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CITE *Critical Issues in Teacher Education*

Critical Issues in Teacher Education (CITE) is a double blind reviewed refereed scholarly journal of the Illinois Association of Teacher Educators. CITE will publish empirically based or original research articles, synthesis papers, book reviews, and special reports on topics of interest to teacher educators.

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A SYSTEMATIC SAMPLING OF ILLINOIS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' USE AND VALUE OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PORTFOLIOS
by
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Abstract
Teacher education programs are being required to use the Teacher Performance Assessment (ed TPA) portfolio. The new mandate specifies that preservice teachers must complete a professional teaching portfolio during their student teaching experience. Educators know that teaching portfolios are an alternative, authentic, and performance-based assessment that assists with identifying teaching skills, knowledge, and instructional practices in the classroom. This study sought to identify principals' use and perceived value of professional teaching portfolios through a regional systematic sampling in Central Illinois. School administrators' found value with the contents of professional teaching portfolios and considered them beneficial for identifying the professional development of educators. The school administrators agreed that teachers should record their professional development in portfolios throughout their career as educators. Even though administrators were not using portfolios to their full potential during the hiring process, they still wanted teachers to make their portfolios available during job interviews.

Teaching Portfolios

Portfolios have been used in many disciplines to display a person's talents, skills, and content expertise (Lombardi, 2008). Portfolios are considered an authentic and qualitative assessment practice as they display the reflection from actual learning activities (Lombardi, 2008). Portfolios provide a personal representation of an individual's knowledge and skills in real or working environments. Educators document their teaching experiences, connect meaning, and identify improvement practices to their classroom instructional practices (Bacon & Bloom, 1995).

Portfolios are authentic and performance based, as they provide documentation of actual experiences and knowledge of the author (Lombardi, 2008). Artifacts within a portfolio display teachers' content expertise and how they connected content to Special Professional Association standards (SPA's), state learning goals (Barwegen, Brulle, Goreham, & Henry, 2009), and Common Core Curriculum Standards. Portfolios also display how teachers' incorporated Best Practice Principles (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998) into their instructional activities as well as independent and collaborative problem solving strategies used for student learning activities (Bacon & Bloom, 1995). Portfolios promote open discourse and reflective practice when clear guidelines or questions to be answered are provided to assist selection of artifacts for portfolio inclusion (Pelliccione & Raison, 2009). Fiedler, Mullen, and Finnegan (2009) asserted that professional growth and development can be identified through documentation of field experiences and accomplished course work and displayed in a visual document.

Inclusion of a reflection section, in a professional teaching portfolio, assists the reader or evaluator with understanding the teacher's instructional planning and practices, completed subject assignments, and assessment methods that were used with classroom instruction (Jensen & Kiley, 2005). Arends (2007) concluded that teaching portfolios should include a reflection section so that teachers will be able to better understand completed work assignments and assessment practices as they continue their professional growth as educators. Skills and accomplishments are recorded, along with teacher reflection, which assists with ownership of the learning and confirmation of teaching decisions in the classroom (Bitter & Pierson, 2002). Reflective practice assists with the identification of interventions and opportunities for collaboration and improvement of instructional decision-making in the classroom (Author, 2002). As teachers recorded and communicated their instructional practices, they were able to better understand their teaching and articulate their beliefs about the teaching and learning process (Dutt, Tallerico, & Kayler, 1997).

Included portfolio artifacts provide occasions for engagement of learning and demonstration of learned concepts, as portfolios are considered a performance-based assessment (Koutsoupidou, 2010). Portfolios may include instructional plans and teaching units which display and emphasize instructional development and improvement with the teaching and learning process. Teacher knowledge, skills, and writing are infused throughout a professional teaching portfolio which validates field experiences (Author, 2002).

Current Usage of Portfolios

Most portfolios are presented in a digital format. Electronic portfolios have made a significant impact on the teaching and learning process (Batson, 2010). Digital portfolios are efficient for collection of data and reflective practices as preservice teachers store important artifacts from their classroom instruction (Tochel, Hesketh, Cadzow, Beggs, Colthart, & Peacock, 2009). Students can save large amounts of work, add a variety of media, connect to many online sources or Internet sites, use social networking, record experiential situations, and can aggregate data in one site. Heath (2003) identified e-portfolios' ease of use as she stated that electronically stored information is easy to organize, retrieve, and edit, since most work is accomplished in Word files, PowerPoints, spread sheets, etc.

Portfolio artifacts may include samples, such as photographs, work samples, performance assessments, evaluations of teaching, and samples of the teacher's writing skills (Author, 2009). Digital portfolios assist learners as they organize information and artifacts. Portfolios provide a place to collect information and identify a student's areas of strengths and challenges in a subject area (Batson, 2010). As portfolios are being used as an assessment practice for capstone courses in education and completion of student teaching experiences, they provide an electronic recording of teachers' knowledge, skills, philosophies, classroom instructional practices, and teaching experiences as they continually use and extend their technology skills (Author, 2002). Aronson (2010) suggested that e-portfolios allow the learner to be creative and supports environmentally friendly efforts instead of paper usage.

In a study using three formative and one summative e-portfolios with preservice teachers, Beck, Livne & Bear (2005) concluded that formative e-portfolios were beneficial to preservice teachers. The portfolios provided opportunities for preservice teachers to understand their planning, teaching and assessment practices, and reflection on the teaching and learning process.

Current emphasis of the professional teaching portfolio may be viewed through the Teacher Performance Assessment (ed TPA). The portfolio was developed to provide a performance assessment for teachers on a national level. This assessment tool was created to provide a level of consistency across the United States of America for identification of preservice teachers meeting specific criteria to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and instructional practices necessary for educators as they apply for licensure (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2012). Samples of content areas work, unit instructional plans, video clips, student

work samples, pre- and post-testing assessment data, identified interventions, and reflections about the teaching and learning process can be found in the ed TPA portfolio. Portfolios contain visual documents that display samples of teaching experiences, assessment practices, and promote reflective practice (Koutsoupidou, 2010).

School Administrators and Portfolios

There have been many studies conducted to identify portfolio content and how to use them in teacher education programs; however, there has been an absence of research identifying school administrators' use and value of teaching portfolios. Teacher education programs are using professional and development portfolios within their curriculum as an assessment tool to identify teacher knowledge, beliefs, and instructional practices, as well as accomplished state requirements, completed course work, and credential information. Currently, the Teacher Performance Assessment (ed TPA) portfolio is being incorporated into college programs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2012). As an assessment tool, it is being used nationally to identify knowledge, skills, and instructional practices for licensure of teachers. Since portfolios are an accepted teaching and learning practice in teacher education, identification of their use and value by principals or school administrators is necessary for understanding how to use portfolios during the hiring process and for continued professional development purposes.

Mosley (2005) surveyed k-12 school administrators. Out of 675 principals, there were 252 responses to a 19 item survey seeking answers to portfolio use, content, and presentation format. The results identified 85.8% of principals and hiring committees using portfolios during the hiring of new teachers, in some form, during formal job interviews. In her study, she identified some important portfolio contents as including:

- resume, transcripts, and letters of reference
- educational philosophy
- classroom and behavior management
- professional goals
- lessons and/or unit of study
- technology usage
- teacher and family interactions

About 50% of the school administrators preferred not to view case studies, research papers, and audio and video materials. Their preference for a condensed portfolio was evident, as they do not have time for reviewing a large document. Teachers need to be selective when including portfolio artifacts and use captions to explain the value of the artifact. The artifacts should illuminate teachers' accomplishments, successes, and instructional beliefs and practices and be few in number.

In a study conducted by Sullivan (2004), principals and foreign language chairs were surveyed to identify their perceptions of state teaching standards and portfolio usage. Sixty-one participants answered a 17 item survey. The principals and chairs listed their three most important factors when hiring teachers as interviews, letters of reference, and professional portfolios. Portfolios provided evidence of:

- instructional methods and strategies
- use of foreign language in the classroom
- classroom management skills
- students' work samples
- assessment practices and grading

Other portfolio contents noted by the administrators included possible inclusion of community service, viewing portfolios before the job interview, and using a paper format. They stated that quality portfolios would assist hiring decisions while low quality portfolios would hinder the selection of prospective candidates. Administrators identified the average time they would use to read a portfolio as 38 minutes.

A case study conducted with four principals, Theel and Tallerico (2004) sought to identify meaning placed on portfolios by principals during the teacher hiring process. Their findings concluded that portfolios provided open discourse about educational beliefs, teaching practices, and samples of teaching methods and strategies during the job interview with principals. As construction of portfolios assist student teachers' communication skills as they prepare for their job interviews, the school administrators in the study stated that professional teaching portfolios did not influence their hiring decisions.

Wildy and Wallace (1998) studied principals and their use of portfolios as leaders in the schools. In their study, principals used portfolios to document their work. Half of the principals in the study stated that there would be benefits for teachers if they recorded their professional development in a portfolio. Recording learning activities, evaluations, planning of new programs, and achievements would be some of the valued contents of the portfolio.

The Study

A systematic sampling was used to identify school administrators' perceptions about professional teaching portfolios use and value to the education profession. Using a quantitative systematic sampling of school administrators' portfolio use assisted with the identification of key concepts that the principals think are important for professional development of teachers. Identified generalizations gleaned from the target population responses were recorded to assist teachers as they enter the teaching profession.

The school administrators' who were selected for the systematic sampling were identified through the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools State-Map (2002). The site listed the counties, school districts, and schools with websites. The regions are divided into six areas numbered I, II, III, IV, V, and VI. Areas III and IV were identified as containing schools within the Central Illinois region. There were 1,010 schools located in Areas III and IV of Central Illinois for the study. The systematic sampling selected every fifth school in the listed counties.

