PDS at Hope Elementary. The authors consist of two university faculty members (Jacobs, Burns), a doctoral student who co-teaches coursework at Hope (Haraf), Hope's instructional coach (Bellas), and two teachers/members of the teacher leader academy (Perrone, Holt).

Hope Elementary PDS

Hope Elementary is a PDS between the Colossal School District (pseudonym) and Urban Research University (pseudonym) in the southeastern United States. Within this urban Title 1 school, 97% of students are on free and reduced lunch and the student population is predominantly students of color. Many students are shelter insecure and ten percent qualify as homeless. The student population changes daily; some years, the number of students is just over 800 and other years, there are over 1000 students in this PK-5 building. There are over 100 staff members, approximately sixty of which are instructional staff. A unique feature of Hope Elementary is that it is a community partnership school, so there are several community partners that have made a twenty-five year commitment to Hope. These partners include Colossal School District, Urban Research University, two health care providers, two community organizations, and a local religious organization. Colossal School District is one of the largest school districts in the United States; it serves over 200,000 PK-12 students every year and has nearly 150 instructional sites.

Urban Research University is a research-intensive university that is located within five miles of Hope Elementary PDS. The College of Education serves over 2,000 students a year. There are three pathways to teacher certification for approximately 200 students in elementary education. Hope serves as one of the sites for teacher certification, hosting between 12-18 teacher candidates per year for a two-year period.

Hope has won several awards for its robust PDS design, which uses a five building block approach: (1) Teacher Preparation; (2) Teacher Learning; (3) Teacher Leadership Development; (4) School Administrator Learning; and (5) Teacher Education Learning and Preparation. In addition to preparing teachers, Hope also works intensely with a few of URU's College of Education faculty and doctoral students to support teacher leadership development through the Hope Teacher Leader Academy (TLA). The TLA is an innovative, clinically-centered approach to differentiating teacher professional learning and transformation graduate coursework. The Hope TLA was designed specifically with the intention of supporting the renewal of Hope as a turnaround elementary school, which is a state designation for schools that are considered "underperforming" on state standardized assessments for two consecutive years.

In the TLA, teachers earn advanced credentials in courses co-taught by university faculty, doctoral students, and a Hope instructional coach onsite at the school. One of those credentials is a twelve credit, four course graduate certificate in teacher leadership. This graduate certificate means that teacher leaders can: (1) systematically study their own teaching practice by using essential data literacy skills, (2) effectively coach their peers and teacher candidates to improve student learning, (3) skillfully facilitate job-embedded professional learning to improve instructional practice, and (4) intentionally develop a lens of equity in themselves and others. Once teacher leaders have earned this graduate certificate, they can apply those 12 graduate credits to a master's (MA) or an educational specialist (EdS) degree in elementary education. Participants who have graduated with any of those credentials may leave the program, or they can choose to stay in the TLA and earn professional development credit from the school district for their participation. The issues and challenges at Hope truly become the curriculum for graduate coursework that takes the form of job-embedded professional learning. The Hope TLA began in 2013 and has covered yearly goals such as: building school community and culture,

developing professional learning communities, deepening professional practice as teachers and leaders, integrating technology into instruction, and integrating culturally responsive pedagogy.

This article will describe the emphasis within Hope's TLA connected to culturally responsive pedagogy and equity-based teacher leadership. In this paper we will 1) introduce a framework and theoretical underpinnings for equity-based teacher leadership development, 2) describe the curriculum and pedagogy to support teacher leader learning, and 3) provide recommendations about facilitating a focus on equity in PDSs.

The Development of Equity-Based Teacher Leaders

A key aim of the Hope TLA is to develop equity-based teacher leaders (TLs) who can serve as both school-based teacher educators for teacher candidates and teacher leaders for their peers in the PDS. Equity-based TLs work actively to "*recognize, respond to*, and *redress* conditions that deny some students access to educational and other opportunities enjoyed by their peers" (Gorksi, 2017, p. 6). Figure one depicts our model of how equity-based TLs develop both a leadership and equity lens in the Hope TLA.

Figure 1. A framework for equity-based teacher leadership (adapted Jacobs & Crowell, 2018)

Fostering a *leadership lens* involves the TLs broadening their perspective beyond their own classroom. This broadening is not to minimize what happens within the classroom or to suggest that teacher leadership cannot happen in this space; however, an expanded lens/perspective helps teacher leaders better understand schoolwide systems, understand the origins of challenges, and begin to influence others within the school. Additionally, equity-based TLs grow in their leadership abilities by learning skills such as instructional coaching, facilitating professional development, engaging in practitioner research, etc.

In addition to gaining a leadership lens, equity-based teacher leaders also develop an *equity lens*. Developing this equity lens involves TLs engaging in critical self-reflection and consciousness-raising about their own beliefs and biases. Teacher leaders need to understand how their experiences and beliefs influence how they view and interpret the world. Building an equity lens also includes critical reflection on teaching. Teacher leaders' beliefs and biases can have real consequences for students (Gay, 2018; Irvine, 2003). They need both conceptual and practical tools to promote equity (Grossman, McDonald, Hammerness, & Ronfeldt,

2008). Conceptual tools include understanding frameworks and theories (i.e. deficit thinking, culturally responsive thinking, microaggressions, etc.) as well as philosophical views (i.e. purposes of schooling) that guide their decisions about teaching and learning. Practical tools include strategies to promote equity in their work with students, such as critical literacy practices, utilizing a funds of knowledge approach to bring student experiences within the curriculum, etc.

Teacher leaders simultaneously develop and use both their leadership and equity lenses together to become *equity-based leaders* who can support their colleagues in developing an equity lens as well as promote change and reform within their schools to foster equity for students and families (Jacobs & Crowell, 2018). Equity-based teacher leadership becomes praxis as TLs engage in a continuous process of critical reflection and action (Freire, 2018). Equity-based TLs learn the unique leadership skills needed to support their colleagues in developing an equity lens as well as the conceptual and practical tools to become equity-literate (Gorksi, 2017).

The Curriculum and Pedagogy for Developing Equity-Based Teacher Leaders

At Hope Elementary, we started working five years ago to enact the curriculum and pedagogy to develop the TLs' leadership lens. Subsequently over the past two years, there has been an explicit equity focus. In the first year we emphasized building the TLs' equity lens by focusing on culturally responsive pedagogy. In the second year we supported TLs in their continued learning about equity with the added element of how to facilitate their colleagues' learning about equity-based teaching.

Year One: Supporting the Learning of Teacher Leaders around Equity

The first year of working with Hope around equity focused on TLs learning about culturally responsive teaching as an entry point to building an equity lens and equitable teaching practices. Culturally responsive teaching is defined as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively" (Gay, 2018, p. 106). Culturally responsive teachers: 1) have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, 2) have the commitment and skills to act as an agent of change, 3) have constructivist views of learning, 4) are learners of their students, and 5) engage in culturally responsive teaching practices (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The curriculum for the year emerged from the challenges that Hope faced in supporting the achievement of a diverse student population who experienced many challenges connected to poverty. Amanda, the instructional coach at Hope, shared the purpose behind year one's work:

> Because learning about equity is complex, it is not as easy to hand a teacher a book with strategies and tell them to try one in their class. An educator must first build their knowledge on the subject and begin to make changes and choices in their teaching. Two years ago in TLA, we knew we had to first engage the teacher leaders in the learning. For one entire year, they participated in coursework with the goal of helping them make conscious changes and decisions in their mindsets and instructional practices. (Reflection)

Therefore, the first year became about building the TLs' knowledge and understanding about equity with a specific focus on culturally responsive teaching.

Table 1 outlines the guiding questions, readings, and activities from year one. This clinically-centered curriculum was not prescriptive or laid out from the beginning of the year. The curriculum emerged collaboratively and responsively as the planning team focused on the TLs' growth and the needs of the school.

Table 1
Year One Curriculum

Guiding Questions	● What is culture? What is my culture? ● What is the connection between culture and teaching? ● How are my teaching beliefs influenced by culture? ● What is culturally responsive pedagogy? ● What are the cultures of my students? ● What is the role of bias in learning about culture? ● What is the connection between culture, privilege, and equity?
Key Readings	● *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood* (Emdin, 2016) ● The Culturally Responsive Teacher (Villegas & Lucas, 2007) ● Not Time for Stories, Case 5.2 (Gorski & Pothini, 2013) ● Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003) ● Students as Curriculum (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017) ● Prejudice and Discrimination (Chapter) (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) ● Choice of content-based culturally responsive pedagogy article
Key Activities	● Readiness assessments ● "I believe" worksheet ● Paseo - Circles of Identity ● Sharing a cultural artifact ● Culture iceberg and culture cake ● Dimensions of culture website; culture compass tool ● Privilege walks ● Writing up a case connected to a cultural dilemma ● Jigsaw reading of content culturally responsive teaching articles ● Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Tool (CRIOP): Reading, Coding, and Exploring ● Curriculum action plans

As can be seen in the guiding questions (Table 1), the year began with the TLs' examination of their personal culture and beliefs. They engaged in activities such as sharing a cultural artifact, creating 'circles of identity', and a privilege walk. From there, the TLs spent time learning about their students' cultures and beliefs. The TLs developed an action plan where they set goals for

learning about their students. The TLs also reflected on the impact of cultural incongruence between teachers and students. Finally, the TLs began to investigate culturally responsive practices in their classrooms. We provided TLs with the Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol (CRIOP) (Powell, Chambers Cantrell, & Malo-Juvera, 2016) as a way to promote a vision of culturally responsive teaching in relation to various dimensions (i.e. assessment, discourse, pedagogy and instructional practices, family collaboration, multiple perspectives, etc.). Teacher leaders engaged in self-evaluation and reflection around different elements of the CRIOP. Additionally, in order to move toward a greater focus on curriculum and instruction, we created a resource site of practitioner articles on culturally responsive teaching in various content areas. Readings focused on topics such as culture, culturally responsive teaching, cultural capital, and making cultural connections to specific content areas.

Snapshot into Teacher Leader Learning

Year one included many opportunities for TLs to engage in critical self-reflection. For example, Francesca (author), a TL and fifth grade classroom teacher, reflected on how engaging in the privilege walk prompted critical self-reflection. In part one of the privilege walk, participants stepped forward and back in connection to traditional views of privilege (i.e. had many books in the house, parents went to college, etc.), while part 2 aligned with tenets of community cultural wealth or non-dominant capital (i.e. speaking multiple languages and hearing stories from grandparents, etc.) (Yosso, 2005). She shared:

> Growing up I never felt like I was different than my peers for my culture- but looking back, that was because of my understanding of my culture. It was surreal for me and made me truly reflect on my background. Growing up as a first generation American, with a father who immigrated from Italy- who has no higher than a 4th grade education, I never experienced anything that would maybe relate to my father's experiences. My mother grew up at a disadvantage as well- using government assistance for food and welfare for housing. I grew up seeing my parents hustle, and when we did the privilege walk I never thought "wow, I can't believe my parents didn't do this for me…". (Reflection)

In this quote, Francesca reflects upon how engaging in this activity prompted her to reflect on the meaning of culture, but also to see the connection between culture and privilege. Other TLs reflected, "What is my culture? I have trouble defining what exactly my culture is compared to interests. I learned that others feel the same way." Another shared, "The way I grew up was not very culturally diverse. I grew up in a white middle class school and community. However, the church I went to was very diverse. This makes me realize I need to be very conscious of researching and understanding cultures." Critical self-reflection became embedded in the experiences of the TLs in year one. Francesca took this experience from TLA to her elementary classroom. She explained:

> I ended up using a form of the privilege walk in my classroom with questions I altered to be more appropriate for 5th graders. This exercise allowed me to build the CULTURAL community in my classroom- the awareness for one another's culture. (Reflection)

While Francesca made the link between her learning and working with her students, some of the other TLs felt challenged in this area. As an instructional team, we knew the importance of

having time for the TLs to critically self-reflect on their identity and beliefs; however, soon the TLs began to seem antsy wanting more time learning about taking action in their classroom.

Starting in November we provided the TLs with several articles about culturally responsive teaching. From there, the TLs each created an action plan (see Figure 2) to achieve a goal related to culturally responsive teaching within their classroom.

Action Plan			
Action Steps: *What needs to be done?*	**Timeline:** *When will it get done?*	**Resources:** *What resources do you have and will you need to achieve your goal?*	**Potential Barriers:** *Are there individuals that may resist? What other obstacles may impede moving forward?*

Figure 2. Teacher leader culturally responsive action plan.

A majority of the TLs focused their action plans on Villegas and Lucas' (2007) culturally responsive tenet of "Learning about Students' Lives". Teacher leaders set up lunch bunches, morning meetings, and class surveys focused on asking students questions about their culture. Many of their questions revolved around traditions, relationships with their family, roles within their house, beliefs, etc. One TL shared that her goals were: 1) Get to know students on a deeper level, 2) Organize this knowledge for lesson planning, and 3) Create lesson plans integrating culture. Some of the TLs worked with their students to better define the term culture. Another TL set up dialogue circles where students had an opportunity to bring in a cultural artifact.

The TLs reflected that at times gaining information about their students' culture beyond the surface level was challenging. For example, one TL who created a survey shared:

> So I started with this student assessment of classroom culture. It was a total bomb! I think for their age/grade level it was too much for them. There were too many options for them to respond to. Some of the kids didn't really know how to answer, It was too vague. So I sat down and did some more research to find the right kind of survey. This time it was so much better. This one focused on my students at school and their teacher. But, it still did not dig deep enough. So I am doing one more. I took the both of them and was able to learn more about each student as an individual. This one has about their family and focuses on what they do outside of school.

Even with the challenges, TLs described how students loved sharing about their cultures and these discussions not only led to connections between the TLs and students, but also to connections between students.

Only a few TLs focused their action plans on changing instruction. For example, one TL involved her students' voices in instruction by having students design an activity for a math lesson. Francesca described the action she took with her fifth-grade teammate (another TL):

> We taught two specific lessons-one on gender bias, and one on students who have disabilities. These lessons impacted our classrooms because I had a student at the time who is on the Autism spectrum. With the student's (and parents) permission I found articles on autism and changemakers in the world who are also on the spectrum. This was because I had overheard students in other classes talking about the student with autism. I wanted to make sure that my students were educated on characteristics of people on the

> autism spectrum/what it is- in order to be able to take action when they heard others talking. This was such an incredible experience. When I asked a student what the message the author of the article was trying to send one student wrote "don't judge others- we are all human". When someone not from our class asked another student, what autism was… they responded with "it doesn't mean that _________ isn't smart, it just means their brain takes a different path to understanding"- so it worked.

Francesca also described a unit connected to gender bias:

> When we learned about gender bias we had a debate on if girl scouts and boy scouts should be inclusive or if they should continue to be segregated. This was because we wanted to make sure that the boys in class understood that girls could do anything boys can- and to be accepting of however a student wants to identify.

In both of these cases Francesca was able to take what she was learning in TLA and make connections to her teaching.

The year ended by sharing a visual of our scope and sequence for the first year. The visual included topics, readings, and activities we engaged in. This reflective activity served as a bridge into the TLs' new role as leading their colleagues within professional development during year two.

Year Two: TLs Supporting Colleagues through Professional Development

As seen in the guiding questions (Table 2), in the second year, we spent time helping TLs continue to build their equity lens as well as analyze issues related to equity and professional development (PD).