The names of school administrators and their e-mail addresses were found at the school's websites. If the site did not provide an e-mail address for the school administrator, a phone call to the school provided an e-address. A cover letter and the survey were sent to 196 school administrators. All names were anonymous through the tabulation of the electronic survey. Six principals elected not to participate in the survey from the identified 202 school administrators in Areas III and IV of the Central Illinois Region. Boundary lines of the counties located in Areas III and IV are outlined below:
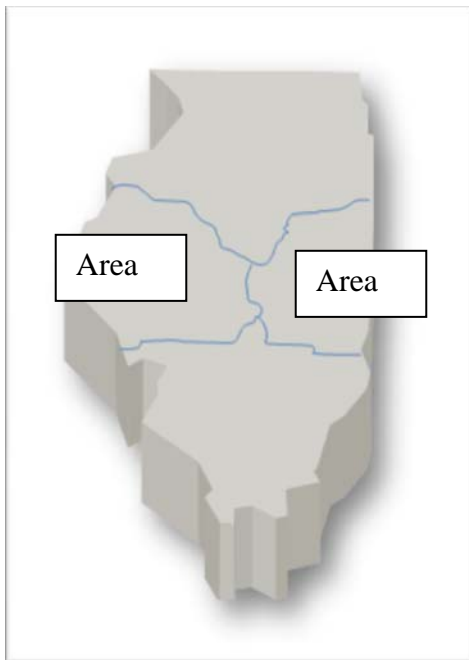
Figure 1: Illustration of Areas III and IV, Counties of Central Illinois.

Central Illinois Regions Area III and IV

School administrators were selected for participation from every fifth school in the following counties:

Area III

Brown	Cass
Morgan	Scot
Adams	Pike
Fulton	Schuyler
Handcock	McDonough
Henderson	Mercer
Warren	Knox
Logan	Mason
Menard	Peoria
Sangamon	Tazwell

Area IV

Champaign	Ford
Clark	Coles
Cumberland	Douglas
Edgar	Moultrie
Shelby	Dewitt
Livingston	McLean
Iroquois	Kankakee
Macon	Piatt
Vermillion	

Systematic Sampling Survey

All principals' responses were anonymous. The Qualtrics software program generated the results of responses and provided data for each question. The program tallied all of the responses and added them into graphic organizers or charts to view the results of the survey. The Professional Teaching Portfolio survey was sent to 202 school administrators during a two week period with two reminders to complete the survey. The systematic sampling sought to identify school administrators' use and value of teaching portfolios.

When selecting items for the survey, the researcher decided to add the statements, *Professional Portfolios allow for richer, meaningful interview questions* and *Portfolios support my teacher hiring decisions*. In a previous study that was completed by the researcher in 2000, the principals, in a comparative qualitative case study stated that teaching portfolios would assist principals as they ask or generate questions and support their hiring decisions during the formal job interview (Author, 2000).

The survey included nine short Likert items to identify principals' perceived value, use of a professional teaching portfolio during the hiring process, and continued use for teachers' professional development within their profession. Professional teaching portfolio systematic sampling survey included nine Likert items with an answer selection from agree strongly, agree, disagree, disagree strongly, or no opinion were as follow:

1. Professional Teaching Portfolios reflect a teacher's knowledge of current educational terminology and classroom instruction.
2. Portfolios provide evidence of a teacher's organization and planning skills, classroom teaching, technology skills, and reflection practices.
3. Prospective teachers should provide access to their Teaching Portfolios during job interviews.
4. I find evaluating Teaching Portfolios useful when hiring new teachers.
5. Professional Portfolios allow for richer, meaningful interview questions.
6. Portfolios support my teacher hiring decisions.
7. Portfolios should be used during annual teacher evaluations to identify ongoing professional development, learning activities, and improvement practices.
8. All classroom teachers should document their work in a Professional Teaching Portfolio.
9. Teachers should use their Professional Portfolio when applying for recertification.

Within the total number of sent surveys, three were deemed as "test mailings" to identify successful sending of the survey and insure that all school administrators received the sampling survey. The Qualtrics software program was used to survey school administrators during a two week period in March 2011 and two reminders were sent to school administrators requesting survey completion.

Findings

Thirty school administrators, or 15%, responded to systematic sampling electronic survey. The survey had an average mean of 2.65 out of 4.0. Administrators generally agreed that portfolios are valuable and should be used with the teaching and learning process. The school administrators' responses to the items were identified by percentage of affirmative responses:

- 80% of school administrators agreed that Professional Teaching Portfolios reflect a teacher's knowledge of current educational terminology and classroom instruction.
- 83.3% of principals agreed that Portfolios provide evidence of a teacher's organization and planning skills, classroom teaching, technology skills, and reflection practices.
- 89.7% stated that prospective teachers should provide access to their Teaching Portfolios during job interviews.
- 46.7% of administrators stated that they find evaluating Teaching Portfolios useful when hiring new teachers.
- 53.3% of school administrators agreed that Professional Portfolios allow for richer, meaningful interview questions.
- 30% said that Portfolios support their teacher hiring decisions.
- 63.3% stated that Portfolios should be used during annual teacher evaluations to identify ongoing professional development, learning activities, and improvement practices.
- 73.3% of school administrators stated that all classroom teachers should document their work in a Professional Teaching Portfolio.
- 62.1% of principals agreed that teachers should use their Professional Portfolio when applying for recertification.
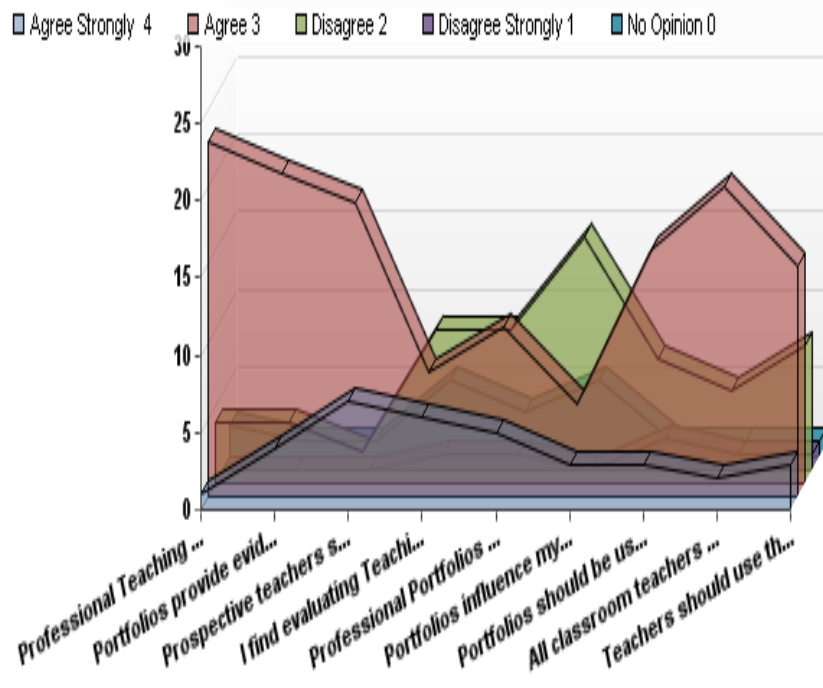

Figure 2: Graph of Central Illinois School Administrators' Responses.

The school administrators agreed that portfolios reflect a teacher's knowledge of current educational terminology and classroom instructional practices.

Portfolios display the teacher's organization and planning skills, classroom teaching, technology skills, and reflection practices. The administrators were in consensus that teachers should provide access to their professional portfolio during interviews for teaching positions and they should be documenting their teaching and learning information in a portfolio.

About two-thirds of the principals agreed that teachers should be required to us professional teaching portfolios for annual evaluations and recertification purposes. They stated that teachers should document their teaching and educational work in a portfolio throughout their career as an educator. The lowest scoring question was number six. Administrators stated that they did not believe teaching portfolios support their hiring decisions. The researcher included two items to the Likert style survey based on a study in 2000. During that study, the principals stated that portfolios would assist their asking questions during the job interview and support their hiring decisions of new teachers. The results of the survey indicated that the professional teaching portfolios did not enhance the interview questioning process or assist the principals' hiring decisions. However, school administrators stated that prospective teachers need to provide access to their portfolios during the interview process.

From the school administrators' responses to the systematic sampling survey, it can be generalized that school administrators find value with the contents of professional teaching portfolios and consider them beneficial for identifying the professional development of educators. The results also identified that principals are not using portfolios to their full advantage during the hiring process as documents of teaching experiences.

Future studies should include surveying the target population of 1,010 Central Illinois school administrators with parochial schools and demographic information. If a digital survey is used, there should be additional reminders requesting completion of the survey. Each time a reminder was sent, the number of responses increased. The sampling of Central Illinois administrators only had two reminders requesting completion of surveys within the study.

Conclusion

The review of the literature supports the usage and value of teaching portfolios for instructional practice, improvement of programs, teacher self-assessment, and an understanding of the teaching and learning process. Portfolios support reflective practice, teacher confidence, and provide an outlet for open discourse, to discuss teaching methods and strategies that were used in daily classroom settings. Real teaching situations are documented in portfolios as teachers record classroom instructional practices and connect their problem solving strategies with improvement practices. Preservice teachers are able to identify their teaching strengths, challenges, and articulate their beliefs about the teaching and learning process.

Professional teaching portfolios are an alternative and authentic assessment tools. Authentic assessment refers to leaning in a natural environment when meaning is attached to the learning activity, using meaningful tasks. Educators agree that it is necessary to identify purpose for the portfolio, clear guidelines for construction, and learners should have the opportunity to make some decisions as to what artifacts or documentation should be included in their portfolios. Choice of artifacts and documentation of instructional practices allows for more creativity and problem solving with instructional practices. Teaching portfolios promote reflective practice.

Portfolios are usually presented in a digital format. Electronic portfolios are efficient for collection of data and reflective practices as preservice teachers store selected artifacts from their classroom learning activities. E-portfolios can save large amounts of work, include media, connect to many online sources or Internet sites, use social networking, record assessment information, and provide easy access to instructional materials, since organizing and editing work is usually done in software programs, websites, Word files, PowerPoints, spread sheets, video clips, etc.

Through the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) portfolio, preservice teachers will complete their professional portfolio during their student teaching semester for licensure. The portfolio, as a performance based assessment, will contain samples of work from content areas, unit instructional plans, video clips, student work samples, assessments and data, identified interventions, and reflections about the teaching and learning process.

In reference to school administrators' use and value of professional teaching portfolios, the literature suggests that portfolios contain valuable information and are sometimes used with job interviews. The studies conducted identified some principals using portfolios and one study found that portfolios may help or hinder a perspective teacher being hired for a position in the school depending upon its quality of contents. Portfolios contain valuable information about teachers and their instructional practices, however, principals were not using portfolios to their full benefit for hiring purposes and professional development of their teachers.

The systematic sampling survey revealed that school administrators agreed that portfolios reflect and display teachers' knowledge, beliefs, organization and planning skills, classroom teaching, technology skills, and reflection practices. The administrators were in consensus that teachers should provide access to their professional portfolio during interviews for teaching positions. Also, teachers should be documenting their teaching and learning information in a portfolio.

About two-thirds of the principals agreed that teachers should be required to use professional teaching portfolios for annual evaluations and recertification purposes. They stated that teachers should document their teaching and educational work in a portfolio throughout their teaching career.

The results of the survey indicated that the professional teaching portfolios did not enhance the interview questioning process or assist hiring decisions. However, school administrators stated that teachers applying for a job need to provide access to their portfolios during the interview process.

School administrators find value with the contents of professional teaching portfolios and consider them beneficial for identifying the professional development of educators. They concurred that teachers should record their professional development in portfolios throughout their career as educators. Even though administrators are not using portfolios to their full potential during the hiring process, they want teachers to make their portfolios available upon request during job interviews.

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PARTNERSHIPS: PUTTING THEORY INTO ACTION
IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION
by
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Abstract
Effective teacher education has a rich conceptual framework as its foundation that is put into action with clinical partnership collaborations that explicitly support and operationalize the theoretical foundations. The program described here as a promising practice centers on culturally responsive pedagogy and the importance of community context. These two framing elements of clinical partnerships and culturally responsive teaching are brought together through embedded core practices in program design, curriculum, and assessments. Collaborative partnerships with teachers in a variety of deliberately selected K-12 school district partners are central. Rather than focusing on one limited type of partnership, a variety of types of effective partnerships provide authentic preparation for teacher candidates. Partnerships are intensive and extensive, have shared responsibility and mutual benefits, use community-based educators, and focus on community context. Curriculum design centers on culturally responsive pedagogy, assessing students on implementation of the curriculum through course-embedded assessments, and modeling best practices.

Introduction

To create a successful teacher education program, a rich conceptual framework is needed as a foundation, but it must be put into action with school/college clinical partnership collaborations that explicitly support and operationalize the theoretical foundations of the program. The liberal arts teacher preparation program described here has a conceptual framework centering on culturally responsive pedagogy and the importance of understanding the community context for teaching in an age of rapid social and cultural changes in community and family configurations. These two framing elements of clinical partnerships and culturally responsive teaching are brought together through the development of embedded core practices in the areas of program design, curriculum, and assessments. We address social and cultural, as well as practical and theoretical, aspects of teacher education by working closely in collaborative partnerships with teachers in a variety of deliberately selected K-12 school district partners.

Rather than just focusing on one limited type of partnership, we have a variety of types of effective partnerships to provide authentic preparation for our teacher candidates with the goal of providing all students with equal access to quality education. Rather than speaking only of theoretical frameworks, methods of achieving the goal of preparing effective beginning teachers will be presented through specific examples of clinical partnerships and culturally responsive curriculum, teaching practices, and course-embedded assessments. While not intended as an empirical study, the promising practices synthesized and reported here address critical issues in teacher education centered on two elements: the importance of working in close collaboration with school districts and the importance of focusing on diverse clinical experiences for candidates. These are critical issues in teacher education today, especially in light of the profession's goals to diversify the teaching force and prepare all candidates to successfully educate a diverse K-12 student population. In addition, the focus on performance assessment measures for all teachers (such as the edTPA) requires that programs include authentic experiences for candidates in a variety of settings that enable them to hone their performance base.

Working in collaboration with partnerships is embedded throughout all levels of our program, resulting in partnerships with over 167 varied schools in our area, thus enabling our candidates to recognize the complexity of student learning environments. The nature of these clinical partnerships varies, with some used primarily for course-embedded, focused classroom observations and others for more intensive, authentic, and mutually beneficial clinical experiences, including a professional development community partnership model.

Zeichner and Hoeft (1996) have suggested that all teacher education programs take a position on four issues: infusion versus segregation of related issues in the curriculum; culture-specific versus culture-general study and experience; interacting with versus studying about cultures; and whether or not a program itself is a model of what it espouses. Our program's design and curriculum makes clear that we have designed an infused, culture-specific, and culturally interactive program that models what we advocate. Approaching teaching in this way is very different from assuming that context-neutral, mainstream pedagogy and curriculum are appropriate for all students. We are not just rhetorically and conceptually committed to these principles but have put this framework into action. Our program puts into practice what multicultural theorists advocate: that diversity issues must be central not peripheral to the rest of the curriculum, mandatory rather than optional for all prospective teachers, and infused throughout courses and fieldwork experiences rather than contained in a single course (Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner, 1993). We have directly addressed the issue of race and cultural diversity with our mostly white pre-service candidates.

Our program is also framed around a social reconstructionist approach that directly challenges students to become social reformers and commit to the reconstruction of society through the redistribution of power and other resources (Grant & Sleeter, 1997). The curriculum teaches social action skills, promotes cultural pluralism, and has students analyze oppression with the intent of eventually, if not immediately, taking action to work for a more democratic society. Social reconstructionism focuses on how groups can change structures, and in this regard, community action projects are important and active learning takes center stage (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001, p. 95).

We also ground our vision of culturally responsive teaching in constructivist views of learning. To support students' construction of knowledge, teachers must help learners build bridges between what they already know and believe about the topic at hand and the new ideas and experiences to which they are exposed (Oakes & Lipton, 1999). This involves engaging students in questioning, interpreting, and analyzing information in the context of problems or issues that are interesting and meaningful to them. Clearly, teaching cannot be reduced to a rigid prescription that, if faithfully followed, automatically results in student learning. On the contrary, it demands thoughtful decision making in situations that are ever changing and characterized by uncertainty (p. 25). Faculty members practice this in their teaching and encourage all candidates to teach this way.

Foundational Concepts:
Community-based Clinical Partnerships and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Our program is framed around the importance of community-based clinical partnerships, understanding community context, and the application of the principles

of culturally relevant pedagogy. An examination of background literature in these areas will prove useful as a foundation for the explanation of our curriculum, core practices, and embedded signature assessments.

The first guiding principle that frames our program is the implementation of research-based exemplary practices in community-based partnerships. The National Research Council (2010) identifies clinical preparation in K-12 classrooms as one of the three "aspects of teacher preparation that are likely to have the highest potential for effects on outcomes for students," along with content knowledge and the quality of teacher candidates (p. 180). As the Council on Accreditation for Educator Preparation (CAEP) (2013) recommends, we have collaborated with our partners to "design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development" (p. 15). The attitudes and understandings of partnership design support the major goals of an effective teacher education program.

Teacher education can be strengthened when prospective teachers have realistic classroom situations in which to learn the tools of the profession with the continual support of mentors from both the school and the university (Barnhart et al, 1995). There is a focus on open communication with partners that exemplifies trust and appreciation of both like and differing perceptions of the world of teaching and learning. Houck et al (2004) indicate effective partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect, sufficient time to develop and strengthen relationships at all levels, shared responsibility and accountability among partners, and periodic formative evaluation. This is the case with our long standing relationships with the districts of Waukegan and Lake Forest in particular. Both college faculty and K- 12 teachers promote supportive school conditions. Each participant understands the unique experience and perspective that the others bring to the collaborative and demonstrate willingness to work together on a professional basis. All partners' contributions to the development of our curriculum are equally valued (Gomez, 1990, as cited in Carter, 2013). Community-based teacher education focuses on strategically utilizing the expertise that exists in the broader community to educate prospective teachers about how to be successful teaching in their communities (Zeichner, 2010).

As evidence of our mutually beneficial relationships, our collaboration with school personnel to determine the specific needs of their communities has enabled us to shape our curriculum to include extensive preparation for candidates before their fieldwork practicum in which they look at the specifics of the district's diverse school culture. This establishes shared beliefs among teachers, administrators, and staff. Our students learn about their Waukegan students' families by communicating with them consistently and respectfully, and they learn about the communities in which they teach by becoming familiar with the community resources. This is further exemplified in the music education program's professional development community co-teaching model. In addition, the many in-service professional development programs described below show our serious cooperation and desire to benefit our partner districts, and our agreement to focus on one or two specific goals in each case, as recommended by Maeroff (1987).

Clinically based approaches create varied and extensive opportunities for candidates to connect what they learn with the challenges of using it, while under the expert tutelage of skilled clinical educators. Students blend practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge as they learn by doing. They refine their practice in the light of new knowledge acquired and data gathered about whether their students are learning, as recommended by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher

Education (NCATE, 2010). Field experiences that are carefully coordinated with coursework and carefully mentored are better able to accomplish program goals in preparing teachers to successfully enact complex teacher practices (Zeichner, 2010). The methods our program specifically uses to implement these ideas will be described below.

The second guiding principle of our institution's program design is the centrality of culturally responsive pedagogy, equity of access to knowledge, and the importance of addressing the local needs of schools and communities. The term culturally responsive refers to a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 467). The premise behind culturally responsive pedagogy has been linked to the idea that if teachers are able to make connections between the cultural knowledge, beliefs, and practices that students bring from home, as well as the content and pedagogy that they use in their respective classrooms, this combination may have the potential to enhance the academic performance and overall schooling experiences of culturally diverse learners (Howard & Terry, 2011, p. 347). Culturally responsive teachers (a) are socio-culturally conscious, (b) have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, (c) see themselves as responsible for and capable of bringing about change to make schools more equitable, (d) understand how learners construct knowledge and are capable of promoting knowledge construction, (e) know about the lives of their students, and (f) design instruction that builds on what their students already know while stretching them (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 21).