Table 2
Year Two Curriculum

Guiding Questions/ Topics	● What is privilege? How do people get it? How have privilege and discrimination manifested in my life and my students' lives? ● What are our biases, and what implications do these have for us as teachers? ● How can teacher leaders facilitate professional development for teachers about equity and culturally responsive teaching? ● What are micro and macro aggressions? What implications do these have for teaching? ● How do we reframe the deficit thinking about students and families? ● How do we recognize, respond to, and redress issues of inequity?
Key Readings	● The Myth of the Culture of Poverty (Gorski, 2008) ● The Red Shoe (Webb, 2000) ● Rethinking agendas: Social reproduction and resistance (Hinchey, 2010) ● Understanding Unconscious Bias and Unintentional Racism (Moule, 2009) ● PD That Makes a Difference (Patton, Parker, & Tannenhill, 2015) ● "Tom" Vignette from Danielson book (Danielson, 2006)

	• Micro and Macro Aggressions (Lindsey et al., 2018, p. 110 - 114) • The Teacher of Adults (Galbraith, 2004) • Understanding Privilege through Ableism (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) • Excerpts from "Oppression and Power" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) • Taco Night (Gorski, 2011) • Avoiding the Holiday 'Balance Traps' (Teaching Tolerance, 2009). • Equity Literacy for All (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015). • Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (McIntosh, 1988) • Willing to Be Disturbed (Wheatley, 2002)
Key Activities	• Bias picture sort (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) • Case study "Multicultural Fair" (Gorski & Pothini, 2013) • Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Tool (CRIOP): Reading, Coding, and Exploring • Critical Friends Groups with PD dilemma discussion • "This is Us" video clip: micro/macro aggressions • Videos about teachers' controversial Halloween costumes • Harvard Implicit Bias Tests • Privilege and social identities portrait • Exploration of 'invisible knapsacks' of privilege (self and school) • Exploration of *Teaching Tolerance* lesson plans • "Back to the Future" protocol - developing a long-term vision

We continued to help build the TLs' equity lens by moving from a focus on culture to including additional equity topics (i.e. privilege, micro/macro aggressions, deficit thinking, etc.). We began to emphasize bringing the equity and leadership lenses together as the TLA members planned and enacted professional development focused on equity with their colleagues throughout the school. Therefore, we also reviewed topics such as adult development, tenets of high-quality professional development, etc. We continued to engage TLs in various self-reflective activities. For example, we explored the concept of privilege after reading McIntosh's (1988) article about the Invisible Knapsack of white privilege. The TLs divided into small groups to read and discuss various lists of invisible privileges (i.e. race, socioeconomic status, immigration status, religion, etc.). From there, the TLs created a list of invisible privileges at Hope Elementary, or Hope's Invisible Knapsack, followed by a discussion of marginalization as a result of Hope's structures, norms, and expectations. We also brought in discussions of current events. For example, we read an article about a group of teachers who dressed up in stereotypical Mexican "costumes" for Halloween, as well as teachers who dressed up as the Mexican border wall.

In order to provide an opportunity to bring together the equity and leadership lenses, the TLs began the second year by dividing into groups based on the CRIOP (See Table 3). The TLs chose a group aligned with their interests. Each group would be responsible for leading PD about their area of focus. From the beginning, these PD groups were created as inquiry communities guided by a question developed by the TLs.

Table 3
Teacher Led Professional Development Topics

Topic	**Inquiry Wondering**
Multiple Perspectives	In what ways can teachers create a culturally-centered environment for students that celebrates multiple perspectives and ideas?
Classroom Caring and Teacher Dispositions	How do we establish a classroom of respect and rapport with one another?
Classroom Climate and Physical Environment	How can we create a positive learning environment where all individuals are valued and respected?
Family Collaboration	How can we develop partnerships with our parents to support their children as learners?
Curriculum and Planned Experiences	How can I integrate culturally responsive learning experiences into the curriculum?
Pedagogy and instructional practices	How can we build on students' cultural backgrounds/ knowledge to develop instruction relevant to students' lives?
Assessment Practices	How do we include student voice in assessments?
Discourse and Instructional Conversations	How do we use students' home language and culture through a variety of discourse techniques to implement equitable teaching?

Each group created a 2-minute video "advertisement" that was shared with the entire school at a September faculty meeting. The faculty members then self-selected the PD group they wanted to join.

Throughout the year, TLs led their PD groups once a month for a total eight sessions. Each session was approximately one hour. The TLs had autonomy in planning each of the PD sessions. For each session, the TLs: 1) wrote a lesson plan, 2) designed an exit ticket to collect data about their PD participant learning, 3) analyzed exit ticket data, and 4) wrote a reflection focused on their PD members' learning (see Table 4). The goal with the PD was to be responsive to teacher needs and use the data to plan subsequent PD sessions.

Table 4

Teacher Leader PD Reflection Questions

1. Look at the data you gathered. Analyze that data. What evidence-based claim(s) can you make about your PD session (and give the evidence from the exit tickets) about your ability to meet your objective for that planning session?
2. Did you meet the objectives you planned for? Why or why not? How do you know?
3. What values, beliefs, or assumptions could you identify that teachers held as they were learning and participating in your PD session?
4. What do you want to remember to include in your PD plans for the future based on what you learned today?

Two members of the instructional team provided feedback on the TLs' plans each month. Feedback included comments connected to: having TLs clarify their rationale for inclusion of an activity, asking for explanations about how the topic built upon the previous PD, encouraging TLs to plan discussion questions, etc.

Within the TLA sessions, we supported the TLs' planning for PD. At an early session, we reread an article from a previous year about the core features of high-quality professional development (Patton, Parker, & Tannenhill, 2015). We also modeled a way to develop norms focused on building bridges between the group's goal and possible barriers. After engaging in these activities, the TLs collectively agreed that during their first PD session they would implement a community builder of their choice and develop norms. We also started off the year having the TLs engage in a modified "Back to the Future " protocol (schoolreforminitiative.com) to envision where they hoped their PD group would be in terms of their learning in May. This exercise helped TLs engage in backwards planning about where they would want their PD to begin. In addition, we set up a resource site on Google Drive. This site included all the readings and activities we utilized during the first year of our work on equity. During our TLA meetings, the TLs had opportunities to reflect on their PD progress. We set aside time for Critical Friends' Groups (CFGs), where TLs could bring problems of practice from their PD group to gain support, as well as time for the TLs to collaboratively plan.

Snapshot into the Teacher Led Professional Development

It was quite evident in the teacher leaders' PD lesson plans and in our observation notes of the PD sessions that the TLs' professional development responded to teachers' needs and included opportunities for collaborative, active, and dialogic learning (Parker et al, 2015). In order to provide the reader with a description of this PD, we will describe the work of the Family Collaboration PD group. Two of the teacher leaders (TLs) led this PD group made up of three primary teachers, a special area teacher, and an ESOL resource teacher. The group selected the

inquiry question, "How can we develop culturally appropriate partnerships with our Hope families to help them support their children as learners?", to guide their work.

Like the other PD groups, the Family Collaboration group began by collaboratively creating norms. The agreed upon norms included: 1) Challenge ideas NOT people, 2) Limit sidebar conversations, 3) Be prepared to participate, and 4) Take risks. The TLs began each meeting by having the group engage in a community builder that not only helped build community and relationships among the group, but connected to the session topic. From there, the group would engage in a short reading to gain more information about the topic. Then the TLs helped make connections to practice in their school context. Figure 3 illustrates the process this Family Collaboration group followed.

Figure 3. Process for teacher-led professional development in Family Collaboration PD group.

We will share descriptions of several PD sessions in order to gain insight into how the TLs prompted teacher learning around equity through the process in Figure 3.

In session three, the TLs focused on the concept of culture. Following their pattern, the community builder included each participant sharing a cultural artifact. The TLs also continued the discussion of bias and how this connects to beliefs by reading an article, *"The Myth of the Culture of Poverty*" (Gorski, 20008). The TLs selected this article because they wanted the group to realize:

> It is not just language that can create barriers between school and home but also socio-economic issues can create barriers as well. We learned that it is not always true that families are not interested in their child's learning journey, some work multiple jobs while others may not feel comfortable in the school environment. (Reflection 10/16)

The TLs hoped that by reading the article it would "empower our participants and enable them to think outside the box when it comes to our Hope Families." The TLs explained that both of these experiences (artifact sharing and article) prompted the group members to share more personal information about themselves. The TLs reflected, "It was also eye opening to hear them talk about their culture and share a glimpse of what is important to them including some of the struggles they may have faced." Finally, the group discussed turnout for conference night and disaggregated their class data to look for patterns such as "girls vs. boys, ELL vs. non-ELL, on level and above level vs. below level academic achievement." The group's homework was to utilize a template to track communication with parents (written, face to face, or phone). The participants were also to focus on whether the communication was positive or negative.

In the fourth session, the TLs extended the discussion around culture to include cultural clashes or incongruence between teachers and families. They began by having the teachers explore their own beliefs with a cultural self-assessment with likert-style questions such as, "I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity" and "I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work setting." Then the group read an article entitled "*Indian Father's Plea*" (Lake, 1990). The TLs shared that the goal of the reading was for "participants to understand that the students in our classrooms are not empty vessels for us to fill, but bring their ideas and knowledge from their culture with them into the classroom. Just like the parents who we need to value and involve in the education process." After reading the article the group began to connect the concepts to family collaboration thinking about the question, "Can you think about a time when a cultural difference might have created a conflict?" One participant spoke about how teachers can be "close-minded or unaware of teaching a diverse group of learners" and that a relationship that is framed as a "personality clash" can really be a "culture clash". One participant explained, "It is a common saying that 'they don't know anything' when speaking of non-English speaking students, easily forgetting what the child brings to the table." The group continued to track their parent communication. In future sessions, this group worked together to create a new school-wide family survey that could be given out at the beginning of the year.

This snapshot into the Family Collaboration group represents the work of many of the PD groups. The TLs were thoughtful in their ability to plan PD across a whole year. As in the Family Collaboration group, there were often opportunities for participants to critically reflect on themselves as well as reflect on data and their students. Of course, each PD group differed in their ability to make change, but all worked to support the learning of their colleagues. When looking across all the TLs' PD plans, we saw explicit connections to the topics, readings, and activities from year one. In essence, the TLs were able to see a model of PD focused on equity by being participants themselves within our work in year one. However, we did not see a replication of the year one TLA within the PD groups. While the TLs used the Google Drive resource site as a starting point, they all made individual decisions about what topics to address, the order of those topics based on participant needs, and selection of readings and activities to support the learning of that topic. While this PD became a major focus, we did not stop facilitating TL learning around equity within our TL course sessions as they were continuing along their never-ending journey toward equity literacy. Engaging in the real-life work of planning and enacting PD around equity supported their development as equity-based teacher leaders.

Recommendations for Facilitating a Focus on Equity in PDSs

In this paper we have outlined the two years we spent working with TLs at Hope Elementary to support their development as equity-based teacher leaders. Year one supported the development of the TLs' equity lenses while year two provided the opportunity to bring the two lenses together as the TLs led PD on equity and culturally responsive teaching. Looking across what we have learned in the past two years, we provide recommendations for facilitating a focus on equity within PDSs. Parallels existed between what we found in our own learning about supporting TL learning with what TLs learned about supporting their colleagues' learning.

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

A hallmark of PDSs is the deep relationships and community of learning built between stakeholders (NAPDS, 2008). However, when shifting the focus to equity, PDSs may need to reevaluate their environment. For example, while many of the TLs came into the two years knowing each other, we knew these relationships had not involved engaging in conversations about topics such as race, power, privilege, sexual orientation, bias, etc. Therefore, we continued to build a trusting environment where TLs could feel comfortable having critical conversations. During each TLA session, the TLs would lead a community building activity. In addition, each year we created norms. Interestingly, the TLs also saw the importance of creating a safe environment for learning as a key aim of their PD work. For example, TL Maureen shared:

> We, as a group, were able to build a community of trust and respect. I learned how important icebreakers are to build that trust and rapport. We really got to know one another and learned to be more open. It made the PD more relaxed and it led to meaningful discussions and interactions. For example, in the beginning, I did not know most of the participants. Some were new to the school and some I had never worked with before. However, once we started the PD group we were able to form a bond. This helped make the group more accountable for the activities. It also opened the door for us to brainstorm ideas about the topics and for us to dig deeper into culturally responsive teaching.

PDS partners need to have frank conversations about the norms for equity conversations in order to promote dialogue between school-based teacher educators, university-based teacher educators, and teacher candidates. Creating the context for these conversations can help to strengthen all aspects of teaching and learning within the PDS.

Emphasizing Critical Consciousness and the Self

PK-12 student learning is at the center of PDSs (NAPDS, 2008; Teitel, 2010); however, when there is a focus on equity within a PDS, there must be a continual focus on the self as a vehicle to focus on students. Developing sociocultural consciousness involves understanding how one's beliefs, thinking, and way of being is influenced by race, ethnicity, social class, language, etc. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Throughout the readings as well as activities, we always reflected on how the concepts connected to TLs personally. Through this focus on self, consciousness can develop where TLs "achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities which shape their lives and discover their own capacities to recreate them" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2017, p. 14). Developing this understanding of self was key in their ability to take the concepts and apply them to the PK-12 students. Knowing one's own values was key to helping

TLs interpret how their reactions to students and practice in the classroom could be influenced by culture and positionality. We also saw the TLs begin with this same focus as they facilitated learning in their PD groups. For example, the Multiple Perspectives PD group reflected:

> Although we are not at the core of our PD topic (multiple perspectives) we feel as if we need to first lay foundations in order to uncover participants' own perspectives/biases and be comfortable identifying them BEFORE we can have them analyze and include student perspectives in lessons. We want participants to be able to keep in mind all students and educating the whole child when bringing in their perspectives to the lesson; however, we feel that if participants aren't aware of their own deep perspectives this would not come to fruition. (Reflection)

While it may be enticing to move toward equity practices in classrooms, stakeholders in PDSs first need to reflect on who they are so they can begin to reflect upon how their beliefs and experiences influence their teaching practices.

Praxis at the Center

Equity cannot just be written into the mission of a PDS, but it must occur throughout the actions of the PDS. While the focus on self was so important to learning about equity and cultural responsiveness, reflection also must lead to praxis. The term praxis refers to "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 2018, p. 51). In the TLA, this included instituting an action plan assignment as well as having the TLs engage in readings about integrating culturally responsive teaching into specific content areas. We also utilized the CRIOP framework because it gave specific examples of what culturally responsive instruction looked like in the classroom. We also had to push the TLs to bring their work within the PD groups toward greater praxis. We observed deep, reflective conversations that involved questioning, but not acting upon the status quo. For example, the Assessment PD group questioned a writing prompt that privileged certain students in the county over Hope students. In another PD group, after learning about cultural communication styles, the teachers questioned a school norm that established "eye contact" as a communication expectation. Conversations in the TLA moved to how the PD groups could push some of these points to action.

Praxis also means PDSs need to bring this equity lens or consciousness to all aspects of their work. PDSs must consider questions such as: Is the PDS recruiting a diverse group of teacher candidates (i.e. candidates of color)? Are the various PDS sites providing teacher candidates with opportunities to work in diverse contexts? Is the PDS being conscious of the representation of mentor teachers of color? Are the structures, policies, and practices within the PDS promoting equity? For example, are teacher candidates' extensive hours in the school making it impossible to work, resulting in their own food and shelter insecurity?

Approaching Learning with an Inquiry Mindset

A key tenet of PDSs is engaging in inquiry to promote data-driven reflection and continually improve practice (NCATE, 2001; Yendol-Hoppey & Franco, 2014). As an instructional team, we had to use data to be responsive to the TLs' needs. A key aspect of our pedagogy was to systematically collect data through notes, TL assignments, and exit tickets as a way to make data-informed decisions. Even though we planned week-to-week based on the data we gathered, at times we had to turn in a new direction based on the data we collected. For

example, we had not originally thought of introducing the action plan or CRIOP framework so early in November; however, the TLs wanted more support moving equity and culturally responsive teaching to their classrooms, so we had to adjust to meet their needs. Additionally, in year one, Hope was under intense pressure to achieve a higher school grade or face being taken over by an outside entity. Therefore, at times, the TLs would come to TLA extremely stressed. One TLA, we put our plans on hold to provide the TLs an opportunity to discuss and emotionally process a state visit that had occurred that day.

We saw this same type of responsiveness in the TLs within their own PD groups. The TLs made decisions based on the needs of their participants. At times this included adapting their plans or making decisions to spend more time on a topic because participants needed time for deeper discussion. For example, one TL shared, "The more we get to know about our participants, the more we can tailor our sessions around them" (Reflection). In addition, the TLs took an inquiry approach to leading their PD group. The TLs' PD groups were structured around an inquiry question, and the TLs facilitated sessions as collaborative learning rather than by positioning themselves as equity experts who were teaching their peers.

Closing Thoughts

The work of TLs at the grassroots level can make a difference in the lives and success of students (Nieto, 2007) by working inside and beyond their own classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Rodriguez, Mantle-Bromley, Bailey, and Paccione (2003) share, "If change for underserved students is to occur, teachers who are committed to issues of equity must become active leaders in their schools" (p.229). PDSs serve as contexts to support the learning of PK-12 students, teachers, teacher candidates, and university faculty. In this paper, we focused on the learning of TLs and the greater staff of Hope Elementary. However, as we speak, we are beginning to include a more explicit focus on equity within the undergraduate teacher preparation curriculum. We are hopeful that by starting with inservice teachers at Hope we will have created a foundation to foster teacher candidate learning for equity. By having knowledge of equity, teachers can now serve as mentors who can model equity-based practices and explicitly support teacher candidate learning around equity.

By sharing the story of the Hope Elementary PDS, we hope that our story will inspire others to understand how to they can harness the power of universities and K-12 schools to empower teacher leaders who can serve as catalysts for change across the continuum of teacher learning (preservice, induction, and beyond) and more importantly make a difference in the lives of PK-12 students.

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Appendix A

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Service Learning for Social Justice?: An Analysis of a School-University Partnership

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Abstract: Engaging in service learning has the potential to increase pre-service teachers' awareness of and capacity for addressing social justice issues. In this study, we examine whether a semester-long service learning project implemented within the context of a PDS partnership aligns to the goals of social justice. We analyzed 51 service learning projects completed by university seniors (pre-service teachers) between 2017 and 2020 using Gibson's (2018) framework for social action. We found that only one project involved a higher level of engagement in social action and went beyond providing direct service to the school partner. We posit that time constraints, project parameters, and the need for more scaffolding by instructors about project possibilities contributed to this finding. We conclude by suggesting ways of altering the service learning project to better align to the goals of social justice.

KEYWORDS: Service learning, School-University partnership, social justice, social action, teacher education

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

Service Learning for Social Justice?: An Analysis of a School/University Partnership

At our university, which engages in a professional development school (PDS) partnership with several area school districts, service learning is an essential component of a capstone course that our seniors take in their final semester while they are completing full-time student teaching. These seniors investigate an area of need at their placement school and then design and implement a service learning project to address the need. The project is associated with a course, *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities*, which has an enrollment of approximately 150 seniors each year. A variety of projects have been completed in the years since we (the first and second authors of this article) have taught the course. Some specific examples include supporting children with their mastery of sight words and phonics knowledge, helping children increase their multiplication fact fluency, and teaching children how to cope with socio-emotional concerns. In this way, the service learning project is meant to support the various needs of children in the seniors' placement schools and offer a beneficial service to the university's PDS partners.

However, as we have increased our knowledge of service learning and its purpose, we have often asked ourselves if our seniors' service learning projects are achieving the goals of social justice. This question is particularly salient because one of the course outcomes for *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities* is to support the development of teacher candidates who will "display an ability to analyze and reflect on their personal and professional practices and issues in the field from a social justice perspective" as stated on the course syllabus. Given this question, our purpose in this paper is to analyze whether the service learning projects completed by the seniors placed within our university's K-5 PDS partner schools support social justice work. Are their service learning projects meeting the goals of social justice? If the projects do meet social justice goals, what are the key factors, ideas, or implementation strategies that help advance these goals? If not, in what ways can instructors of *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities* help the seniors advance social justice goals in their service learning projects? Our purpose for sharing our analysis and interpretations is to inform and support fellow educators who are considering service learning opportunities to enhance their students' educational experiences or their PDS partnerships.

About Service Learning

Service learning is an instructional approach in which students participate in a service experience related to their academic learning. Service learning is distinct from community service or volunteerism in several ways. In service learning, academic goals are integrated with the service experience (Harrison et al., 2016; Hildenbrand & Schultz, 2015), and students are encouraged to reflect and make connections to the content they are studying in the classroom (Cipolle, 2010). The service experience is designed to enhance and enrich academic learning and vice versa (Middleton, 2003).

Service learning has become a popular approach in both K-12 and higher education contexts (Butin, 2007). Research suggests that participating in service learning can have positive outcomes for pre-service teachers. For example, it can support what they are studying in their coursework and help them learn about the needs of their community (Hildenbrand & Schultz, 2015). PDS partnerships can be an especially advantageous context for service learning. The sustained relationships between schools and universities provide an existing structure for service

learning (Harrison et al., 2016), and service learning projects completed within PDS partnerships can offer schools much-needed services while enhancing the professional learning of pre-service teachers (Middleton, 2003). Further, service learning affords opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop more robust connections to their school communities (Harrison et al., 2016). Thus, service learning can be mutually beneficial for those serving and those receiving services, particularly within PDS partnerships.

Service Learning and Social Justice

Social justice is concerned with the inequitable distribution of power and resources among groups in a society. Social justice work often addresses problems and injustices related to race, gender, sexuality, age, and ability, among other concerns (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). Those committed to social justice understand that society is not equal; they recognize that inequality is structural and permeates all facets of society (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Leaders who work toward achieving social justice question policies and procedures linked to injustice, assume critical perspectives and engage in praxis, or reflective action, to call attention to injustice (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). People engaged in social justice work also develop solutions for problems that create and reproduce inequities across groups in a society (Dantley & Tillman, 2010) and take action to address injustice (Gibson, 2018). To engage in social justice work, then, means to engage in work that seeks to resolve problems related to the marginalization and oppression of groups within a community or the broader society. While social justice work could take many forms, examples could include developing and advocating for policies that would result in a higher minimum wage, more affordable housing options, or equitable public school funding formulas.

In addition to the positive outcomes of service learning that have been previously noted, some educators believe that service learning has the potential to increase pre-service teachers' awareness of social justice issues and their commitment to creating social change (Donahue et al., 2003; Hildenbrand & Schultz, 2015; Middleton, 2003; Stringfellow & Edmonds-Behrend, 2013). Kirkland (2014) explains that service learning within teacher education is intended to help pre-service teachers understand diversity and become aware of the injustices in their communities. Indeed, service learning projects can be an initial step toward supporting pre-service teachers as they participate in social justice work (Tinkler et al., 2014).

Although some teacher educators assume that service learning is always tied to social justice (Mitchell, 2008), participating in service learning does not necessarily advance the goals of social justice work (Kirkland, 2014). In fact, Butin (2007) argues there is little overlap between education for social justice and service learning, while Donahue et al. (2003) critique service learning because of the unequal power relations created between those who are serving (pre-service teachers) and those being served (members of the school or community). Kirkland (2014) contends that teacher education programs are moving away from linking service learning to social justice:

> Today, service learning has come to mean something equivalent to an extended and sustained field trip (a kind of localized study away) for privileged learners who often imagine their roles in communities as agents of salvation as opposed to agents of service. (p. 583)

From these perspectives, service learning does not equate to doing social justice work despite the common assumption that social justice goals are invariably embedded within service learning.

Mitchell (2008) provides a helpful framework to distinguish between service learning approaches that do and do not advance social justice goals: *traditional service learning* and *critical service learning*. According to Mitchell's framework, the traditional approach involves providing a service without calling awareness to issues of inequity within a community; Butin (2007) notes that such approaches are typically associated with charity. In contrast, the critical approach involves making efforts to remedy injustices and enact social change.

Based on Mitchell's (2008) definition, critical service learning includes several components. First, critical service learning must include actions directed at creating social change, which involves learning what causes social problems, addressing these problems, and reflecting on one's actions to reinforce or dismantle the existence of these social problems. Second, participants in critical service learning must examine issues of power in the community and within society: who has it, who does not, and why this is the case. Third, those involved in critical service learning - the learners and the members of the school or community - must develop shared goals and build authentic relationships. Mitchell further suggests that service learning engagements should be long-term partnerships because social justice cannot be achieved in a short amount of time.

Though service learning and social justice work are not synonymous, service learning does have the potential to address social justice problems, particularly if projects incorporate the components that are characteristic of the critical service learning approach that Mitchell (2008) describes. In the remainder of this article, we analyze the service learning projects that our seniors have completed within the context of a social justice, diversity-oriented capstone course taught at a university engaged in PDS partnerships. Our purposes are to 1) determine whether our students' projects are addressing social justice goals and 2) consider how we, as instructors of the course, might adjust the course and the service learning project to address issues of inequity and injustice within our locality's schools.

Methods

Contextual Factors

The University of North Georgia is a public, multi-campus university in the Southeast region of the United States. The university is engaged in PDS partnerships with several nearby school districts that have varying demographics. One district is located within an affluent, suburban county with a rising population of Asian Indian families, and two are rural counties with large numbers of families experiencing poverty. Another county has a mix of rural and suburban schools within its school district. Situated within this county is a small, culturally diverse city that has its own separate school district.

Within the university's elementary/special education program, approximately 150 juniors and 150 seniors are placed at elementary schools throughout these school districts each year. Juniors and first-semester seniors participate in internships at their schools three days per week, while seniors are present at their schools full-time in their final semester. Students are divided into geographically-based cohorts; currently, the program has seven cohorts with five to six elementary schools (PDS partner schools) connected to each cohort. About eight university students are placed at each elementary school, usually four juniors and four seniors.

The university students who take *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities* are seniors in their final semester. These pre-service teachers are earning a dual degree (with certification) in both elementary and special education. When they take the course, the seniors are simultaneously completing a semester of full-time student teaching that includes six weeks of taking over the planning and teaching of all subjects. *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities* is a hybrid course with online components and periodic face-to-face meetings that occur in the late afternoon following the school day's conclusion. The course is focused on growing seniors' awareness of social justice issues and how to support children and families from diverse backgrounds, including differences in race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, religion, and language.

The capstone project in *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities* is the completion of a service learning project and an accompanying paper. Seniors work with peers who are student teaching at the same elementary school to design and implement a project addressing an area of need at the school. To begin the project, the seniors research the areas of need at their school by talking with stakeholders such as teachers and administrators and consulting their school's improvement plan. After determining a project topic and receiving approval from school administrators and the course professor, the seniors investigate appropriate methods for addressing their school's area of need to ensure their project implementation is research-based. Next, they plan and implement their project, which involves determining a target population of children, developing and teaching lesson plans, and collecting data to determine the project's impact. Seniors are expected to teach at least two 30-minute lessons per week for a minimum of eight weeks. At the conclusion of the project, the seniors analyze the data they have collected to evaluate their project's success and consider recommendations they could make to administrators at their school. Once the implementation is complete, seniors write about the project and its results. Afterward, they are asked to present their projects to juniors and faculty within their cohorts during the last week of the spring semester.

Data Sources

For the purpose of the analysis, we examined past service learning projects completed by the seniors we have taught in *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities*. Danielle (first author) has taught the course since 2017 and supported the completion of 23 projects between 2017 and 2019, while Diana (second author) has taught the course since 2018 and supported the completion of 28 projects between 2018 and 2020. We each analyzed and coded our own students' service learning projects separately and afterward reviewed our findings with each other to ensure consensus. In total, we analyzed 51 projects completed by our seniors between 2017 and 2020.

Framework

For our analysis, we used Gibson's (2018) framework for social change, which identifies types of social action ranging from philanthropy to community organizing. Because a goal of social justice work is to solve social problems and remedy injustice, we believed a framework for social change would be well-suited to the purpose of our analysis. Although Gibson's (2018) framework is meant to describe a variety of ways that people can work toward social change, for

our purposes, we conceptualized the framework as a hierarchy. The framework includes four types, or pillars, of social action:

- *Philanthropy*, or offering resources in support of a cause (e.g., giving money or goods to a charitable organization)
- *Direct service*, or providing some kind of needed service to a group of people (e.g., tutoring English learners to improve their English skills)
- *Politics and advocacy*, or working to change laws and policies or raise public awareness of an issue (e.g., attending a legislative session to advocate for a new law, participating in a march to raise awareness about a cause)
- *Community organizing and development*, or working with a community to solve social problems (e.g., creating a task force of parents, teachers, and students to examine bullying in local schools and implement steps to reduce or eliminate bullying)

We viewed *philanthropy* and *direct service* as lower forms of social action because although they offer needed resources and services to people impacted by a social problem, these forms do not involve taking action to eliminate the root of the problem. As Gibson (2018) suggests, these forms address the symptoms of the problem and not the causes. We viewed *politics and advocacy* and *community organizing and development* as higher forms because these actions are aimed at the broader goal of eliminating a social problem through advocacy and community efforts. These types of social action go beyond mitigating the impacts of a problem by attempting to develop a solution to the problem itself.

Data Analysis

To conduct our analysis, we reviewed all key assessment papers completed by groups of seniors who took *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities* with us in previous semesters; reviewing these key assessment papers reacquainted us with the projects that the seniors designed and implemented. After this review, we independently analyzed and categorized the projects completed by our own students according to the four types of social action (Gibson, 2018); Danielle categorized all of the projects from students that she has taught, and Diana categorized all of the projects from students in her classes. Following this independent categorization, Danielle and Diana met in person and discussed their independent analysis and reconciled differences. Interpretations were discussed until full agreement was achieved. In the next section, we address our findings and what we learned from this analysis.

Findings: Analysis of Service Learning Projects, 2017-2020

Findings from our analysis suggest that all of the senior groups chose service learning projects that provided a direct service (Gibson, 2018), offering necessary academic or social supports to the students at their elementary schools. Within 51 total projects, only two groups met an additional pillar of change aside from providing a direct service. One group was able to tie in philanthropic services by conducting a canned food drive. Another group moved further along the hierarchy towards politics and advocacy; after group members concluded their direct service work with the elementary students at their school, they worked with these children to host a community resource fair and disseminate information to others.

All service learning projects that occurred between 2017-2020 addressed either an academic or social need at the school. The topics of the service learning projects included math

support, English language arts support, study skills, and socioemotional skills and strategies. English language arts was the most popular topic chosen within all service learning projects: 21 out of 51 groups (41%) chose to work on either reading, writing, or speaking skills. Within the 21 groups, 14 chose to focus on reading, providing support in reading comprehension, reading engagement, phonics, and sight word skills; five groups worked on improving students' writing; and two groups worked to improve students' English-speaking proficiency with English language learners.