Banks' (1994) transformative approach requires that the internal structure of the curriculum incorporate the fabric of the racial, ethnic, and social experiences of different minority groups. Merging culture and pedagogy represents a complex and intricate set of processes that many practitioners and researchers have suggested may improve student learning and engage students who are often disengaged from teaching and learning (Nasir, McLaughlin, & Jones, 2009). "The fundamental aim of culturally responsive pedagogy is to empower ethnically diverse students through academic success, cultural affiliation, and personal efficacy" (Gay, 2000, p. 111). Culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes the uniqueness of student culture by using "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming" (p. 29). Ladson-Billings (1995) describes this teaching, that she calls "culturally relevant", as one that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 18).

Culturally responsive pedagogy embodies "a set of professional, political, cultural, ethical, and ideological dispositions that supersedes mundane teaching acts, but is centered in fundamental beliefs about teaching, learning, students, their families, their communities, and an unyielding commitment to see student success become less rhetorical and more of a reality" (Howard & Terry, 2011, p. 346). Culturally responsive pedagogy is situated in a framework that recognizes the rich and varied cultural wealth, knowledge, and skills that diverse students bring to schools, and seeks to develop dynamic teaching practices, multicultural content, multiple means of assessment, and a philosophical view of teaching that is dedicated to nurturing students' academic, social, emotional, cultural, psychological, and physiological well-being.

Preservice teachers with little multicultural experience need to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills, but they also must reconceive their role as teachers by recognizing the primary importance of diversity in all of their educational

decision making, from determining student readiness for learning, to designing curricula, selecting instructional materials, assessing performance, and developing appropriate programs and teaching techniques (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001, p. 100). It is an approach that is very much grounded in Banks's (1994) transformative models and Grant and Sleeter's (1997) cultural pluralism. To prepare prospective teachers to overcome possible barriers, teacher educators must take steps to "deliberately socialize" them into the change agent role (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 285). "Knowledge of the community in which schools reside and in which our students will work is an obviously important element in the success of pre-service teachers" (Koerner & Abdul-Tawwar, 2006, p. 38). Putting students directly into diverse partner districts allows teacher candidates to see the assets, not the deficits, of their student population. They come to understand that all students bring cultural values to their education, even though schools and teachers who are unfamiliar with their students' cultures may frequently disregard them. Multicultural teaching affirms diversity and its value for what it adds to the classroom and the importance of understanding the context of the community in which one is teaching.

Community-based Clinical Partnerships in Action

As recommended by the research, our partnerships are framed around principles of intensive and extensive partnerships, recommended partnership and program characteristics, shared responsibility, mutual benefits, integration of community-based educators, and the importance of community context.

Intensive and Extensive Partnerships

Two clinical partnerships stand out and show the systemic but varied nature of our collaborations. Our most intensive and extensive partnership is with a local high-needs district, Waukegan, IL, District 60. The 16,000 Waukegan district students are 74.7% Hispanic and 17% African-American with 77.4% low income. Working with Waukegan schools provides our students with opportunities to apply the theories of multicultural and community-based education and culturally responsive pedagogy learned in coursework to a real world setting. Our Waukegan partnership has been sustained and deepened over time. We have been placing students for fieldwork (a 150-hour pre-student teaching practicum in either K-2 or middle school classrooms) for over fifteen years. The partnership has become stronger each year as we add more schools, subject areas, and teachers to our collaboration. This is truly a mutually beneficial partnership, as we have also provided numerous sustained professional development opportunities for in-service teachers in District 60 through a number of projects for over thirteen years. This benefits our students as these well prepared in-service teachers later become mentor teachers for our students in their clinical placements, thus completing a mutually beneficial partnership cycle.

The second intensive partnership is the K-16 committee composed of representatives from Lake Forest School District 67, Lake Bluff School District 65, Lake Forest High School District 115 and the college. These districts represent the high resourced districts (90.9% white and 0.9% low income) that are located immediately adjacent to the college. The committee began meeting formally during the spring of 2005 after years of less formal partnerships and continues to seek ways to tap into community resources and collaborate for the purpose of improving learning for both district and college students and improving staff development/instruction across our communities. We use our K-16 partners for our special education student study placements, field-based high school discipline-specific observation placements, field-based elementary/middle school mathematics and technology observations, as well as pre-student teaching practica and student teacher placements in K – 12 classrooms. In turn, our faculty and students make a variety of contributions to district projects as well, to be described below.

Clinical partnerships are embedded throughout all levels of our program in a developmental progression in which candidates observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and conduct research (NCATE, 2008). We recognize the developmental nature of the transformative learning involved. This begins in the introductory course, Observing the Schooling Process, in which students conduct focused observations in numerous school sites, followed by a series of reflective writing assignments. Our junior level courses include fieldwork practica in diverse elementary and middle school settings that will be discussed in more detail below. A special education placement, usually in Lake Forest District 67, is part of our special education course, entitled Inclusive Learning Environments. As part of this placement, all students conduct a student study of a special education student in an assigned partner school. In the senior year methods courses, students are again working in partner schools to apply theoretical knowledge to practice. For example, elementary teacher candidates are in mathematics and science classrooms in districts including North Chicago, Lake Forest and Lake Bluff. Secondary majors are assigned a placement in a local suburban high school in their discipline of licensure to observe and reflect upon instructional strategies in their content area. Students are often placed in the schools in which they will subsequently student teach. The assigned mentor teacher also assists in the development of their culminating unit plan assessment in the senior seminar courses. K-12 candidates also complete an elementary practicum in the semester between the middle school and high school placements. Finally, all students complete a 560 hour, 14-week full time student teaching placement in either a grade 3- 5 or high school classroom in a suburban setting.

All candidates complete all of these truly transformative partnership experiences that are documented by the many reflective assignments they submit to culminating portfolios required in these courses. These will be discussed below in the section on course-embedded assessments. Evidence of the transformative nature of these placements can also be found in the large number of our alumni who teach in both Waukegan and other local districts. Finally, we are always working to improve and refine our clinical partnerships. Most recently, the music education program added a professional development community model of fieldwork at the elementary and middle school levels. This partnership includes collaborations between music education professors and the K-12 music teachers and their students. Both the professors and the K-12 music teachers are responsible for instructing both the college students musically and pedagogically and the K-12 students musically. In addition, the candidates instruct the K-12 students modeling their instruction after the K-12 teachers and college professors. The instruction takes place entirely in the K-12 schools. Cooperation among all these organizations promotes quality teacher education.

Partnerships have developed to an advanced level as integrated, sustaining, and generative (NCATE, 2010). As stated in the recent report from NCATE (2010), "only when preparation programs become deeply engaged with schools will their clinical preparation become truly robust" (p.3). In terms of the teacher preparation program, ten design principles recommended by NCATE (2010) are embedded into our program. These are: student learning is the focus; clinical preparation is integrated throughout every facet of teacher education in a dynamic way; candidates' progress is continuously judged on the basis of data, including student artifacts, (the four checkpoints of our electronic developmental portfolio); programs prepare teachers who are expert in content (all our majors also have a full second major in a content area) and how to teach it and are also innovators,

collaborators, and problem solvers (the cooperating teachers often take our candidates' work and subsequently use it in their classrooms).

We are an interactive professional community in which clinical educators are rigorously selected and prepared (supervisors are either long time professors in the department with years of experience in Waukegan, and in one case a retired administrator in District 60, and our pre-fieldwork and student teaching cooperating teachers receive individual orientation sessions and handbooks). Specific sites are designated to support embedded clinical preparation; technology applications foster high-impact preparation (such as electronic message boards and portfolios); there is a systematic gathering and use of data that supports continuous improvement in teacher preparation (we compile annual data-driven reports for Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and internal documentation of program changes for assessment, including data collected by survey each semester from K-12 partners who assess candidates, supervisors and program design and execution); and, as a result of this strategic partnership, each partner's needs are better met by collaboration.

Our partnership structure models the characteristics that make successful partnerships (Hirsh, 2012), including the value of team structures and processes, working from plans with measureable outcomes (our students' developmental portfolio checkpoints), and an appreciation and respect for collaboration (fostered by the constant personal interaction within our small department, cohort and community). The importance of communication, listening to all voices, and working in diverse contexts are all hallmarks of our small liberal arts teacher preparation program. See Table 1 for specific examples of how we put the community-based partnership principles into action throughout the program.

Table 1: Community-based Clinical Partnership Theory in Action

Community-based Clinical Partnership Principle	Program Elements
Clinical preparation is integrated throughout every facet of teacher education in a dynamic way (NCATE)	Focused observations begin in introductory course, Observing the Schooling Process; 150-hour fieldwork practicum in junior year; special education placement during Inclusive Learning Environment course; discipline specific placements during senior seminars; full time capstone student teaching semester
Specific sites are designated to support embedded clinical preparation (NCATE)	Partner schools specifically designated for each type of clinical experience – focused observation; student studies; practicum; student teaching
Clinical experiences are early, ongoing and take place in a variety of school and community based settings (CAEP)	Clinical placements from first course to student teaching required to be completed in both high-needs and suburban schools
Working in diverse contexts (Hirsh)	Over 167 partner schools, including required fieldwork practicum in high-needs district, Waukegan #60
Candidates observe, assist, tutor, instruct and may conduct research (NCATE)	Developmental sequence from introductory course through student teaching

Clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. (CAEP)	150-hour fieldwork practicum; 560 hour full time student teaching; all placements supervised by college faculty and associated with seminar courses; fieldwork practicum has co-requisite reading methods course
Strong collaborative partnerships with school districts and individual school partners (CAEP)	Mutually beneficial partnerships include in-service professional development for district teachers; professional development community model; K-12 partnership committee; district partners serve on Advisory Council for college
Partnerships are strategic in meeting partners' needs by defining common work, shared responsibility, authority and accountability (NCATE); Shared responsibility and accountability among partners (Houck); Strategic partnership that meets each partners' needs, pursue mutually beneficial and agreed upon goals (CAEP)	Leadership teams for in-service professional development projects consist of partners from both school districts and college who work together to define needs and pursue beneficial shared goals (see McRAH; LLC; K-16 Committee); program handbooks explain college's conceptual framework, identifying dispositions and responsibilities for cooperating teachers and college supervisors
Partnerships value team structures and processes and appreciation and respect for collaboration; communication and listening to all voices (Hirsh); Mutual trust and respect (Houck)	Leadership teams for in-service professional development projects consist of partners from both school districts and college; Education Advisory Council
Working from plans with measurable outcomes (Hirsh); Periodic formative evaluation of activities among partners (Houck)	Ongoing formative and summative evaluation surveys included in all partnerships for program improvement; outcomes explicitly defined in program handbooks and measured through course-embedded assessments
Sufficient time to develop and strengthen relationship at all levels (Houck)	Working in close partnership with Lake Forest and Waukegan districts for over 15 years
Clinical educators are rigorously selected and prepared (NCATE)	All cooperating teachers are certified teachers with required years of experience appropriate to placement; criteria for selection and responsibilities are explicitly identified in program handbooks
Multiple indicators and appropriate technology-based application to establish, maintain and refine criteria for selection, professional development, performance evaluation, continuous improvement and retention of clinical educators in	Candidates evaluate and give feedback on cooperating teachers; college supervisors meet with cooperating teachers on a regular basis for purpose of continued improvement and retention of clinical educators in all placements; personal relationships develop with

all clinical placement settings (CAEP)	practicum cooperating teachers who are used repeatedly; small cohort size allows for close relationships
Partnerships establish mutually agreeable expectations for candidate entry, preparation and exit and share accountability for candidates outcomes (CAEP)	Program handbooks explicitly identify criteria for candidates' assessment including identifying dispositions at all checkpoints. Cooperating teachers evaluate candidates; Education Advisory Council members approve candidates at program exit; K-12 teachers serve on student teacher exit interview panels
Candidates' progress is continuously judged on the basis of data, including student artifacts (NCATE); Clinical experiences have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development (CAEP)	Performance-based assessments are included in development electronic portfolio; e.g. checkpoint #2 includes assessment of student study, total teach plan and culturally responsive lessons and culminating project from fieldwork; checkpoint #3 includes student teaching lesson plans and special education student study
Ensure that theory and practice are linked and maintain coherence across clinical and academic components of preparation (CAEP)	Curriculum mapping documents that standards are met in each course and assessment; theory and practice connections explicit in program handbooks and course-embedded assessments

Our preparation program and our partner districts think about teacher preparation as a responsibility we share, working together. The values and goals of the Lake Forest College program and the mission and goals of our partner school districts, particularly Waukegan District 60, are very much aligned resulting in relationships that benefit all students. To make these elements a reality, we start by providing individual orientation meetings for each mentor and cooperating teacher before the placement. We explain the complete and detailed handbooks all cooperating teachers receive. Teacher partners are provided with information on appropriate strategies for co-teaching with students to support the development of complex teaching skills with a weekly pacing guide of activities. College supervisors, mentors, and candidates work collaboratively through at least eight on-site school visits per candidate each semester to ensure that all teachers know how to work closely with colleagues, students, and the community. In addition, schools provide space for college meetings on site and education and arts and sciences faculty are involved with the schools as speakers and mentors. The college's counseling center and one of our faculty members are major partners in the Wellness Task Force in Lake Forest Schools. Finally, our students and faculty provide expert guidance for many projects, programs, science fairs, math nights, technology projects, etc., for our school partners in an ongoing basis. Our students also provide afterschool volunteer tutoring and mentor services for our partner schools.

Waukegan District 60 shares many of the same goals as our program. Their mission statement is: "Educating students for the world of tomorrow is our top priority. Through mobilization of the entire community, we will challenge, teach, and inspire our students. We will provide the resources to serve each of our students,

expecting excellence from all involved. We will deliver an exciting education in a safe learning environment that celebrates our diversity and similarities in a spirit of unity and respect." District goals include: to mobilize the entire community to provide programs, resources, and services that ensure success for all students (which includes the larger community of the college); to serve all students and their families without bias; to expect excellence and accountability from students, families, teachers, administrators, board of education, staff, and partners—no exceptions, no excuses; to strengthen our community by celebrating our diversity: honoring and respecting our differences, and embracing our similarities. These goals are in alignment with the program's conceptual framework described previously.

Another demonstration of the alignment of the values and goals of the partnership members is the fact that many of the alumni are hired by the district and other high needs, urban districts, such as the Chicago Public Schools. In recent years, at least 28 teachers have been hired by Waukegan and at least fifteen have worked in Chicago Public Schools. In addition, many graduates of our program are working in local schools in surrounding suburban school districts, including Lake Forest, that are the same or similar to the partners we employ for student teaching placements. Our alumni are making a difference for a diverse range of students. One of our alumni teaching at Waukegan High School was awarded the National History Teacher of the Year Award in 2012, and a recent graduate teaching in Lake Forest was awarded the Abbott Sigma Xi award as elementary science teacher of the year.

In addition to what we learn from our K-12 teachers, college faculty share expertise with our in-service teacher partners through a series of professional development grants and projects. This demonstrates our strong commitment to a true partnership that is two-sided and mutually beneficial to enhance all stakeholders in our partnerships. These projects have addressed the needs of school partners, as identified by them in our close and ongoing collaborations. These projects have included a *Teaching American History* grant entitled Model Collaboration: Rethinking American History (McRAH) that was an innovative professional development program that resulted from a $930,000 grant awarded to the Waukegan Public Schools in collaboration with the college and the Chicago History Museum by the U.S. Department of Education. Faculty from both the Education and History Departments were involved in the McRAH project. The goal of the project was to improve the teaching of American history in middle and high schools in Waukegan and other local suburban school district partners. Faculty research on the outcomes of this project has been documented in a series of published research reports shared with the partners (Ragland, 2009, 2008, 2007a, 2007b).

Another professional development project, Linking Learning Communities, a New Teacher Leadership Project, a part of the Associated Colleges of Illinois' Center for Success in High Need Schools, was a partnership between the college and Waukegan, IL, District 60 public schools designed to increase and retain the number of high quality teachers in Waukegan schools. Through instructional coaching specifically designed for the Waukegan teaching community, the project supported new teachers working in Waukegan schools and their decision-making skills in the areas of resource use, learning environment, activity design, and student assessment. Both college professors and Waukegan school personnel served equally as faculty for this collaborative project.

Another way in which our framework is put into action is through the use of our K-12 partner teachers as instructors for sections of curriculum and instructional design courses. For example, the sections for each secondary and K-12 senior methods course are taught by educators who are current or former department chairs at many of our partner high schools and who are experts in their particular

disciplines. A further example of our use of educators who are experts in specific content areas includes the current instructor for our Inclusive Learning Environments course. This course focuses on the topic of special education for the general classroom teacher and has been taught successfully for several years by the Director of Special Education from a partner district. K-12 educators teaching at the K-college reflects our commitment to enhancing our students' preparation. All members of our partnerships, including Education Department faculty and K-12 teachers, share their expertise to enrich the preparation of our students.

Current K-12 teachers and administrators also serve as guest speakers for our introductory courses, junior fieldwork seminars and senior seminars. They present on topics such as technology in the classroom, implementing cooperative learning strategies, the importance of community context for successful instruction, and how teachers use data to inform instruction. College faculty also have continuous contact with K-12 educators so that we remain informed about changes in the curriculum in the schools that in turn shapes our program in necessary content to support these changes. For example, collaboration with K-12 partners has led us to revise our curriculum to include more emphasis on the Common Core Standards and the PARCC assessment frameworks, as our school partners are currently facing the implementation of these elements into their programs. We have added more focus on topics such as the new state teacher evaluation system, integration of new standards for science and social studies, updated technology-based learning opportunities, and use of data to inform instruction as a direct result of collaboration with our school district partners. They have indicated a need for teachers to be prepared to address these elements, and our partnerships have enabled us to modify the design of our curriculum based on this important collaboration. Finally, in-service teachers from our partner districts serve on our Educational Advisory Council, a policy making body for the program.

Every level of partnership, from pre-student teaching observations to supervision of student teachers, becomes part of both the K-12 and college environments. All education faculty in the teacher preparation program have experience teaching in K-12 classrooms to share with candidates, as well as knowledge based on our own research associated with K-12 classrooms and up to date developments in our field. We continue to learn from our K-12 teachers as well. For example, teachers from our partner districts present each semester on panels for both our fieldwork interns and student teachers to share their "wisdom of practice." We also meet continuously with our alumni to keep up to date with the latest developments in their K-12 classrooms. We have made many modifications to our course content based on this information, such as expanding our coverage of the content areas discussed above.

Our music education program professional development community model of fieldwork extends collaboration between our music education professors and partner district K-12 music teachers and their students. Both the professors and the K-12 music teachers in nearby Highland Park and Lake Forest schools are responsible for instructing both the college and the K-12 students. In addition, our candidates instruct the K-12 students modeling their instruction after the K-12 teachers and the professors. The instruction takes place entirely in the K-12 school, thus enabling us to clearly document the impact on student learning from the partnership. As documented by Boyd, et al (2009), there is a direct link between teacher preparation programs and student achievement.

The materials developed in the in-service professional development projects discussed above have also benefited our students in multiple ways. Teachers involved in this professional development have subsequently served as cooperating teachers for both fieldwork interns and student teachers, as they share their understanding of best practices in instructional design and delivery. The best practices developed through these partnerships have also been used to structure the curriculum of the senior seminar for secondary history majors (Ragland, 2008) and the seminar for fieldwork interns, so all elements of our program – college faculty, K-12 mentors, and students – are aligned.