In these groups, the seniors created engaging lessons that provided specific and targeted supports to the students. For example, there were a few groups who chose reading engagement as their topic. The seniors noticed that many students hated to read, and they sought to change the students' perceptions of reading: They wanted the students to realize that reading could be enjoyable and pleasant. Working towards the goal of having students develop a love for reading, the seniors brought to class a curated selection of books based on the students' interests and hobbies. Moreover, the seniors had students bring in and share books that they enjoyed. They provided supports for students to conduct a "book talk," where students could discuss and describe the books they enjoyed reading. This opportunity allowed the students to share their ideas about what made the books engaging, as well as to provide an opportunity for other students to hear about books that they might be interested in reading. Additionally, the seniors also provided support for students to write book reviews, which were displayed in the classroom and on hallway bulletin boards for all students in the school to view. By providing access to high-interest books and allowing students to share their ideas about books they liked reading, the seniors were able to demonstrate that reading could be a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

The second most popular topic that pre-service teachers chose for their service learning projects was socio-emotional learning. Sixteen groups of seniors (31%) chose to work with students who were struggling socially or behaviorally. The topics within socio-emotional learning were varied, depending on the age group that the seniors chose: Some groups focused on identifying positive social behaviors and self-monitoring strategies, and others taught students strategies to help cope with anxiety or anger. Seniors who were working with older elementary-aged students supported them with developing self-respect as well as the social skills needed to help with the transition from elementary school (fifth grade) to middle school (sixth grade).

The third most popular topic among the service learning projects was improving mathematics. Ten groups (19%) focused on strategies and supports to improve students' mathematical abilities. Many of these groups emphasized improving math fluency and math facts; others addressed problem-solving strategies with word problems. The remaining four service learning project groups selected something other than math, English language arts, or socio-emotional learning. Two groups focused on study skills, and the other two groups focused on student motivation to attend school.

As mentioned briefly at the beginning of our Findings section, a few groups created service learning projects that met the criteria of two pillars of social change. In addition to providing a direct service by working with students who had socio-emotional needs, one group also provided philanthropic services by having these students conduct a canned food drive, receiving donations from the entire school community. These seniors were able to develop students' social skills through the collaborative task of collecting canned food to donate to the local food bank, which involved composing messages about the food drive that were broadcast

on the morning announcements, counting the number of cans donated by children in each grade level, and reporting each grade level's contributions. Through the philanthropic activity of collecting canned food and donating it to the food bank, students were able to learn valuable prosocial skills. Although philanthropy is considered a lower hierarchical level within our interpretation of the pillars of social change framework (Gibson, 2018), it is worth noting that the seniors created a service learning project that went beyond the four walls of the school and benefited the local community through their project. This group produced one of the very few projects which impacted the community beyond the elementary school.

The second service learning project that encompassed two pillars of social change met both the criteria for direct service and the advanced hierarchical level, politics and advocacy. In this project, the seniors provided a literacy intervention to students, but the project also addressed another need identified by the school principal: access to resources and information about community issues. The seniors taught lessons designed to help the students improve their research and informational reading comprehension skills, and the students applied their learning by studying and writing about important community issues, such as water safety, internet safety, and healthy eating. As a culmination of the project, the group hosted a community fair at the school to raise public awareness of these local issues and to provide resources to the community. The public was invited to attend this resource fair and learn more about issues that may affect their lives or impact the local community, and local nonprofit organizations were present to offer information about their services. Posters showcasing the students' research findings were displayed at the fair, and similar to an academic or professional conference, the students stood by their posters to share information with attendees. By teaching the students reading comprehension skills through a research project centered on issues that were important to the community, and then creating a resource fair where students were able to share their learning with the public, these seniors were able to extend their impact beyond the school to reach the level of politics and advocacy.

Although these two service learning project groups were the only groups that met more than one pillar of social change, two additional groups completed projects that went beyond providing a direct service to the small group of children who partook in their project. These two service learning projects made an impact on the whole school community.

One group, which called themselves the "Recycling Club," used the theme of recycling throughout their reading skills remediation. The seniors asked students to read and learn about all aspects of recycling. Then, as an engagement activity, the students created posters that shared information about recycling, and their work was displayed on the walls throughout the elementary school. Additionally, as part of the club, the students went around to each classroom every week to collect paper for recycling. By sharing information about recycling through posters and by collecting paper to be recycled each week, the service learning project participants were given opportunities to advocate for the care of the environment through recycling. These actions provided opportunities to spread awareness about recycling and shape the consciousness of children in the school, which is a step towards advocacy, a higher form of social change.

The second group, which called themselves the "Elite Eagles Writing Club," focused on writing enrichment. In their club, students practiced informational writing skills by creating scripts for videos that were used to inform parents and guardians of activities and games that

could be played at home in order to support students' learning. First, students learned informational writing skills. Then, the students created scripts for their videos. Afterward, the students acted out their scripts and recorded their scripts on video. Lastly, the videos were uploaded to the school's website for parents to access. Parents were able to watch the videos to understand the directions of the activities and games which they could implement to support and extend their children's learning at home. This group's service learning project extended beyond benefiting only the students in the group; it provided a service to the parents and guardians of the students at the school, which broadened the impact of their service learning project on the local school community. Tori and Kristina, who are the third and fourth authors of this paper, respectively, were in charge of the design and implementation of the Elite Eagles Writing Club. Both are alumni of the elementary/special education program and currently teaching within the university's PDS partner schools. In the section below, they offer additional details about their project and how it aligns to the framework for social change (Gibson, 2018) from their perspective, which corroborates Danielle and Diana's analysis of this project.

Alumni Perspectives: Elite Eagles Writing Club

We designed the Elite Eagles Writing Club to support the academic goals of our elementary placement school. The primary objective of the project was to increase the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores, as outlined in the school's annual improvement plan. Specifically, the school wished to improve informational writing scores. In addition to working with students to increase writing scores, the school administration also requested that we create supplemental videos to educate parents and community members about the school's Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) games and activities designed to support students' academic progress. Accordingly, a secondary purpose of our service learning project was to support the school's APTT program, which aims to increase communication between parents and teachers concerning student scholastic success (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.).

In order to accomplish both goals, we chose to focus on writing scripts for the APTT videos. Our student population consisted of 16 fourth- and fifth-grade student ambassadors divided into three groups based on pre-assessment data. Each group focused on specific writing skills such as brainstorming, sequencing, transition words, editing, word choice, or clarity. Over 10 weeks, students met for 30 minutes twice weekly during the school-wide response to intervention (RTI) time. Each session began with a 5-10 minute mini-lesson that addressed a specific writing skill, followed by independent writing time where we conferenced one-on-one with students to provide additional instruction through guided writing. Once the first script was complete, each group filmed their video. We then administered a mid-assessment to analyze which skills to address while writing the second script, as well as to note the progress students had made in the first half of the program. We repeated the same instructional process for the second set of scripts, then administered a post-test to measure overall growth.

Our service learning project fell in the direct service level of Gibson's (2018) framework of social change. In collaboration with our partnership school, we worked directly with staff and students to provide writing instruction to a specific student population in response to a documented need for support. Students who were considered to be at risk and in need of interventions for grade-level standards received targeted instruction through the implementation

of this program in the school. We also guided and facilitated students in recording videos that were then shared with parents and community members.

Our partnership school has dedicated its time and resources to increasing parent involvement by reaching out to parents and stakeholders across several community needs. A few examples of our school's influence in the community included educating families on how to obtain a free library card and offering parents access to a resource room with books, games, and other activities for use at home with their children. The school worked diligently to fill in gaps for families with limited resources. In this way, our service learning project was close to operating within the community organizing and development pillar of Gibson's (2018) framework, since our partnership school had organized, designed, and implemented programs to affect change across social issues in the community. To be transparent, our relationship was a transitive one, as we did not intend to affect social change within this school community; any benefits to the community in this aspect were due solely to our school's relationship with stakeholders.

Discussion

In summary, although there was one group that reached the level of politics and advocacy and a few groups that were approaching this category, the vast majority of groups fell into the category of direct service, in which seniors implemented projects that provided a service to students addressing academic or socio-emotional needs. We believe there are several reasons why the majority of service learning projects fell into the direct service category for social change. First, the seniors were required to complete the service learning projects within their field placement schools, limiting options for impacting the broader community. Second, the seniors were expected to select a topic related to their school's improvement plan, which was created by school district personnel to identify areas of improvement for the school. These improvement plans typically targeted academic areas of growth, socio-emotional development of the children, or the development of prosocial behaviors and positive school culture. Third, when the seniors were implementing their service learning projects, they were also student teaching on a full-time basis and completing edTPA, a performance assessment that leads to teacher certification. Quite understandably, these responsibilities may have limited the time our seniors had to devise projects that could serve their schools and the needs of the broader community. We believe that these reasons may have prompted our seniors to choose projects that provide more direct services to students rather than extending their reach to community-based projects.

We pondered one question after analyzing the data: whether it was possible to consistently enact higher levels of social change, such as advocacy or community organizing and development, within these service learning projects. With the current service learning project guidelines, reaching higher levels of the hierarchy would be challenging because of the established standards for meeting specific academic achievement goals. After all, service learning is supposed to be a blend of academic learning and service (Harrison et al., 2016; Hildenbrand & Schultz, 2015).

However, with some changes to the requirements of the service learning project, we believe that enacting projects at the higher levels of social change is a possibility. For example, removing the requirement to link the project to the school's improvement plan would provide seniors with more options when selecting and designing their projects. Recently, a school in a

nearby community received media attention when students sent racist and hateful messages to peers via social media. Regrettably, racism continues to be a pressing problem in the schools and communities of our region as it is elsewhere in the United States. Our seniors could be responsive to these problems by designing a project in which they collaborate with students to research and implement actions that schools and individuals should take to eliminate racism. These actions might include advocating for curricular changes built on principles of anti-racism (Husband, 2012) or forming a school-based organization dedicated to promoting intercultural respect, raising awareness about the impacts of racism, and eliminating bullying, acts of hate, and discrimination within the school. Such efforts could also be extended into the community if seniors and students are permitted to share their ideas and collaborate with community organizations dedicated to anti-racism, which aligns to Mitchell's (2008) point that critical service learning, an approach aimed at creating social change, must involve sharing goals with the broader community.

Making some changes to the service learning project, such as removing the requirement to choose a project aligned to the school's improvement plan, could give our seniors more latitude to design projects aligned to the goals of social justice while continuing to serve the needs of the university's PDS partners. Instead of referring to the school's improvement plan, seniors could work with teachers, students, administrators, and others to identify areas of need at the school that are not necessarily articulated in the improvement plan. In addition, we wonder if completing *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities* and the service learning project in a different semester would help our students design projects aligning to the higher levels of social change, such as politics and advocacy, and community organizing and development. While our university students always have many demands on their time given their dual major and internship requirements, the spring semester of senior year is the most time-intensive of all. Shifting the course to the spring or summer of junior year or the fall of senior year might provide them with more time to plan meaningful projects beyond the school walls and into the community.

As another solution to address the issue of time, we could develop the service learning project into an assignment spanning multiple semesters. In our program, the seniors take a content literacy course in the fall semester before they begin student teaching and before they start implementing the service learning project. Within this content literacy course, seniors learn evidence-based practices for teaching children to read and write within various academic disciplines. Perhaps within the content literacy course, the seniors could work with children at their placement schools to identify a meaningful community or social issue. Within the context of investigating this issue, seniors could teach elementary students about conducting research, reading and synthesizing sources, and academic writing. At the same time, the seniors might explore the issue themselves through reading relevant scholarship and talking to community stakeholders, and they could begin developing some components of their capstone paper such as the literature review. In the spring semester as the seniors enter student teaching, they might continue working with the same group of children to implement a project related to the chosen issue, such as engaging in advocacy or building awareness of the issue within the local community. Powell et al. (2001) describe an outstanding example of fourth grade children in Kentucky who practiced and applied their literacy skills to successfully save Black Mountain, the highest peak in the state, from the environmental destruction caused by strip mining. The real-

life project described in this article models how academic skills like reading and writing can be practiced in the context of advocating for a better world. Essentially, we are suggesting that students could begin building the background for their service learning project in the fall semester within their content literacy course and implementing the actual project in the spring semester when they take *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities*. By spreading the service learning project across the fall and spring semesters and integrating it in two courses, the issue of time could be addressed. Redesigning the service learning project in this way would allow elementary children to have input on the issue addressed in the project, which opens more possibilities for more meaningful projects, and it would provide the seniors and their student groups more time to brainstorm and implement a project with social justice-oriented goals.

As instructors of *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities*, we recognize a need for providing more scaffolding to our seniors if we expect their projects to achieve the aims of social justice and align to higher levels of Gibson's (2018) framework. First, we recognize that some of the seniors may not be permanent residents of the communities where they teach, and they may be unaware of the social issues these communities face. We acknowledge that it takes time to get to know the community's issues, goals, and values. As instructors, we could be more deliberate about linking the topics taught in the course to local issues and current events, especially because Danielle and Diana both live and work in the communities where the university has PDS partnerships. In some cases, our knowledge of our community could be more intimate than the seniors' knowledge. Taking the step to link course content to local issues might help seniors generate new ideas for projects, ideas that may not have occurred to them without this more intimate, "insider" knowledge of local communities. Second, we realize that many of the seniors may not fully understand what social justice looks like in practice. While much of our class time is spent discussing social justice issues and the ways we can address them in schools, the seniors may need support with applying their learning in new ways. We could address this concern by sharing examples of social justice-oriented work that would be feasible to address in a semester-long project. For example, the literacy intervention/community resource fair project would be an excellent model to share with future seniors because it addressed a need of the school (improving students' reading skills) and a need of the community (raising awareness about relevant issues and providing access to resources and information). Sharing examples like this could inspire future seniors to be more creative and intentional about addressing social change in their service learning projects.

Danielle and Diana have experienced the service learning project from the perspective as instructors of *Strategies for Supporting Diverse Communities*. However, as alumni and current teachers within PDS schools, Tori and Kristina offer additional ideas about aligning the service learning projects to the higher levels of social change (Gibson, 2018). Their insights are useful to us (Danielle and Diana) as instructors, but they also have implications for the university's PDS partners. Their perspectives are shared next.

Alumni Perspectives: Service Learning for Social Justice

In order for future service learning projects to meet the highest goals of social justice, partnership schools must be willing to support pre-service teachers in such efforts. In our experience, partnership schools limited the activities that seniors were allowed to participate in. This might be due in part to the fact that pre-service teachers must use their partnership school's

annual improvement plan as a starting point when identifying a need. Typically, school improvement plans are constructed strictly on data-based academic needs within the student population and not underlying social issues. Another consideration for future success is time. We were required to complete our service learning project concurrently with our full-time student teaching and our teacher-certification assessment, edTPA. Consequently, we had to make concessions and prioritize how much time and effort we could pour into specific tasks. The time to work with the community on social issues was extremely limited. Additionally, we feel that further education regarding the framework for social change (Gibson, 2018) before beginning student teaching would benefit pre-service teachers in choosing, designing, and implementing service learning projects that meet the highest levels of social justice goals.

Conclusion

In its current form, the service learning project that our seniors complete is valuable for several reasons. The project provides the seniors with opportunities to learn about research-based practices and collect and analyze data to improve instruction, which are critical skills they will frequently utilize when they enter the teaching profession. Further, the project provides a service designed to address the needs of the university's K-5 PDS partner schools, helping the university sustain a mutually beneficial relationship with its partners. Nevertheless, we believe that our seniors' service learning projects can be more intentionally designed to address social justice goals with some adjustments to the requirements and additional scaffolding from instructors.