By focusing on the integration of partnerships into the program, the importance of community and understanding the context of the community in which one teaches becomes apparent. This is a particular focus of the students' preparation before their Waukegan fieldwork practicum. We stress that good teaching connects with and builds on the strengths and ways of being that K-12 students bring into the classroom from their home communities. We further emphasize the importance of spending time in students' communities and not being a stranger to the community. Teachers need to be able to identify strengths, resources, networks, and ways of connecting within communities of which they may not be members. They need to place the struggles parents are facing in a larger context, thereby understanding that while parents should not be absolved of responsibilities, someone who is responsive to the community is critical of factors leading to community impoverishment. Responsive, effective teachers need to identify additional sources of community support, such as churches or community centers to support their teaching. Details of course-embedded practices in these areas are described below.

Integral to our framework is the idea that individuals have obligations in the community as well as a role as a professional individual in a democratic society. Our students become cognizant of themselves as political beings/community workers through their clinical experiences in partnership districts, especially their Waukegan fieldwork experience. This allows students to sees themselves as part of the community and teaching as giving something back to the community. The culture of our program infuses the beliefs that all students can succeed, and teachers should help students make connections between their community, national, and global identities.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Action: Course-embedded Assessments

Our research-based curriculum design centers on infusing, preparing for, and demonstrating culturally responsive pedagogy, assessing students on implementation of the curriculum through course-embedded assessments, and modeling best practices.

We integrate community-based education projects and a focus on culturally responsive teaching throughout the program's curriculum. Students move back and forth between the academic and the experiential, with the work of Banks (1994), Grant and Sleeter (1997), Ladson-Billings (1997), Nieto (2000) and others providing interpretive value systems with which to develop cross-cultural competency and a personal pedagogy committed to equity and excellence for all students. Students are assessed on their ability to demonstrate concepts such as: respecting and being interested in students' experiences and cultural backgrounds; supporting higher-order learning (complex problem solving while developing basic skills at the same time); building on students' prior knowledge, values and experiences; avoiding stereotyping of students; adapting instruction to students' semantics, accents, dialects and language ability; applying rules relating to behavior fairly and sensitively; engaging families directly in their children's learning; and legitimizing students' real-life experience as they become part of the "official" curriculum.

The diversity of the Waukegan district's population allows our interns to gain valuable experience while their K-12 students learn too. It gives our students authentic experience with the framework for multicultural education infused throughout our program, in line with the goals of Waukegan and other local districts. Based on research on culturally-responsive pedagogy, this framework includes concepts such as: the focus of the classroom must be instructional; having high expectations for all students; when students are treated as competent, they are likely to demonstrate competence; when teachers provide instructional "scaffolding" students can move from what they know to what they need to know; real education is about extending students' thinking and abilities; importing students' culture and experiences legitimizes them as part of the curriculum; and understanding how ethnicity affects teaching and learning is crucial.

Teachers benefit from preparation programs that provide well supervised field experiences that are congruent with candidates' eventual teaching, and that feature a capstone project – often a portfolio that reflects the candidates' development of practice and evidence of student learning (NCATE, 2010). In order to show the impact fostered by the partnership, our candidates have to demonstrate impact on student learning at each stage of clinical placements with community partners. They do this through a series of assessments: student studies; lesson portfolios; fieldwork reflective assignments at the beginning and end of placements; a senior seminar adolescent motivation research activity in which data collected in the high school classroom is incorporated into a culminating unit plan; senior clinical reflection journals; student teaching portfolio requirements; and the required edTPA (Teacher Performance Assessment) completed at exit by all candidates. See Table 2 for specific examples of how the program puts culturally responsive pedagogy and course-embedded assessments into action.

Table 2: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Theory in Action

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Principle	Course	Assessment
Diversity issues must be central not peripheral to the rest of the curriculum, mandatory rather than optional for all prospective teachers, and infused throughout courses and fieldwork experiences rather than contained in a single course (Nieto; Villegas & Lucas; Zeichner)	All	Focused observation reflections on culturally responsive teaching; cross-cultural communication theory and practice activities; fieldwork practicum in high-needs, diverse schools; special education clinical placement
Provide learning experiences that increase the likelihood that pre-service teachers will undergo transformative learning regarding multicultural education (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol); deliberately socialize candidates into the change agent role (Cochran-Smith)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar	150-hour fieldwork practicum in high-needs, diverse school setting with reflective assessments, including Personal Practical Philosophy of Education; "What I bring to teaching in Waukegan" (entrance presentation before fieldwork); "What I brought to teaching in Waukegan" (exit presentation after fieldwork); seminar activities including inventories on cultural and moral philosophies and readiness to teach in diverse settings.
Provide field experiences in urban settings in which students directly observe the need for multicultural education and pedagogy in schools with diverse student populations (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol)	Observing the Schooling Process; Fieldwork practicum & seminar	Focused observation in Chicago Public Schools; All candidates required to complete 150-hours fieldwork practicum in high-needs, diverse school setting
Assignments that accompany field experience should focus on culturally responsive issues so that theory and practice are interrelated (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar; co-requisite reading methods course	All candidates required to create culturally responsive lesson plans and deliver those plans; student study of individual struggling reader with remediation strategies; Reading Instructional Plan; culturally responsive culminating project incorporating local community resources; analysis of cooperating teachers' instructional strategies to bridge theory and practice; seminar activities such as reflection from Ladson-Billings "Dreamkeepers" lens
Emphasizing performance-based standards (Cochran-Smith)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar ; Student teaching	Total teach portfolio ; edTPA portfolio

Critical reflection regarding one's own philosophical position, moral commitment and readiness to teach for equity and excellence (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol); Cultivate dispositions by emphasizing the moral dimension of education and guide prospective teachers in developing their own personal vision of education (Villegas & Lucas)	Observing the Schooling Process; Fieldwork practicum & seminar	Reflective teaching autobiography; Reflective assessments, including Personal Practical Philosophy of Education; "What I bring to teaching in Waukegan" (entrance presentation before fieldwork); "What I brought to teaching in Waukegan" (exit presentation after fieldwork); reflective addendum to total teach portfolio with reflection on motivation, differentiation, strategic instruction, culturally relevant teaching and changes to future teaching in areas of instructional design and delivery; in seminar activities including inventories on cultural and moral philosophies and readiness to teach in diverse settings; candidates assessed on Identifying Dispositions aligned with Conceptual Framework
Candidates face and accept their own identities (Nieto) and examine their own socio-cultural identities (Villegas & Lucas)	Observing the Schooling Process; Fieldwork practicum & seminar	Reflective teaching autobiography; Reflective assessments, including Personal Practical Philosophy of Education; "What I bring to teaching in Waukegan" (entrance presentation before fieldwork); "What I brought to teaching in Waukegan" (exit presentation after fieldwork); seminar
		activities including inventories on cultural and moral philosophies and readiness to teach in diverse settings
Candidate learn to challenge racism and other biases (Nieto)	Observing the Schooling Process; Instructional Communication: Theory & Practice; Fieldwork practicum & seminar	Focused observation reflections on culturally responsive teaching; cross-cultural communication theory and practice activities; pre-fieldwork seminar activities, including guided community bus tour, Waukegan weekend experience assignment; reflective journals and message board postings; personal inventories on cultural and moral philosophies and readiness to teach in diverse settings; Candidates assessed on ability to: facilitate a learning community in which individual differences are respected, modeling sensitivity to the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of all learners; interpret the behaviors of students without making stereotypical or prejudicial judgments; and address when necessary stereotypical or prejudicial language use.
Candidates need to know about students' experiences outside school and consult with people who live in the communities served by the school (Villegas & Lucas)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar	Pre-fieldwork seminar activities, including guided community bus tour, panel of alumni teaching in Waukegan;

		Waukegan weekend experience assignment to visit Waukegan institutions on the weekend and observe and reflect on family dynamics; meeting with local teacher/church leader at community church; family message journals
Candidates become learners of their students realities and students of their students (Nieto); candidates inspect their own beliefs about students from non-dominant groups and confront negative attitudes they might have about these students (Villegas & Lucas)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar	Student study assignment to work with struggling reader one on one with implementation of remediation strategies; "What I bring to teaching in Waukegan" (entrance presentation before fieldwork); "What I brought to teaching in Waukegan" (exit presentation after fieldwork); Candidates assessed on ability to facilitate a learning community in which individual differences are respected, modeling sensitivity to the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of all learners; interpret the behaviors of students without making stereotypical or prejudicial judgments and address when necessary stereotypical or prejudicial language use.
Candidates develop strong and meaningful relationships with their students (Nieto)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar; Student teaching; Inclusive	Student study assignment to work with struggling reader one on one with implementation of

	Learning Environments	remediation strategies; student interest inventories in practicum and student teaching; Special Education Student Study
Require students to work closely with individual minority students in tutorial relationships in order that they may gain a more sensitive and concrete understanding of how culture shapes learning styles (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar	Student study assignment to work with struggling reader one on one with implementation of remediation strategies; Candidates assessed on ability to: facilitate a learning community in which individual differences are respected, modeling sensitivity to the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of all learners; interpret the behaviors of students without making stereotypical or prejudicial judgments; and address when necessary stereotypical or prejudicial language use.
Use pertinent examples and analogies from learners' lives to introduce or clarify new concepts (Villegas & Lucas)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar; discipline specific senior seminars	Candidates required to incorporate students' community/ culture into lesson and culminating project during fieldwork, such as environmental print projects; family message journals; use of community history and resources for exploration; Adolescent Motivation Research Exercise in the senior seminar; Candidates are assessed on ability to: use students'

		interests, knowledge and experiences, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels as the basis for materials selection; stimulate student reflection on prior knowledge and links new ideas to familiar ideas and experiences; use a variety of communication modes to engage a diverse student population; and use information about students' families, cultures, and communities as a basis for connecting instruction to students' experiences.
Candidates design their own units to become more skilled in making judgments about effective curriculum and pedagogy (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar; student teaching	Two-week total teach unit created and delivered in fieldwork; four to six weeks total teach units created and delivered in student teaching
Candidates gain practice using highly interactive instruction that appeals to many learning styles considered in relation to culture-specific contexts (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar; student teaching	Candidates assessed on ability to: use cooperative grouping techniques; motivate student engagement in instructional design choices (e.g. choices of materials, activity design, reward structures, etc.); and use a variety of student centered, context specific pedagogies.
Involve candidates in their own construction of knowledge through constructivist pedagogy (Cochran-Smith); teacher educators model constructivist practices for their students (Villegas & Lucas)	All	Teacher educators model constructivist practices in all courses through use of student centered, small group activities

		made possible by small, seminar sized classes. Teacher educators deconstruct their own instructional practices for students through reflective self-assessment and debriefing of teaching strategies
Candidates develop a community of critical friends to open up their perspectives (Nieto)	Fieldwork practicum & seminar; student teaching	Small cohort program uses interactive, online message boards for postings of reflective inquiry and exchange of comments and suggestions on focused topics each week; fieldwork students are placed together in schools for further interaction during practicum.

Preparation to Put Culturally Responsive Teaching into Action

Our program activities explicitly support learning about the importance of community context in culturally responsive teaching. The course-embedded assessments are designed specifically to prepare teachers to construct culturally responsive curriculum and enact its pedagogy. (See Table 2) Through a two-week series of daily seminars prior to beginning the fieldwork practicum, students are prepared to work in the diverse Waukegan community and implement culturally responsive teaching. These activities include: research completed in advance about Waukegan schools and the specific school placement site to which each student has been assigned; gaining knowledge specifically about the context of the district in which they are conducting their semester-long fieldwork practicum through a variety of sources, including primary documents, scholarly readings, and census materials; and a self-reflective presentation on "what I bring to teaching in Waukegan." Information on Waukegan's population and the history of the demographic changes that have taken place over the last fifteen years is provided, including during a bus trip to Waukegan guided by a colleague in the college's History Department. This also includes eating lunch in an authentic local Mexican restaurant and visiting community institutions such as churches and the library. A follow-up weekend experience assignment is required where candidates attend, observe, and reflect on family interactions in the community. Candidates also hear from a panel of alumni teaching in the district. At the end of the practicum semester, students create a bookend to their initial reflective presentation that provides insight into their experience, growth, and transformation throughout the semester and their impact on their students' learning.

These examples put into action the recommendations of Gay and Howard (2000) that prospective teachers need to learn about their own cultures and think of

themselves as cultural beings at the same time they learn positive attitudes toward students with different cultural backgrounds by developing "critical cultural consciousness." In addition to the series of self-reflective presentation assignments mentioned above, inventory exercises implemented before students actually begin their fieldwork placement ask the students to examine their own background and readiness to teach in diverse settings and create a Personal Practical Philosophy of teaching. Requirements assessed during the internship placement include: culturally responsive teaching; a focus on instructional strategies for ELLs; completion of a student study – getting to know an individual struggling student and documenting how they helped them succeed; elementary family message journals and environmental print projects; and community based culminating projects.

Educators in the program demonstrate the importance of motivation and engagement for learning by modeling such best practices in our own teaching. We describe and analyze our practice by deconstructing and explaining our practices for our students during our classes. The active engagement of students during course work occurs in all courses, starting with our introductory course, Observing the Schooling Process. An important topic in the course is theories of motivation and engagement that becomes the topic of a reflective paper where students observe teachers in two K- 12 classrooms in partner schools and compare their implementation of motivational strategies to the theories of motivation they have learned in the course. The focus on the importance of motivation and engagement continues in fieldwork and student teaching, as discussed previously, where students are assessed on their ability to motivate, engage, and make an impact on student learning through implementation of instructional strategies. Other assignments focus on student achievement, including the tasks of the required edTPA portfolio. edTPA Task Three focuses on the use of student achievement data assessed in alignment with unit goals to improve instruction that is then documented and analyzed to draw conclusions in a cycle of reflection.

Our program has developed a carefully articulated sequence of performance measures for successful progress through our developmental program, including performance in clinical placements in partner schools. These evaluations are aligned with our conceptual framework and the principles of culturally responsive teaching, as well as standards such as Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS) and other recommendations of professional groups such as Stanford Center on Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), the creators of the edTPA. Our faculty also model culturally responsive pedagogy by being active members of educational communities in our diverse school district partners through the in-service professional development projects described above.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Teacher education programs in colleges and universities must make the commitment to encouraging the kind of transformative learning in pre-service educators that eventually will result in powerful multicultural programs for students (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001, p. 89). Teacher education programs should offer prospective teachers courses and other experiences that focus on questions of equity and diversity and that challenge deficit notions about the capabilities of students of diverse backgrounds (Nieto, 2000, p. 186). As we have done in our program, pre-service teachers must learn how to use culturally sensitive strategies and content, to recognize the cultural underpinnings of their own logic and thought as well as those of others, and to understand how cultural and linguistic differences may explain what in the past have been labeled as learning disabilities. Only in this way will they enter the profession able to provide equitable opportunities for

academic success, personal development, and individual fulfillment for all students (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001, p. 89).

As Lynn recommends (2014), we have translated increased awareness about race, culture, and student background into effective practices. We have built links between what is taught, how it is taught, and who is being taught. Culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education frame our program as more than a feel-good or obligatory addition to teacher preparation. Instead, it is embedded throughout the teacher preparation curriculum with the ultimate goal of improving student performance for all.

We have moved from talking about diversity and effective multicultural pedagogy to assessing teacher candidates on their ability to demonstrate that they can use this awareness of students' history and students' backgrounds to improve learning, as they put it into action in the context of our community-based clinical partnership experiences. Nieto (2000) suggests that teacher education programs need to take a stand on social justice and diversity, make social justice ubiquitous in teacher education, and promote teaching as a life-long journey of transformation (p. 182- 183). Due to the integration of clinical placements in multicultural communities, diversity has become part of the normal experience for all of our prospective teachers.

Multicultural infusion is a key component of a teacher education program that aims for transformative learning. Cross-cultural competency is not developed in any one course or in an academic vacuum. It depends on students having cultural knowledge, direct intercultural experiences, and the opportunity to reflect on those experiences. It is personal and interpersonal, cognitive and affective. For this reason, a multicultural program for aspiring teachers must not be limited to the education department or school of education (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001, p.102). Our entire college is committed to a multicultural approach, as is shown by the work of our Office of Intercultural Affairs and our student population that comes from 81 countries. About 38% of our students are either ethnic minority or international students. More than 40 languages are spoken on campus, and we have greater student diversity than most other small liberal arts colleges in the country.

The vision for our program has not been imposed from the outside (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). It has grown out of the authentic work of ongoing dialogue and negotiation among colleagues including our K-12 district partners. This vision gives conceptual coherence to the preparation of teachers for diversity. As teacher educators, we have articulated a vision of teaching and learning in a diverse society and have used that vision to systematically guide the infusion of multicultural issues throughout the pre-service curriculum. This infusion process requires that teacher educators critically examine the curriculum and revise it as needed to make issues of diversity central rather than peripheral.

As Villegas and Lucas (2002) point out, it is realistic to expect prospective teachers to come away from their pre-service teacher education programs with a vision of what culturally responsive teaching entails and an understanding of what culturally responsive teachers do. Our candidates have this ability and are able to demonstrate an initial ability to tailor their teaching to particular students within particular contexts, a central quality of culturally responsive teaching (p. 30). They successfully demonstrate this through the course-embedded assessments described above and their successful completion of stages of the edTPA that also address the importance of using knowledge of students as individuals to create effective beginning teaching. Another measure of how embedded this philosophy is throughout out program can be seen in the result that many alumni teach in diverse school settings after graduation, as described above.

Overall, our program has successfully put theory into action by starting with an overall framework and mission around which to develop the partnerships and candidate experiences. We also stress the importance of embedding the framework throughout the program and putting it into action throughout the curriculum and course-embedded assessments. It is central to get all partners on board with the shared goals of the program and sustain the impact of these partnerships with ongoing partner activities that link in-service and pre-service contexts. Implementing these actions has contributed to our program being awarded the 2014 Models of Excellence Award for partnerships from the Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education (AILACTE).

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PARTNERING WITH PARENTS: STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN HISPANIC STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS
by
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Abstract
Partnering with Parents: Strengthening the link between Hispanic students and their teachers Educators promote strong home connections and collaboration with parents as a key for healthy partnerships in support of student learning and achievement. With linguistically and culturally diverse families, these partnerships can be more difficult to forge. A practitioner and scholar collaborated to conduct a study to survey and interview Hispanic parents in one school regarding their educational expectations for their children and what factors seemed to be the most significant obstacles preventing or limiting parental involvement with the school. As a result of parental feedback, four strategies emerged: 1) provide Spanish-speaking advocates for school contacts; 2) deepen the understanding of Hispanic culture by teachers; 3) create literature to help in the Hispanic families' transition; and 4) offer opportunities for the Hispanic parents to learn English.

Why Are Many Hispanic Parents Left Behind?

In the wake of No Child Left Behind, the Common Core State Standards, and the quest to improve student achievement and school success for Hispanic students in our schools, we often overlook partnering with parents, or perhaps assume they are not relevant factors toward achieving these goals. The daily challenges of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students consume our time and energy to the point we may not follow up with parents as often as possible. The literature suggests that parental involvement and support seem to have a positive impact on student learning (Epstein, 2001; Lemov, 2010; Maynard & Howley, 1997) and that respectful teacher-parent partnerships are associated with positive learning outcomes (Rule & Kyle, 2008). Yet school personnel seldom pursue these partnerships with the parents of their Hispanic students.

Certainly linguistic and cultural differences can act as daunting hurdles between parents and the schools their children attend. The rapid increase in the number of Hispanic students in the U.S. has been well documented (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011; Garcia, 2001; Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan-Short, 2009). In fact, Hispanics comprise the largest ethnic or racial minority with 16.7 percent of the total population in the U.S., and 22 percent of children under the age of 18 identified as Hispanic (U.S Census Bureau, 2012). With 37,000,000 U.S. residents age 5 or older speaking Spanish at home in 2010 (U.S Census Bureau, 2012). Hispanic families with school-aged children are found in communities throughout the U.S.