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Experiences of Novice Teacher Educators Focused on Advancing Equity Literacy with Teacher Candidates in School-University Partnerships: A Collaborative Self-Study

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Abstract: This collaborative self-study examines the experiences of three novice teacher educators focused on advancing equity literacy in their work with teacher candidates within a school-university partnership. For one year, we sought to intentionally embed equity concepts into our work with teacher candidates. This article discusses our resulting reflections and wonderings, our uncertainties, and how we overcame challenges in our work. We concluded that collaborative self-study as a methodology supports and enhances the growth of novice teacher educators; the need for support networks for each other and our school-university partners; and that messiness and tensions are inevitable in equity work. Our study seeks to fill the void in the literature on how teacher educators learn about advancing equity work.

KEYWORDS: Collaboration, equity, reflective journal, school-university partnership, self-study, support network, teacher candidate, teacher educator

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

Experiences of Novice Teacher Educators Focused on Advancing Equity Literacy with Teacher Candidates in School-University Partnerships: A Collaborative Self-Study

Novice teacher educators often face challenges as they move from educators to teacher educators in university contexts where mentoring and support systems for new teacher educators may be lacking. Cochran-Smith (2003) shares that,

> Despite the many expectations that US and other teacher educators around the world are striving to meet, there has been little attention to the development of a curriculum for educating teacher educators, or to local and larger policies that might support the development of what teacher educators need to know and do... (p. 5).

The void in the knowledge of how to educate teacher educators is compounded by the call for deliberate engagement in equity work. Goodlad, a leader in education, published postulates for teacher education that remain seminal ideas in educator preparation (1994). As Goodlad (1994) asserts in his Thirteenth Postulate: "Programs for the education of educators must be infused with an understanding of and commitment to the moral obligation of teachers to ensure equitable access to and engagement in the best possible K-12 education for all children and youths." (Goodlad, 1994. As cited in Polly et al., 2019, p.19) This emphasizes the need for teacher preparation programs to focus on equity within the K-12 setting. Further, Gorski and Swalwell (2015) introduced a framework called equity literacy positing, "its [equity literacy] central tenet is that any meaningful approach to diversity or multiculturalism relies more on teachers' understandings of equity and inequity and of justice and injustice…" (p. 36). Equity literacy suggests four abilities for educators and students (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015):

1. Recognize even subtle forms of bias, discrimination, and inequity.
2. Respond to bias, discrimination, and inequity in a thoughtful and equitable manner.
3. Redress bias, discrimination, and inequity, not only by responding to interpersonal bias, but also by studying the ways in which bigger social change happens.
4. Cultivate and sustain bias-free and discrimination-free communities, which requires an understanding that doing so is a basic responsibility for everyone in a civil society. (p. 37)

This collaborative self-study examines our experiences as novice teacher educators focused on advancing equity literacy in our work with teacher candidates within a school-university partnership. The context of the school-university partnership is ideal for conceptualizing the work of teacher education focused on advancing equity-based teaching. As Foley and Rodger (2013) describe, "[Equity literacy] is a model that is not constrained, contained, or dominated by what is best for business, but is liberated by the principles of what is best for students and society" (p. 71). Collectively, we approached this study with the shared perspective that equity-literate teachers are essential for both students and society. We identified our school-university partnership as a unique and shared space where we could work together to advance equity literacy in our work with teacher candidates, and where we could engage in a collaborative self-study of this work.

Purpose

The purpose of this collaborative self-study is to describe our experiences as we sought to intentionally embed equity concepts into our work with teacher candidates. This brought

about the resulting reflections and wonderings, our uncertainties, and how we overcame challenges within our work. We explored the following research questions:

- What are our experiences as supervisors and teacher educators focused on advancing equity literacy with our teacher candidates?
- How do we, as novice teacher educators, navigate the role of equity-centered supervision?

Relevant Literature

Research has continuously shown the importance of preparing teachers to teach diverse student populations with a specific focus on social justice and equity (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gay, 2000; Gorski et al., 2012; Taylor & Kitchen, 2008). However, for some teacher educators, it is a daunting task to consider how to prepare teacher candidates for this work, particularly when novice teacher educators have not had experience with teaching this content before.

In one of the largest and most comprehensive studies of teacher educator preparation, Goodwin et al. (2014) highlight the need for teacher educator preparation to include knowledge for practice, in practice, and of practice. Through analysis of 293 surveys and 20 follow-up interviews with new teacher educators, they revealed how graduates felt about their preparation in their doctoral programs. Highlights included, "(a) happenstance in becoming engaged in teacher education, (b) luck related to doctoral experiences, and (c) lack of explicit development of teaching skills or pedagogies related to teacher educating" (p. 291). These findings suggest the complexity of teacher educator preparation and lack of opportunities for structured learning related to becoming a teacher educator. This collaborative self-study builds on the work of Goodwin et al. (2104) by sharing our experiences as we sought to intentionally embed equity concepts into our work with teacher candidates for the first time. We are committed to advancing this work in our roles as teacher educators within school-university partnerships working toward the goals and structures of professional development schools.

In her recent study on graduate students committed to equity, Dunn (2016) analyzed data compiled from 9 doctoral students attending two different teacher preparation programs sharing a similar mission committed to equity and social justice. Through document analysis and semi-structured interviews, Dunn found that "(a) there is a disjuncture between the rhetoric and reality of social justice teacher educator preparation, (b) preparing to be a teacher educator for social justice is complicated by the neoliberalization of teacher preparation, and (c) social justice commitments are both challenging and powerful to uphold in this climate" (2016, p.12). Doctoral student participants expressed, "there was often a difference or gap between programs' stated missions and the actual experiences they had as doctoral students and/or first-year professors" (p.12) and "they felt further challenged by the landscape of teacher education that reflected a turn toward neoliberal, accountability-focused measures" (p. 23). Unlike Dunn (2016), we find there is alignment between our college's mission and our commitment to equity and social justice, which is one of the reasons we felt the need to study our own experiences.

In their recent qualitative study, Stillman et al. (2019) examined teacher educator professional learning through a monthly informal learning space. The goal was to determine how these meetings transformed teacher educator commitment to social justice. Over the course of a three-year period, doctoral students met monthly to engage in a dialogue about social justice and

teacher educator learning. Through written reflection, memos, video-recorded sessions, and interviews, they learned that "critical pedagogies have a powerful role to play – as tools/spaces for teacher educator development, and also for constructing situated knowledge for teacher educators that can cultivate transformation in the field and beyond" (Stillman et al., 2019, p. 282). Similarly, we used this meeting structure to organize our work in this study.

Overall, this literature guided the organization of our study and how we thought about our roles as teacher educators committed to social justice. Previous research demonstrates that while teacher preparation programs must emphasize equity and social justice issues in order to prepare candidates to work with diverse student populations, additional research is needed to understand how teacher educators can be adequately prepared and supported as they engage in this work. Previous studies have indicated that teacher educators experience challenges and complications in engaging in social justice work, but that informal learning spaces and collaborations offer potential structures that can support and strengthen this work. Our collaborative self-study aims to contribute to this conversation by sharing our experiences navigating the role of novice teacher educators seeking to develop socially just, equity literate teacher candidates.

Rationale

Teacher education literature has called for teacher preparation programs to promote the development of culturally responsive, equity-literate teachers for quite some time (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gay, 2000; Gorski et al., 2012; Taylor & Kitchen, 2008). However, there is a need for research that examines how to prepare teacher educators to engage in this work-(Cochran-Smith, 2003; Han et al. 2014; Jacobs, 2015). The first of Nine Essentials shared by the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) calls for "A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community" (NAPDS, 2008). As novice teacher educators, we are committed to advancing this work in our roles within school-university partnerships working toward the goals and structures of professional development schools.

Methodology

This self- study examined the following research questions:

- What are our experiences as supervisors and teacher educators focused on advancing equity literacy with our teacher candidates?
- How do we, as novice teacher educators, navigate the role of equity-centered supervision?

Self-study can be defined as "intentional and systematic inquiry into one's own practice" (Dinkelman, 2003, p. 8). Self-study has been described as an important and useful component in the work of teacher educators in helping them to develop their knowledge, to understand the complexities of their work, and to promote reflective teaching, among other aims (Berry, 2007; Dinkelman 2003; Kulkarni et al., 2019; Louie et al., 2003; Morettini et al., 2019). In this study, we used a collaborative self-study approach, which builds upon self-study principles to include both individual and collaborative processes around a shared question or topic. Collaborative self-

study merges social support, peer input, and collegial relationships with the self-study process around a shared research focus (Louie et al., 2003).

Since teaching itself involves "a relation between persons" (Coia & Taylor, 2009, p. 171), we selected this methodology because we believe that we, as teachers and teacher educators, can improve our practice by examining ourselves with others (Morettini et al., 2019). Morettini et al. explain, "self-study provides a method for exploration and reflection for faculty researchers who aim to better understand some aspect of the nature of their work" (2019, p. 354). Our methodology is grounded in the idea that teachers can problematize themselves as insiders looking in, but also as outsiders looking in and insiders looking out. Coia & Taylor (2009) explain in this type of research, the researcher's role should be blurred, neither completely subjective (insider) nor completely objective (outsider). In addition, we are ever-changing and dynamic individuals; and the use of collaborative self-study approaches allows us to enhance not just our understandings of self, but of others as well (Coia & Taylor, 2009). Furthermore, as Kulkarni et al. (2019) adds, "validation of practices serves as one goal of self-study in which researchers test, share, and challenge teaching exemplars" (p. 4). Throughout the study, we shared ideas, challenged our assumptions, and validated one another's teaching practices.

Researchers have found that collaborative self-study within learning communities is a structure that can be used to support conversations about equity and social justice (Han et al, 2014; Jacobs, 2006; Kulkarni et al., Morretini et al., 2019; Pithouse et al., 2009;). For example, Han et al. (2014) used a collaborative self-study methodology to explore how teacher educators define, enact, and navigate culturally responsive pedagogy in their respective roles in higher education. In this study, the researchers identified themes and shared tensions across their experiences, as well as opportunities that helped them evolve as culturally responsive educators, which included the support from one another as critical friends, and research engagement around their shared questions. Using a similar approach, we engaged in a collaborative self-study to explore our experiences as novice teacher educators working to develop equity-literate teacher candidates within our school-university partnership work as supervisors and instructors.

Context

Within the context of a large, research-intensive university, we, three novice teacher educators, work closely with many local K-12 schools to develop strong school-university partnerships that support both the development of our teacher candidates and the needs of partner schools. Teacher candidates in our elementary education program engage in four semesters of internship experiences in connection with these local schools. They are grouped using a cohort model, whereby they remain with the same group of peers (approximately 20-30 students) and in most cases, the same school placement, during these four semesters. During semesters one and two, which are named "Level 1" and "Level 2," teacher candidates' internship takes place one full day per week at their school site, while they also engage in coursework throughout the rest of the week. Teacher candidates remain with the same collaborating teacher (CT) through Levels 1 and 2. In the following semester, "Level 3," interns move to a new classroom placement at the same school, and they continue to take coursework while engaging in their internship two full back-to-back days per week. During the "Final Internship" semester (Level 4), teacher candidates remain in their Level 3

classroom, but transition to a full-time (5 full days per week) experience. During each level of internship, teacher candidates attend weekly seminars that last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes led by their university supervisor.

An expansion of our school-university partnership is an innovative Professional Development School (PDS) network that incorporates a teacher leadership graduate certificate program tailored directly to the teachers participating in the program. This PDS network features a clustering of elementary, middle, and high schools within a feeder pattern. One of the school sites in this study is an elementary school in the PDS network, following the same cohort model described above. Two CTs at the school site are part of this teacher leadership program that highlights a focus on equity literacy.

Working within school-university partnership contexts and in collaboration with one another allows us to gain a deep understanding of the schools where our teacher candidates were placed. Our deeply embedded work in these contexts enhances our abilities to make connections between the school contexts and the topics introduced in our classes and seminars, and in particular to equity issues, to the work our teacher candidates are experiencing in the field. For this study, our research takes place at the intersection of our shared goals, overlapping responsibilities in our work with teacher candidates, and desire to collaboratively study our practice and support our collective growth as teacher educators committed to advancing equity.

Participants

Teacher candidates' course instructors and supervisors aim to collaborate and engage with the school sites in a variety of ways in our program. In this study, we worked as both supervisors and instructors of teacher candidates as they engaged in their internship experiences and related coursework, and we continuously sought to make strong connections between coursework and internship experiences. For the year in which this research took place, the three of us shared some of the same students for different courses. For example, one of us taught coursework to a cohort that had another one of us as a field supervisor. Similarly, two of us taught the same course to different groups at the same time, allowing us to collaborate and co-plan within each context.

Each of the co-researchers in this study is a former elementary teacher and a current doctoral candidate in Teacher Education or Special Education. We approached this self-study with our shared interest in advancing equity literacy in our work with teacher candidates. For this study, all three of us engaged in the supervision of teacher candidates, including observation cycles and the facilitation of weekly seminars. As supervisors, we spent at least one full day a week at a school with our teacher candidates. Two of us also taught sections of a course on classroom management and how to create an effective and differentiated learning environment. Additionally, one of the researchers co-taught courses in the PDS network's teacher leadership program. Our multiple overlapping roles add to the fruitfulness of this study. In addition, we engaged with a larger group of equity-minded faculty advisors, mentors, and doctoral students from whom we could seek advice and support when needed.

Researcher 1: Amber.

Teaching Background. Prior to beginning my doctoral program, I taught elementary school (grades 3, 4, and 5) in a large, urban school district in Southwest Florida for 10 years. Both schools I taught at were considered high needs, serving socioeconomically disadvantaged students with a high rate of racial and ethnic diversity. The schools in which I completed my student teaching during my teacher preparation program were a stark contrast to the school I was hired at - serving a predominantly white student body coming from affluent families. I was ill prepared to navigate the challenges I would soon face, from students bringing weapons and drugs to class, to being assaulted by a student. In fact, the future of my educational career was defined by this pivotal incident of assault, by a 10-year old child who was previously diagnosed with Bipolar disorder. The school resource officer and the principal encouraged me to join them in their office so they could assist me with formally pressing charges against my student, only if I wished. Pressing charges on an otherwise loving child with special needs seemed unfathomable. All I could think about in that moment was the urgency in which I needed to equip myself with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively teach and support children, especially when their school has already given up on them. I began a journey of learning about equity and social justice as I proudly continued teaching at the same school for several more years, serving in a variety of roles which included being a Collaborating (Mentor) Teacher for student teachers enrolled in the same teacher preparation program at the same university where I graduated. These experiences sparked my passion for learning about social justice and equity, which ultimately brought my journey full circle--from being a teacher candidate, a teacher, a Collaborating Teacher, to being a supervisor of teacher candidates and working with Collaborating Teachers, all in the same university and school district.

Current Program. I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Teacher Education program focused on social justice and equity in education. Within this program, I have served as a graduate assistant and supervised elementary education teacher candidates throughout all levels of their development. I also served as a Co-Instructor for teachers earning a graduate certificate in Teacher Leadership. My main area of research interest includes preparing teacher educators for socially just teaching. My goal as a teacher educator is to support the development of equity literate teacher candidates through the experiences in their teacher preparation program. This study has enabled me to examine my practices and learning as a novice teacher educator.

Equity Experiences. In the first semester of this study, I supervised a cohort of level 1 teacher candidates who were concurrently enrolled in the course "Creating and Differentiating the Learning Environment" taught by Samantha. At that time, Nicholas was supervising a different cohort of teacher candidates at the same school site. Because we were at the same school site on the same days, Nicholas and I had the opportunity to collaborate on the needs of the teacher candidates specific to the school site as well as the integration of the course he and Samantha were both teaching at the time. In the second semester of this study, I continued supervising the same cohort of students in their Level 2 internship. In addition, Nicholas and I continued our collaboration as we both supervised a new cohort of Level 1 interns at a different school. During this time, Nicholas taught the course "Creating and Differentiating the Learning Environment" to our new cohort. Samantha and I continued our collaboration through our work as Level 2 supervisors. Adding a thread of connectivity, Samantha was previously a supervisor

at the same school site where Nicholas and I supervised during the first semester of this study. Our unique connectedness enabled us to approach this study and our work as supervisors with an understanding of all aspects of the teacher candidates' teacher preparation experiences. Further, my approach to supervising teacher candidates is influenced by my own teaching background and encounters with issues in equity and social justice and the support of equity-minded peers and mentors.

Researcher 2: Nicholas.

Teaching Background. Prior to beginning my doctoral program, I taught elementary school (primarily 3-5th grade) for eight years in a large, urban school district in Southwest Florida. The school was very much supported by the community. Family involvement was very common, and many students came from families of high socioeconomic status. The school's academic performance was recognized each year with multiple awards for student excellence. About three-quarters of the student population was white. Student success was a main priority and the school had a large gifted population, so it was important to differentiate for the high achieving students, while providing the small population of students with disabilities the individualized support they needed as well. This was also the school where I completed my final internship during my teacher preparation program. As such, these experiences shaped my limited understanding of social justice issues in education.

Current Program. I began this study as a doctoral candidate in the Special Education program focused on leadership for inclusive education. My main area of interest is how to be inclusive of LGBTQ youth in the classroom. Specifically, it is important to eliminate marginalization of LGBTQ youth and increase the visibility of LGBTQ topics in curriculum. Having supportive school personnel is also another important aspect to the inclusion of LGBTQ youth in schools. It is this focus that I keep at the forefront of my work with my teacher candidates. Throughout my coursework, I learned about issues of social justice and equity in schools and began to focus my learning on how to support teacher candidates in their future classrooms. When I began working in new school contexts as a doctoral student and supervisor, I realized I had a passion for learning more about these topics and made it my focus for my research agenda.

Equity Experiences. I have been supervising teacher candidates at all levels of internship for the past 4 years in the elementary and special education programs. I also teach coursework that is tied to the clinical experiences of my teacher candidates. During this study, I taught a section of the "Creating and Differentiating the Learning Environment" course which afforded me the opportunity to collaborate with Samantha on our lesson plans each week. I also supervised two groups of teacher candidates in their Final Internship field experience. One of the schools I supervised at was a site for a new group of Level 1 teacher candidates who were supervised by Amber during the same semester. This group of Level 1's was concurrently enrolled in Samantha's course (the same course I taught that semester). The overlapping contexts meant that there were many opportunities for collaboration between Amber and I related to the work her students were receiving in Samantha's course. This led to many fruitful discussions regarding course curriculum and expectations. At times, I would even sit in on their conferences and seminars and provide clarification on assignments and course expectations.

Researcher 3: Samantha.

Teaching Background. Prior to becoming a doctoral student, I taught elementary school (primarily third grade) for seven years in urban, rural, and suburban schools in the Chicagoland area, with experiences teaching in both public and charter schools. My early teaching experiences in high-poverty area schools (97-99% free/reduced lunch) serving primarily students of color were drastically different than my student teaching experiences, and I went through shifts in my beliefs and approaches as I began to explore equity and social justice pedagogies that contradicted the "no excuses," almost militaristic policies of the early schools in which I taught. These shifts, prompted in part by what I perceived as the failure of such policies and in part by learning about culturally responsive teaching as I began my Master's program, were life-altering for me as an educator. I had had almost no experience learning about issues of diversity, equity, or social justice in my undergraduate teacher preparation program. I wondered why I had not learned about these issues in my coursework, and I became interested in not only my learning in this area but also in how to facilitate others' learning around these topics to enact change in schools. Ultimately, these experiences led me to pursue a full-time Teacher Education doctoral program.

Current Program. I approached this study as a doctoral student in the second year of my Ph.D. program in Teacher Education, with an emphasis in social justice education. My research interests include preservice and inservice teacher learning related to equity and social justice issues, teacher leadership, clinically-based teacher education, and elementary student voice. As a doctoral student and graduate assistant, I supervise elementary education teacher candidates across their program, and I teach related seminars and coursework. Throughout this study, I also worked with professors-in-residence at a local elementary school teaching on-site graduate level coursework related to teacher leadership and equity to a cohort of teacher leaders.

Equity Experiences. During one semester in this study, I supervised a cohort of teacher candidates completing their Final Internship at an elementary school. In the second semester of this study, I taught the course "Creating and Differentiating the Learning Environment" to a group of teacher candidates that were being supervised in their Level 1 internship (at a school one day per week) by Amber. Similar to my experiences the previous year supervising and teaching, this work allowed for various opportunities to explore equity issues with teacher candidates. As a novice teacher educator, I have appreciated the support I receive from faculty and other doctoral students as I make decisions about activities, readings, discussions, and approaches for effectively integrating an equity focus into my work with teachers. My work continues to be shaped by my past learning from doctoral courses related to equity, my ongoing learning and research both individually and with others, and mentorship from others who are also to committed to this work.

Data Collection

To collect data for this self-study, we utilized co-journaling, self-reflections, in-person meetings, and interviews of one another to engage in discussion about our practice as teacher educators including challenges we faced, successes, and questions that came up. We collected our data on a biweekly basis for a year. Specifically, through each of these data sources, we

reflected upon how we embed equity into our teaching and supervision practice, and our experiences in doing so. We took notes and/or audio-recorded and transcribed our in-person meetings and interviews, and we reflected collaboratively in a shared journal space in addition to keeping our own reflective journals. These written reflections often took a narrative form as we recorded stories in our own journals and as we shared stories and responded to one another in our collaborative journal. According to Coia & Taylor (2009), the use of narrative writing can help individuals better understand their own struggles and decision making. Then, writings can be discussed in a collaborative group and audio recorded as an additional data source. We often followed this structure by engaging in discussions in our in-person meetings to share and reflect on our journaling.

Data Analysis

We analyzed our data for this self-study with an inductive approach (Miles et al., 2014). First, we individually completed an initial round of analysis of our co-journal, self-reflections, and transcripts of our in-person meetings looking for patterns in the data. In this initial round, we first each read through all of our data. Then, we individually open coded all of the data in order to describe and categorize it. After this round, we met to compare our codes and patterns, and we collaboratively began the second round of analysis. In this second round, we used axial coding to identify categories across our data. An axial code is "a category label ascribed to a group of open codes whose referents (the phenomena being described) are similar in meaning" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 671). We then used the categories we identified through this process to identify themes in the data (Saldaña, 2009). Openly sharing ideas, challenging our assumptions, and validating one another's practices were key elements in achieving trustworthiness. Thus, equal weight was placed on each of our codes. Three key themes emerged from our data analysis, which are discussed in the following section.

Findings

In this collaborative self-study, we aimed to explore our experiences as novice teacher educators working within a school-university partnership by answering our two research questions. Our findings about our experiences as supervisors and teacher educators focused on advancing equity literacy in our teacher candidates and how we navigated these roles are presented in this section.

Research Question # 1

What are our experiences as supervisors and teacher educators focused on advancing equity literacy with our teacher candidates?

Methodology as a Catalyst for Growth

While reflective practices in teacher education are known to be beneficial to support practice, we found that the use of a collaborative self-study as a methodology enhanced our individual and collective practices. Although this was not our initial intention as we began this study, it became increasingly clear as the study unfolded that the methodology we were using was contributing to our sense of support, our ability to navigate challenges and uncertainties, and

our individual development as teacher educators; and our data analysis confirmed this supposition. Over the course of the year, it became more evident that the collective aspect of our study allowed us to support each other as we reflected on our work, developed new ideas, and grappled with implementation to move our practice forward. Through the use of our reflective co-journaling, we were able to gain insight into each other's dilemmas, highlights of practices, and lingering questions. As we wrote back and forth in our co-journal, ideas, empathy, and support flourished. For example, Samantha shared an activity related to gender stereotypes she facilitated in her course that inspired Nicholas to try similar activities in the same course he was teaching. Samantha wrote, "This activity led to some great discussion about how gender is socially constructed and the role of teachers in avoiding/disrupting gender stereotypes in their classrooms." In response, Nicholas reflected,

> With support from Samantha, I added new activities and ways to think about the work we do in the course. I would not have been able to accomplish this without collaboration with Samantha. By having her look at my past lessons and activities through her own, new lens, I feel that it breathed a new life into the course this semester.

Amber agreed with Nicholas as he suggested we work together to reinforce similar ideas and activities into the teacher candidates' internship and seminar space. Nicholas shared, "It could be a really cool thing to bring some of the work Samantha wants to do in our course into your [Amber] seminar space."

Additionally, we emphasized that self-awareness and reflection cannot be overlooked by teacher educators and that our work involves not only learning about others, but also learning about ourselves—especially as we are tasked with teaching and advocating for diverse populations. Nicholas reflected,

> I think through this process, I gained some sense of confidence when thinking about equity and social justice in my practice enabling me to engage in more critical conversations with my teacher candidates than I have ever had in the past.

Amber also shared,

> Working on this collaborative self-study, I felt renewed knowing that I was not alone in trying to do what is best as a novice teacher educator…that there was a group of other people that had the same commitments to issues of equity. Not being alone in this was empowering as I gained so many ideas and resources.

We all highlighted the space that this study created for us as a space where we could openly talk about concerns and vulnerabilities. Our shared vision and collaborative conversations provided comfort with the unfamiliar and showed us the power that came from the lasting relationships we formed through the space we created during this study. Ultimately, we found that the process of engaging in a collaborative self-study supported our growth individually and collectively regarding equity work, including the development of new ideas and new wonderings as we moved our practice forward.

Research Question #2

How do we, as novice teacher educators, navigate the role of equity-centered supervision?

The Development of a Support Network

Through analysis of our data, another key finding was that our collaboration in this self-study led to the development of a strong support network among the three of us as novice teacher educators. Our relationships with a group of equity-minded faculty advisors and mentors added an additional level of support to our network that contributed to our overall learning and a greater sense of agency around engaging in equity work.

Each of us highlighted the helpfulness of our support network. Nicholas shared, "We probably talk on a daily basis, discussing many things we all have going on and getting feedback and support from one another who are also wondering how things work and the best possible ways to handle our dilemmas." Amber agreed when she said,

> Honestly, if it were not for the support I have from the two of you, I do not think my reflective practices alone would have taught me as much, and I know that I would not have benefited from the supportive pushback from our group.

Accountability was another benefit that we each expressed. As novice teacher educators, we worked together to move our practice forward during those times we felt uncomfortable and vulnerable. In one of Samantha's journal entries, she wrote, "I want to hold myself accountable to 'calling in' when my teacher candidates say or do something that is not inclusive or that is based in deficit thinking." She noted that sharing this with the others pushed her to follow through with this commitment. We also were each able to open up about instances we felt discomfort and offer support and feedback to one another. Samantha shared an example of this:

> It definitely felt a little awkward, and I was reflecting afterward about whether or not I responded the right way…but either way, I am glad I did respond and I hope that it will become more natural the more I practice. I want to develop my skills at 'calling in' without making students feel embarrassed or criticized.

The most common questions appearing in our data were "what do you think about this?", "how would you react in this situation?", and "how would you respond?". Being open with our questioning and providing feedback to each other pushed us in our development and provided a sense of motivation in hearing others' stories and suggestions. We all benefited from this support network as we encountered different situations with our teacher candidates, as shared in the following:

> One particular instance that comes to mind was a time we had a meeting a couple of days before I was having a post-conference with a teacher candidate about a lesson I observed, during which she used a book in her first-grade class that presented a really Eurocentric and deficit view of early America. I was glad I was able to share this dilemma in our support network and get feedback before I met with this teacher candidate, because our conversation really helped me to think through how to respond and it pushed me to be direct. Because I still felt new in my role as a supervisor and in my ability to meaningfully discuss equity issues, I can look back and reflect on previous circumstances where I presented certain ideas/issues/conversations in a "friendly" or comfortable way when I should have been more direct or been okay with it being uncomfortable in order to discuss what needed to be discussed. (Samantha)

Talking through issues together as we encountered similar situations allowed comfort and trust to build. The support network we created pushed us to be comfortable confronting issues that need to be confronted, even when it was not easy. We agreed that we felt an enhanced self-

awareness, a clearer understanding of preparing equity literate teacher candidates, and a stronger sense of agency because of our support network.

The empowerment Amber felt from engaging in this collaborative self-study translated to her work with the PDS network, specifically with the CTs in this network who were paired with her teacher candidates. With Nicholas also working at the same school site, an additional layer of support emerged through the collaboration of the CTs in the PDS network with the teacher candidate supervisor and course instructor—all engaging in work with the same cohort of teacher candidates. The structure of our unique connectedness enhanced our growth by drawing upon the knowledge of all stakeholders, enabling us to act on opportunities to problem solve and reflect on dilemmas at the school sites while also utilizing support provided by our various strengths, expertise, and experiences through intentional collaboration.

Within our network, our varying perspectives enabled us to approach teaching and learning from all angles as we co-planned for course assignments and seminars and became more comfortable with the uncomfortable dilemmas encountered when learning about and implementing equitable teaching practices with our teacher candidates.

Learning to Embrace the Messiness of Equity Work

A third finding points to the messiness of engaging in equity work and the tensions involved in the facilitation of advancing equity literacy in our teacher candidates and ourselves. Pushback, resistance from students, and time were all contributing factors to the messiness of our work. However, we felt that our collaborative self-study allowed a supportive space for dealing with these inevitable conflicts and tensions.

As supervisors and course instructors, it can be difficult to determine how to embed equity work into our seminars and courses due to the lack of time and space in the course content design. The following excerpt represents this:

> A challenge I am having is (as always) time! This makes me think of my first couple of years as an elementary teacher when I often had this tension between 'covering everything' and the actual depth of the content. So, I always feel I have so much to get to during each class, even though they are plenty long. As a result, conversations that could go deeper are often hurried through. (Samantha)

Not only does the 90-minute seminar design inhibit adequate implementation of equity work, our time as supervisors and instructors is limited. In the context of a supervisor being paired with upwards of 10 interns, as we commonly experienced, we often felt limited with the amount of time we could dedicate to each intern along with limited opportunities for participation by all in class discussions. When this work is not embedded into course design as adequately as we believe it should, it takes time on our part to learn about and plan for implementation as we are all doctoral candidates in addition to course instructors and supervisors. In one entry, Nicholas shared this sentiment, "Being completely honest, with all that I have going on this semester, the ideas/articles/activities may need to be quick to implement. With all the content we have to cover, time is often a major barrier to implementation."

Another example of messiness and tensions that trended in our data were instances of resistance and pushback from our teacher candidates. For example, in one journal entry, Samantha wrote about a conversation about racism that did not go as planned, during which her

attempts to engage the majority-white class in a conversation about race fell short. She explained,

> I do know the literature talks about hesitancy or unwillingness to talk about race at first, and this is also still early in the semester so we are still building relationships, but I need to think more carefully about how to begin conversations when topics about race come up next time.

Although we understood the importance of building relationships with our teacher candidates and actively worked to do this, we still received push back and resistance. In a related example, Amber journaled about a lesson observation cycle (consisting of a pre-conference, lesson observation, and post-conference):

> Even though we talked about cultural appropriation two weeks ago, the teacher candidate insisted upon dressing up in traditional Native American dress. I probed her during our pre-conference, and eventually confronted her regarding this decision to which she just explained that because she was older and from another generation, she just did not 'get this kind of stuff'.

Not only did we experience pushback individually, but we faced similar challenges collaboratively as well. The following is an excerpt from a conversation with Amber and Samantha regarding a shared dilemma they faced. Amber stated:

> A dilemma I am facing is that most of my interns are white females and have shared that they have grown up in the community where our school site is located and lacks diversity. The school setting reflects the surrounding community, and I worry that my plans implementing equity work may be hard for them to wrap their heads around. Not just because of the school context limiting their experiences with diverse students in diverse settings, but also because of my limited knowledge of how to broach this topic under these circumstances.

Samantha replied,

> Amber, since part of my class is your group of interns, your comment definitely resonates with me, too. We talked last week in my class about how [their school sites] are great schools to learn in and full of great resources, but also not reflective of the majority of schools in our area. This is something we have to be really intentional about with this group, since we know they will be at these schools the next four semesters.

Our data demonstrated that there is messiness involved in preparing for the tensions that are faced in this type of work and how to respond in situations where we may not know the right answer. Through this study, we began to make sense of the cumbersome tensions and messiness involved in equity work. This process enabled us to manage continuing to be learners ourselves as we studied theory while questioning and reflecting on our practices and experiences as novice teacher educators.

Miller and Glass (2018), pose this question to teacher educators, "Is there a way to help teacher candidates dismantle or challenge their own perspectives to be open to others…" (p. 147). Throughout this self-study and leading to data analysis, we considered this question as it relates to us, three novice teacher educators, challenging our perspectives. The shifts that each of us had in our own perspectives related to equity included: becoming comfortable with the uncomfortable, coming to expect the tension or resistance and learning to embrace it, and

learning to rely on one another when feeling uncertain about a conversation or incident that we experienced.

When we asked each other what we gained and how we evolved from this experience during one of our interviews, we produced the following reflections:

> I think the biggest thing for me was just having this sense of community and space to talk about what we are all doing. Hearing about others' work gave me ideas, pushed me to try new things, and helped me reflect on my own experiences. I also see growth in my attention to/confidence in addressing equity issues with my preservice teachers. I am more able to identify issues related to inequity or injustice that are occurring around me, especially in schools, and to know how to respond or address them as I engage in seminar and coaching cycles with my teacher candidates. I can see how this has helped me personally grow, but I also know that I still have so much to learn, and I hope this continues to be a space where we can support each other in advancing this important work. (Samantha)
>
> Nicholas answered,
>
> This experience has afforded me accountability coaches that held me to thinking about equity as we planned for content with our teacher candidates. But, it also provided me a group of people that I now know I can lean on for feedback and support when I am in doubt.
>
> Answering the same question, Amber reflected,
>
> This experience allowed me to feel comfortable openly talking about concerns that I've had for myself as well as my vulnerabilities, because without confronting those issues, and having my support network with me along the way, my growth would have been limited. We have created such a beautiful space to have conversations that helped me gain confidence in how I react and respond to issues of inequity.

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this collaborative self-study was to look into our journey over one year and examine our experiences as novice teacher educators with a commitment to equity. As we spent this time as doctoral candidates as well as supervisors and instructors reflecting on our practices and how we navigate our roles, we also considered the context of working within a school-university partnership. The results indicated that reflection and collaboration are tremendous supports for novice teacher educators as they examine their practice to enhance their instruction and move forward with equity work. Working within a school-university partnership extends opportunities for collaboration and reflection with university supervisors, course instructors, teacher candidates, CTs and teacher leaders with a shared commitment to equity work--making such partnerships ripe contexts for teacher and teacher educator learning.

Although we struggled at times with the messiness and tensions presented along the way, the use of a collaborative self-study enabled us to build a support network that fostered the growth of our relationships as practitioners and researchers, promoted self-study and self-awareness, and inspired a sense of agency. Additionally, we found value in our collaborative efforts, allowing us to benefit from these practices in not only our work but also the work we will inevitably encounter as we work with collaborative groups. Further, collaborative groups or

networks "that meet over time can become contexts that propel transformation forward beyond simply changing or adapting a frame of reference, but changing how one acts on and acts within the world" (Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010). Being a part of support networks will empower teacher educators to act as they serve as an impetus for purposeful engagement in critical conversations with all members of a school-university partnership (Forsyth & Gustafson, 2013; Hoffman & Dahlman, 2013; Brown et al., 2013).

As we examined our experiences enacting our espoused practices with teacher candidates, we found there to be much work needed with ourselves as we learn, reflect, and challenge each other's thinking while incorporating equity work in our teaching. Thus, it is no simple endeavor, nor is it possible to effectively advance our equity work before engaging in self-reflective practices. More importantly, equity work cannot only consist of lesson plans and activities built into course designs, ready to be implemented on a course schedule by anyone. This is especially critical when at some universities, including ours, undergraduate teacher preparation courses are primarily taught by doctoral students who are novice teacher educators themselves. As we engage in these practices with our school-university partnerships, the amazing potential exists. Breault and Lack (2009) suggest, "In order for PDSs to preserve a social justice agenda that is truly critical, university partners must both embody the knowledge and dispositions central to the critical pedagogy movement, and they must be transparent about the limits of their conceptions of social justice and equity" (p. 163).

Our findings offer implications for teacher educators committed to equity literacy work, including the importance of reflection, collaboration, and support networks. This study suggests that as universities place increased attention on the preparation of socially just, equity-literate teachers, there are great benefits to developing and strengthening structures that promote collaboration and reflection among teacher educators, particularly when teacher educators are new to this type of work. Further research is needed to explore how such structures enable new efforts, opportunities, and successes around equity literacy in teacher preparation programs. Future research might also explore different types of structures or support networks for teacher educators to better understand their connections to successes and challenges in strengthening teacher preparation programs committed to equity. Despite the messiness and challenges that we find are often inevitable in equity work, we suggest that there is enormous potential when collaboration and self-study around the development of equity-literate teachers is situated as the fulcrum that orients the work of teacher education; and we appeal to teacher educators at large to consider how they might play a role in developing and studying these structures and processes within their own institutions.

Conclusion

Using a collaborative self-study approach to our research, we sought to reflect on and understand our experiences as novice teacher educators focused on advancing equity work with our teacher candidates. Along the journey, we explored our reflections and wonderings, our uncertainties, and how we attempted to overcome challenges within our work. As a result, we found that collaborative self-study as a methodology supports and enhances the growth of novice teacher educators; our methodology and collaboration enabled a support network for each other and our school-university partners, and that messiness and tensions are inevitable in equity work.

Our work may fill the void in the literature on how teacher educators learn about advancing equity work. The findings from this study point to the benefits for collaborative self-studies being used as a tool for teacher educators to improve upon their practice of empowering equity literate teachers; and school-university partnerships have tremendous potential to serve as contexts supporting this work.

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The Power of Children's Voices: Potentials for Teacher Education

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Abstract: Research literature documents a richness of innovations and projects advocating school-university partnerships that facilitate robust clinical practice. In the context of this focus on clinical work and school-university partnerships there are many possibilities to explore the way children may participate in these partnerships as contributors and experts; particularly, when we acknowledge that their role has predominantly been that of the benefactors of partnership efforts. Children have often been seen as the targets and recipients of the combined efforts of pre-service and in-service teacher collaborations with a focus on student achievement and social/emotion growth. In response to the call for innovative clinical work in the context of school partnerships, in this writing we will discuss what we have learned when conceptualizing and implementing Fowler University, an initiative to have elementary school children and undergraduate students participate as peers in a university class about pedagogy. Through our analysis, we revisit what we have learned about education, children, and teachers, providing insight into how we might think differently about teachers' practices. In the context of Fowler University we consider the following questions: (1) What can teacher candidates learn about pedagogy and effective practice through their collaboration with children? (2) How can children's voices contribute to the pedagogical development of teacher candidates?

KEYWORDS: Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Professional Development School, School University Partnership, Teacher Education

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

The Power of Children's Voices: Potentials for Teacher Education

We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.

Stacia Tauscher

Research literature documents a richness of innovations and projects advocating for school-university partnerships that facilitate robust clinical practice (Carpenter & Sherretz, 2012). The emphasis on totally immersing teacher candidates in the day-to-day realities of teaching and schooling as a path for effective teacher education and teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005; Levin 2002; Garas-York, Hill, Day, Truesdell, & Mathers 2017) has yielded many partnerships between schools and universities. Teaching quality has been defined as "instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn" (Darling-Hammond, 2012), and it is one of the strongest school-related factors that can improve student learning and achievement (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Hanushek, 2011; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain 2005).

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2004) defines Professional Development Schools (PDSs) as "…real schools, often in challenging settings, which have been redesigned and restructured to support their complex mission. PDS partnerships typically support professional and student learning through the use of an inquiry-oriented approach to teaching" (p.1). Levine (2006) cites PDSs as "superb laboratories for education schools to experiment with the initiatives designed to improve student achievement" (p. 105). He further indicates that a PDS can "offer perhaps the strongest bridge between teacher education and classroom outcomes, academics and clinical education, theory and practice, and schools and colleges" (p. 105). In order to ensure teacher quality Goodlad (1984) argues for exemplary schools in which clinical-like learning is facilitated and emphasized. Such clinical-like opportunities are the mainstays of a professional development school partnership. This authentic approach to teacher education prepares new teachers for the realities of classrooms and offers daily opportunities for observing and experiencing the connections between theory and practice (Buchanan & Corenza, 2018).

In the context of this focus on clinical work and school-university partnerships there are many possibilities in which to explore the ways children may participate in these partnerships as contributors and experts; particularly, when we acknowledge that their role has predominantly been that of the benefactors or subjects of partnership efforts. Children have often been seen as the targets and/or recipients of the combined efforts of pre-service and in-service teacher collaborations with a focus on student achievement and social/emotional growth. Drawing on her collaborative research with students, Oldfather (1995) makes it clear that we should be pushed to move beyond research in which children believe that in this kind of work "you're working with a bunch of guinea pigs or something" (p. 131). There is a need for research opportunities where "those who have in the past so often been the mere objects of investigation, themselves become the agents of their own transformation" (Fielding 2004). Taylor (1991) asserted, "We consistently underestimate the enormous potential of children to participate in the construction of their own learning environments" (p. 3). After all, children are the "only authentic chroniclers of their own experience" (Delpit, 1988, p. 297).

In this writing we respond to the National Association for Professional Development School's call for "A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community" (NAPDS, 2008). To this end, we discuss and reflect on what we have learned when conceptualizing and implementing Fowler University, an initiative to facilitate elementary school children and undergraduate teacher education students participating and interacting as peers in a university class about pedagogy. Through our conceptualization of our experiences we will revisit what we have learned about teacher education, children, and teachers, providing insight into how we might think differently about teachers' practices and what insights they can glean from children. To this end, we consider the following questions:

(1) What can teacher candidates learn about pedagogy and effective practice through their collaboration with children?

(2) How can children's voices contribute to the pedagogical development of teacher candidates?

Fowler University

Fowler University was implemented for two semesters at Fowler Drive Elementary School. Fowler Drive is one of 14 elementary schools in Athens (Georgia, United States) and has a student population of 579 students (African American—47%; Latino—46%; White—5%; Multi-racial—3%). The free and reduced lunch rate of the student population is over 90% as defined by the federal lunch program for public schools. Fowler Drive Elementary school has been engaged in a professional development school partnership between the Clarke County School District and the University of Georgia College of Education for eight years. As a part of her role as professor in residence, first author Beth Tolley developed the idea of Fowler University as a way to support the school district's initiative to promote college and career readiness for all of its students.

To implement the initiative fourth and fifth grade students were invited to participate in the University of Georgia early childhood education course (Integrated instruction in the early childhood classroom) taught on-site at the school. The objectives, activities, and readings for the university course remained the same as they had been planned for teacher candidates in other sections of the course. Children were given a summary of the readings for the week they were to participate to prepare for the discussions that would take place in class. With the goal to provide access to the initiative to as many elementary school children as possible, each fourth and fifth grade classroom was invited to participate during a different week in the semester. Influenced by Shier (2001) we emphasized collaborative activity between teacher candidates and children to bring about the most effective participation. Teacher candidates and children engaged throughout the course, focusing on the characteristics of effective teaching and the dispositions needed for elementary teaching. We worked to create a space that prioritized the voices of children and where ideas of effective and ineffective teaching generated from the children themselves, those who will be most influenced by teaching practices. We believe "if children are seen as competent social actors, then they have the right and the ability to act as participants" (Skelton, 2008, p. 8). There is a growing body of research evidence to show that this kind of participation brings many

and varied benefits to children and schools (Shier, 2018; Correia et al., 2019; Halliday et al., 2018).

The children offered their perspectives and experiences to examine the ways we think about the language that teachers use, challenging behaviors in the classroom, and how children are affected by classroom routines, procedures, and disruptions. Inspired by bell hooks (1994) we aspired to provide opportunities to shake up children's hearts and minds to care about themselves and their worlds and to understand that they have valuable insight to offer. Collaborative inquiry and critical reflection drove the majority of the practices in place at Fowler University. There were also frequent intentional efforts to make connections between the necessary skills and dispositions of a typical elementary day and those of a typical college day for children to see the similarities of their days with those of the teacher education students. The children were able to understand that reading, note-taking, discussing, cooperative learning and inquiry are common characteristics of both educational settings; through these experiences we wished to provide authentic exposure and understandings regarding the importance of these skills beyond the classroom. As Fowler University evolved, we were committed to facilitating opportunities for the teacher candidates and children to participate together in professional conferences (e.g. Tolley, 2019), furthering the experience of what it means to be a scholar and teacher, highlighting the importance of the skills learned in school.

A Typical Class in Fowler University

The typical Fowler University weekly class incorporated discussions and interactive activities in whole group and small groups to provide adequate space and time for teacher candidates and children to express their ideas and learn together. Wyness (2006) encourages such child-friendly spaces as ones in which adults are required to *listen* to children and not just *hear* them. Thus, university instructors saw their role as listeners, encouraging the teacher candidates to also listen to the elementary school students. Careful listening to children offered ideas for further inquiry with teacher candidates and provided insight as to how the teacher candidates were developing their listening skills. Creating a space of listening also fostered ways to listen to teacher candidates themselves, providing an authentic assessment of where they are in their teacher training and pedagogical understanding.

The main assignment students were asked to complete during Fowler University was an inquiry project. For this assignment, teacher candidates were expected to take the lead in deciding on an inquiry question that they would explore with the children and that connected to their perspectives and experiences as students and teachers in schools. Throughout the semester we facilitated different work sessions in which the children and teacher candidates worked together to better understand the questions posed by the teacher candidates. The assignment was also designed to provide a metacognitive opportunity for the teacher candidates to reflect on how pedagogy and learning that is led by children and based on real issues may take place.

Course readings included books such as *Choice Words* (Johnston, 2004) and *Teaching Difficult Children: Blue Jays in the Classroom* (Gnezda, 2005). Discussions were intended to elicit children's perspectives and feelings about the oral language and body language that teachers use in teaching, and how students are impacted by their teachers' oral and body language. The children offered their thoughts about effective practices, practical classroom routines and procedures, successful discipline, their roles in the classroom, and their visions for

what they want in a classroom. Teacher candidates gained insight into children's school experiences and teacher interactions from authentic child perspectives. Simultaneously, elementary school children were able to ask questions about college life and were exposed to ideas about college attendance with our hope of children being able to conceive of college as an accessible space that is a possible choice in their futures.

Fowler University as an Initiative and as Research

Fowler University was an initiative that arose from our commitments to support the school district where we work; honoring the needs they identify for themselves and prioritizing the perspectives of teachers and students that work with us in developing our teacher candidates into effective, caring teachers. For Beth these commitments arose from her experiences as a teacher and teacher educator, where she has worked to support children and teacher candidates for forty-seven years. For the second author, Cristina, these commitments arose from her experiences in teacher education, where her identity as an immigrant and Latina have highlighted the need to find a way to diversify the voices that shape the knowledge that is privileged. As educators and researchers, we saw a need to create more equitable learning spaces, positioning children as having a depth of knowledge to contribute to a learning community as well as positioning children as people who are able to learn and are able to make choices about their learning.

In the context of Fowler University, we bridged as educators and researchers becoming participant observers; we were completely immersed in the experience as instructors while also taking the role of researchers in our intentional study of the initiative. As participant observers we relied on our experiences and observations, as well as on each other, to gain deeper understanding of the events taking place, with a focus on the learning of our teacher candidates. To supplement our observations, we also collected data through: (1) field notes of regular instruction, recollecting class events; (2) student work completed as part of regular instruction; (3) audio recordings of class sessions; (4) surveys of student perceptions, given as part of the regular implementation of Fowler University; and (5) field notes taken by a research assistant who attended the class sessions regularly. Fowler University took place over the course of two university semesters (16-weeks each). One hundred ninety-seven fourth and fifth grade students participated along with 53 University of Georgia teacher candidates and eight classroom teachers.

Teacher Candidates Learning from Fowler University

In this section we discuss what we have learned while implementing Fowler University; specifically, we consider what teacher candidates can learn about pedagogy and effective practice through their collaboration with children and how children contribute to the pedagogical development of teacher candidates. To do so, we draw on our observations and experiences as facilitators as well as quotes from data collected about teacher candidate perceptions of their collaboration with children. In this way, we examine the possibilities afforded within Fowler University for teacher candidates' pedagogical development. Through our experiences implementing Fowler University we found that children's participation in the pedagogy class provided many opportunities for teacher candidates to learn and develop their pedagogical skills.

Listening as a Pedagogical Strategy

Children often conveyed ideas and skills consistent with the pedagogical practices teacher candidates were expected to learn during the class and as part of their training. As we mentioned, the idea of learning from listening to children was a cornerstone of Fowler University. For instance, a teacher candidate shared: "One thing I learned is that teachers should be listening to their students more. I felt that sentiment every time that we asked the students a question, and they had so much to tell us that they had never even told their teachers." Our observations and the perspectives shared by the teacher candidates showed that teacher candidates took ownership of Fowler University as a space to think about and practice how to listen and learn from children in their own terms. Children expressed important understandings regarding pedagogy as well as issues of equity and social justice. For instance, children expressed they wish to be treated as people and not just students, they often experienced school and norms set by teachers as unfair, how they felt unfair assumptions were made about them, and that they wish to be given choice and freedom within educational spaces. As teacher educators, we saw the important implications in children's ability to convey and explain issues related to social justice and schooling to future teachers.

Engaging in dialogue with children often required teacher candidates to negotiate their own perspectives as teachers about regular issues arising in classrooms, issues that often were exclusively considered from the perspectives of teacher candidates or collaborating teachers. For instance, another teacher candidate stated,

> "The big takeaway I learned from Fowler University is that every student is truly different and has unique needs. My job as a teacher is to never stop discovering those needs and discovering techniques and strategies to use that meet each students' needs. It was also interesting how comfortable students were talking and working with me because they didn't view me as a "teacher." They saw me more as a friend, and I thought that was really neat."

As can be seen in this statement, the teacher candidate shows a willingness to consider the children's perspectives and a commitment as a teacher to support the diverse needs of her students. At the same time, we also see the conflict that arises for the teacher candidate from her own developing pedagogical understandings and identity as a teacher, positioning herself as a friend instead of a teacher when listening to children's perspectives. The quote above illustrates how, in general, teacher candidates understood the importance of listening to children while also having conflicting views about the implications of children's perspectives for their pedagogical practice and themselves as teachers.

Inverting Power Dynamics for Learning

The conflict between being a peer and a teacher to children was a present tension for teacher candidates throughout the implementation of Fowler University. We observed that because teacher candidates were developing a teaching identity themselves, they often did not wish to be seen by the children as students themselves. Some teacher candidates did not seem ready to engage with children in pedagogical discussion or to talk about difficult topics. Other teacher candidates were not willing to have responsibility for the children in the space of a university class. For instance, a teacher candidate observed that it would be helpful to "have their actual classroom teacher rotate throughout the group to help control behavior of the students."

This perspective is consistent with that of some teacher candidates who still judged the children's behavior as something to be controlled, positioning children as either their responsibility or as another whom they were not willing to learn with, even though the children consistently demonstrated their ability to participate in the university class productively. Often, we observed that the children were actually the more flexible participants, were more willing to take risks, and better able to participate in a flexible learning space.

The perspective of children not being able to contribute or behave appropriately during a university class was connected to teacher candidates' ability to engage with children in discussion. Some teacher candidates saw their role in fostering productive discussion while other abdicated the responsibility they may have in maintaining a productive discussion with the children. This can be seen in the following contrasting views from two teacher candidates:

> "Some [elementary school] students were super engaged, and some were not engaged at all. If students liked their Fowler Drive teacher [candidate], they seemed to participate better than if they did not like their Fowler Drive teacher."
>
> "Many children I worked with did not have any interest in the topics we were discussing. I felt bad taking away from their class time."

From these two perspectives we see how the teacher candidates themselves also identified the different levels of success in engaging in pedagogical discussions with the children, pointing to the potential of the experience of Fowler University in supporting teacher candidates in taking ownership of their pedagogical development. The space facilitated opportunities for reflection and for teacher candidates to learn from observing each other and to recognize effective ways peers were engaging with children and ways they were not. Thus, Fowler University also proved to be a fruitful space to identify and support teacher candidates who were not yet pedagogically ready to engage with children or have discussion about complex topics.

Inherently, the children brought diversity of experience and perspectives to the conversations fostering teacher candidates' awareness of structural inequalities that are materialized and reproduced in formal schooling. Both children and teacher candidates needed practice discussing difficult issues surrounding schooling and issues of social justice. Demographics such as the ones in Fowler Drive Elementary School, too often lead to deficit-oriented perspectives and too often define and influence teacher practice. The idea of deficit suggests that there is something wrong with a child who differs from those who naturally succeed in school and places the focus on remediating problems rather than appreciating the strengths all children bring to the classroom upon which a teacher can build to extend knowledge. The children had contrastingly different perspectives from the teacher candidates about their experiences in school, their families, their communities, and even their struggles. These differences in perspective often drove further discussions with our teacher candidates, urging them to think critically about their assumptions in contrast to the messages and deeper understanding the children were able to offer.

Learning from Spaces for Teacher Education

We conclude that one of the key factors that fostered teacher candidates' ability to learn from children's perspective was that Fowler University also created a space that disrupted traditional school practices as an environment that was intentionally designed by teacher educators for teacher education. In this sense, it differed from other field experiences teacher

candidates may have had that immersed them into the world of public schools in Georgia and the hegemonic views and practices of teaching. Hence, Fowler University helped disrupt underlying assumptions and misunderstandings that often arose for teacher candidates in relation to their field experiences in elementary classrooms. Predominantly, it provided a space in which children that teacher candidates may have perceived as problematic were given an opportunity to express their own perspectives and experiences. The experience required many candidates to see with new lenses and be more aware of how making assumptions is problematic. For instance, a teacher candidate reflects on how it was fruitful for her to hear from children's perspectives:

> "In particular, conversations that I had with some of the older students were very enlightening. Many students we talked to had never been given the experience to talk about their school experiences before, so they had a lot to share. Particularly, conversations I had with them about their negative interactions with teachers will help inform my future teaching."

The perspective of this teacher candidate portrays how engaging with children led to open reflections about how interactions with teachers may be perceived by students and the pedagogical understanding of the need to account for it.

Fowler University provided a space where teacher candidates could try recommended strategies and practices to support the development of learning communities. For instance, many teacher candidates expressed that in their practicum classrooms they found morning meeting ineffective or that they did not have an opportunity to experience how to effectively implement it in their classroom. However, incorporating children into the space of Fowler University gave them an opportunity to see how children responded to such recommended teaching practices. This can be seen in the way a teacher candidate reflects on the effectiveness of morning meeting at Fowler University:

> "This was a great way for students to get warmed up and get to know each other as well as the college students. This positive energy carried throughout the rest of their time at Fowler University. I also learned that giving students a lot of control is not a bad thing. Instead, they were very capable and with guidance when needed were able to complete the activities."

In this instance the teacher candidate identifies morning meeting as effective in building a learning community and also connects it with other important supported teaching strategies such as encouraging agency in children, students' ability to complete challenging tasks, and effective ways of providing support.

In creating a setting different than the one in classrooms teacher candidates and children most commonly experienced, Fowler University also disrupted other common assumptions by offering opportunities to experience how children approach learning differently in different settings. A key issue for teacher candidates during the class and in relation to their field placement was classroom management. During Fowler University children behaved differently and children's perspectives also provided an opportunity for teacher candidates to confront their concerns and assumptions about classroom management. For instance, two teacher candidates shared:

> "I noticed that many of the students complained about not having a teacher that was "compassionate" or [one who] "yelled a lot." It really affects me, because I know that

> classroom management can be difficult, yet I want to create a positive environment in my classroom."
>
> "I found it super helpful to hear from the students about their own experiences and how they think a classroom should be run."

Their observations and reflections point to one of the productive spaces teacher candidates found and created in their interactions with children. We capitalized on this experience to facilitate discussions and ideas for reflection by drawing on the recognition that there were no major disruptions or behavior issues during any of the 32 sessions of Fowler University.

In contrast, other teacher candidates perceived that having the children as part of the university class prevented them from confronting specific issues with classroom management they were encountering in their field placements. For instance, two other teacher candidates share:

> "I wish that we had spent more time talking about practical applications of what we've learned, such as what to do if a student cusses you out or throws a chair at you."
>
> "Provide enough time to just have college students have a discussion without the children. I felt I missed out on time to talk about placement and things happening there because of Fowler University"

These perspectives demonstrate the lack of comfort of some teacher candidates in discussing difficult topics and experiences with children and in seeing children as true collaborators in solving difficult realities that arise from teaching. It also demonstrated that teacher candidates need to think more about the extenuating circumstances and schooling practices that influence children's choices in classrooms rather than the nature or contexts of children themselves. Thus, it was important to support teacher candidates in noticing the contrast of the actual experience of Fowler University and their expectation that there would be issues as many of the children came labeled as "troublemakers" by their classroom teachers or by our own teacher candidates. This contrast proved successful in highlighting inconsistencies in expectations and the behavior that can result from those expectations; helping teacher candidates understand the impact of the self-fulfilling prophecy for how students either rise or fall to our levels of expectations.

Learning from Fowler University

Overall, we found that teacher candidates' experiences in Fowler University varied based on their own readiness to engage with children in difficult discussions and the stage of pedagogical ability. Teacher candidates who had strong pedagogical understandings as well as commitments to honor children's experiences and perspectives were able to use the space to grow pedagogically; these teacher candidates practiced listening to children and considered their perspectives in relation to pedagogical practices and themselves as teachers. Teacher candidates who were struggling to understand their role as teachers, had authoritative views of teaching, or were unsure about how to approach difficult topics themselves struggled to engage with children and take ownership of the learning opportunities Fowler University afforded. As Kellett (2006) explains "a combination of circumstances is necessary for child voice to have influence, not least of which is a pre-disposition on the part of adults to value what children have to say and to appreciate the uniqueness of their perspectives" (p. 197).

Regardless of the level of readiness, as teacher educators we found that Fowler University provided a space that was fruitful for teacher candidates and that created opportunities

to identify and support them in their different levels of readiness. Particularly for teacher candidates that were struggling Fowler University provided a space where teacher candidates could be frequently supported and where teacher candidates could observe their peers to reflect on their own level of success and the pedagogical practices they were developing. Building on the idea that children can offer rich perspectives to key questions that arise for teacher candidates in their professional development furthered the initiative of Fowler University. During Fowler University children were welcomed into a friendly risk-free environment in which they were given opportunities to (1) express and facilitate understanding of their views, (2) have their views respected and listened to, and (3) see their views acted upon as appropriate (Lundy 2007). We also drew on the work of Hart (1992) and his “ladder of participation” and facilitated experiences in which (1) children are listened to, (2) children are supported in expressing their views, (3) children's views are taken into account, (4) children are involved in decision-making processes, and (5) children share power and responsibility for decision-making. Their participation was about “being recognized for who they are in the here and now, and for their place in social and cultural life which leads to increased levels of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem” (Kellett 2010, p.196). The conscientious effort to move toward a view of learning as a process of social construction and dismantle notions of teaching as transmission was incorporated into the activities of Fowler University, thereby infusing long-proven research ideas (Marshall 1992, Oldfather 1995, Paley 1986). We have worked to disrupt the idea that teachers more often than not leave students out of the dialogue about educational concerns and underestimate the potential that students have in contributing to our understandings (Erickson & Schultz, 1992).

As teacher educators our objective was to provide authentic instruction to our teacher candidates such that they become “confident teachers who research questions that intrigue and puzzle them, who seek answers and understanding about their students' learning and their own teaching, and who strive to be more knowledgeable in their responses to the teaching/learning cycle” (Olson, 1990, p. 13). We wanted to encourage our students to constantly probe and question, listen and observe, notice and note. Teachers that Goodman (1989) describes as “kid watchers” (p. 8), teachers who interact with students and monitor activities in order to understand more about teaching and learning. We wanted our teacher candidates to benefit and gain pedagogical knowledge from Fowler University as a child-friendly space that reflects children's interests, their ideas, and their “preferred ways of engagement so that children's voices do not become a tool for reinforcing adult governance” (Kellett 2006, p. 197).

The implications taken from Fowler University can offer guidance to all stakeholders—children, teacher candidates, practicing teachers, teacher educators, as well as partnering schools and universities. Child-led discussions about pedagogical practices that encourage and discourage, procedures that are fair and consistent or haphazard, and opportunities for explaining their actions and concerns before assumptions are formed, offer rich material for professional development. Positioning the children as experts of their own needs and education necessarily opens questions about who should be consulted when considering the characteristics of effective teaching. In this sense, a fundamental understanding is that “adults have greater knowledge than children in many areas of life but with regard to childhood itself—in the sense of what it is like to be a child—it is children who have the expert knowledge” (Kellett, 2010; Mayall, 2000). This expert knowledge emphasizes what effective teaching looks like, sounds like, and feels like to

children, calling our attention to the frequent absence of the children's perspectives in classrooms. Listening to the voices of the children reminds us and emphasizes the need for teachers to see "everything that happens in a classroom…. as data to be understood rather than causes for blaming or congratulating" (Bissex 1986, p. 483). Thus, teacher inquiry with children generates data that need not become major research projects "but can be a matter of regular and intentional examination of what kinds of learning experiences students find most engaging, discussing and comparing them, and using the insights gained for students to make choices for ways in which they wish to pursue learning" (Oldfather 1995, p. 136.)

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