When considering families that have arrived in the United States in recent years, it is not uncommon to find many of the parents of students who originate from Latin America struggling to learn the English language. Many of the low-paying, service-related jobs available in the job market do not require a high mastery of English. Complicating matters, some of these Hispanic parents may have little formal education themselves, depending on their circumstances and opportunities prior to arriving in the United States. Besides the infrequency, briefness and poor quality of the formal education of some Hispanic parents, other important factors, such as the extent of their exposure to English and the length of time in the U.S., can determine

their comfort level with public schools (Hill & Flynn, 2006). Therefore public schools, whether located in a major metropolitan center or in a rural agricultural region, may seem alien to many Hispanic parents (Ariza, 2011). Profound differences related to values, customs, nonverbal communication, and other aspects of culture also seem to raise the initial language hurdle. In contrast to parents familiar and comfortable with U.S. schools, many Hispanic parents may not know or understand how to support their children attending these same public schools.

Media stereotypes, history and bias may conspire to further discourage educators from extending efforts to partner with Hispanic parents. Joel Spring thoroughly documents racist attitudes, school segregation, deculturalization programs, state laws, court decisions, and the Civil Rights struggles of Hispanics in their efforts to overcome discrimination (2012). Many of these attitudes persist as evident in the racist Twitter comments of some citizens to eleven-year-old Sebastien De La Cruz singing the National Anthem before game three of the NBA Finals in San Antonio, TX (Rodriquez, 2013). Remnants of these attitudes may impede open dialogue between teachers and parents of Hispanic children. While Hispanic parents may initially feel like outsiders in relation to P-12 public schooling, they are not the only ones facing hurdles to a successful partnership. Teachers working in districts that are historically or predominately white, but with growing Hispanic populations, are often unprepared for some of the cultural differences they face, regardless of the requisite multicultural education courses or practica for teacher certification. School administrators and teachers may make assumptions about Hispanic parents in ways that potentially inhibit them from even attempting to overcome these hurdles. For instance, they may assume Hispanic parents are not likely to be able to help their children with homework because of limited academic vocabulary, academic knowledge, or lack of fluency in English. Teachers may also conclude that Hispanic parents may not highly value education and might be less supportive of high academic goals for their children. How accurate are these assumptions? Could they be misguided? Inaccurate? Generalizations?

Furthermore, when teacher education texts and courses encourage teacher candidates to partner with parents in supporting the literacy development of their children, the suggestions center on home activities between parents and their children, not on teachers interacting with the parents (Law & Eckes, 2000). Examples include giving ESL students assignments to learn about their families, creating a family tree, making a personal time line, collecting funny childhood or family stories, writing recipes for ethnic dishes, mapping migration routes or present community, and interviewing others (Enright, McCloskey, & Savignon, 1988). While these are enriching linguistic activities, they do little to encourage teachers to interact directly with the parents of their Hispanic students.

Cultural factors are critical when attempting to involve Latino parents in their children's learning (De Gaetano, 2007), but economic issues facing parents may also affect their availability for school partnerships. Recent immigrants, whether from Latin America or other parts of the world and whether they possess a Green Card or not, often work for more than one employer, with these multiple jobs totaling many hours of work– perhaps including or extending into the evening. In these cases, traditionally-scheduled before or after school or evening meetings or parent-teacher conferences may become problematic and can also be compounded by transportation challenges. An attempt to attend these meetings at school may require the parents to take time off work without pay and to find suitable transportation to and from the school. School personnel should not automatically interpret an absence from parent-teacher conferences or school meetings or their

limited availability to help with student homework as an expression of a general lack of interest in education. It is more complicated than that.

It appears that some of the common educational assumptions some teachers have of Hispanics may be inaccurate. But more information is needed. How can we truly form partnerships with Hispanic parents when we do not take the time to ask what they expect from teachers and schools and what specific hurdles may hinder them from becoming more involved in their children's schooling? One of the authors raised these questions while teaching in a rural community in southwest Michigan, a community with a small, but growing Hispanic population.

How Can We Connect With Parents?

It was easy to see the need for partnerships with Hispanic parents while teaching in a predominantly white town with a steadily increasing Hispanic population. As I sought to teach the Hispanic children in my K-5, bilingual classes, I grew more and more aware of the unique needs of my Hispanic families. Parents seemed hesitant to talk directly with me or with any other school personnel. Yet they expressed some appreciation to me because I spoke Spanish and could help them to communicate with their children's other teachers. Consequently and as the school year progressed, parents occasionally asked me questions about homework for their child's general education class or for suggestions on how to communicate with the school office staff about specific issues. I observed some of the Hispanic parents conversing and helping each other while noticing others who often appeared more uncomfortable in the school setting and avoided conversing with anyone. I wondered what the school might do to help connect families often marginalized or at the fringes of the school community. How could the school increase the involvement of Hispanic parents? How might the school draw on the rich resources and insights of these Hispanic parents? This lack of connectedness that I observed between the Hispanic parents and staff in schools motivated me to search for answers to these questions.

While still uncertain of how best to access and partner with Hispanic parents in their children's education, I consulted with one of my college professors, and was encouraged to investigate several questions. Although nervous about approaching parents to help me explore my questions and while apprehensive about using my imperfectly spoken Spanish, I was soon to find out how rewarding this would be after initiating the uncomfortable first steps in reaching out to the Hispanic parents. I pondered and posed two key questions as I sought to develop and extend this partnership: "What are your educational expectations for your children?" and, "What factors do you identify as the most significant obstacles preventing or limiting your involvement with your children's schools?" To find answers to these questions I began a process that resulted in asking questions of them and then listening to the stories and responses of the parents. This initially included obtaining permission from the school administration to reach out to parents and ultimately gaining the trust of parents so they would be willing to honestly share their personal perspectives.

The first formal contact I made with parents was through an invitation written in Spanish and sent via regular mail. I explained my interest/motivation and I asked for their help in the process of discovering how to build or improve parent-school partnerships. To follow up I personally phoned each family, and to my surprise, nine of the eleven eligible families enthusiastically agreed to meet with me and to answer my questions. I later discerned how hungry the families were to have a voice in the school – no one had ever asked them these types of questions. Many of them saw this invitation as a step to being accepted and embraced into the school community, while still maintaining their identity as Hispanic families.

My main means of capturing their thoughts and insights were through an initial survey, written in Spanish, followed by a home visit with each family, and culminating with a focus-group discussion. Supplemental phone conversations and informal interactions around the school were also helpful and aided me in interpreting their responses more accurately. These various interactions, both formal and informal, established the beginnings of our school's partnership with Hispanic parents.

Using a survey of questions I created, parents were asked about their expectations of their children's education and to identify which school interactions have encouraged their involvement. Basic questions such as: *What does your child like to do with his or her free time? What are your child's strengths? What are your child's needs?* helped me gain a sense of the current activities, interests, and family interactions in the home. Then I asked *What are your hopes for your child's classroom? What is your hope for your child as a student?* and *How do you see your role in your child's education?* They responded by articulating their educational hopes for their child's class and for their child. These initial survey questions opened the door to further interactions and set the relational tone that allowed for deeper conversations. These proved to be an effective, culturally appropriate way to initiate and cultivate a partnership with Hispanic parents because they utilized personal, face-to-face conversation with parents in their primary language outside the school and in their homes (Inger, 1992).

The relational nature and more intimate interaction of the home visits created an inviting atmosphere for the Hispanic families to become more fully engaged with our school programs. These visits also provided invaluable insights into the home life and culture of the families, as well as provided an outlet for parents to express their concerns, as was also discovered by Astuto and Allen (2009). In the process, I gained a greater appreciation of the influence of the child's home environment related to school performance, and I leveraged this knowledge in subsequent school-home interactions. The home visits helped to establish warm, open relationships with the parents, and that encouraged a long-term partnership as trust was realized (Ispa et al., 2000). As others have noted, home visits offer teachers an opportunity to see families and children from a different, and perhaps, more positive perspective (Lin & Bates, 2010).

In our specific case, these visits significantly lowered the hurdles that tend to impede parent-teacher collaborations and partnerships. Each home visit, lasting 30-60 minutes, was conducted in Spanish and centered on a list of sample questions to guide conversation. Questions included probes into general family routines, literacy and educational experiences, parental beliefs and expectations, and inquiries about the teacher and school relationships.

Responses were later organized into recurring themes and categories and were used to facilitate a follow-up focus group discussion at a local restaurant to talk about the consistent themes and major topics of interest that arose during home visits. The parents seemed at ease to talk, perhaps because the restaurant was a "neutral location" – not in someone's home or in the school building. During the discussion, I recorded anecdotal notes to compare responses to the earlier survey and the home visits, and as a foundation to develop specific strategies for fostering and improving school partnerships with Hispanic parents.

Finally, I crafted a follow-up parent survey that listed these specific strategies designed to promote home to school communication as well as the traditional school communication channels. The survey invited the Hispanic parents to rank which ones were most helpful and effective for communication. Their

responses were instructive and led to communication changes in how my school interfaced with our growing community's Hispanic population.

What Might We Learn From Partnering with Hispanic Parents?

What are the actual educational expectations of the Hispanic parents of students in our school? Parent survey responses indicated a strong desire for school involvement and support for the academic achievement of students. The parents have high aspirations for their children to pursue their interests, to go to college, and to work toward their careers and occupations of choice. These parents saw their role in their child's education as helping them with homework, attending school functions, and encouraging their children in their studies. All (nine of nine) parent responses indicated strong hopes that their children would achieve proficient levels of English and Spanish literacy. While they saw the English language as the primary focus in schools, they also hoped their own children would maintain skills in Spanish competency in reading and writing. One parent stated her perspective this way, "I hope that she learns English well and doesn't lose her Spanish. We hope she speaks Spanish at home, but learns English well in school. We're glad she's learning Spanish in school too" (Rosi, personal communication, November 18, 2010). Other parents also echoed this hope.

Most of the parents (seven of nine) spoke of desiring their children to be successful and happy in whatever occupation or direction they chose, whether it was college, a profession, or another vocational option. Conversations during the home visits only reinforced these general expectations of the parents. These expectations appear to be similar to those of non-Hispanic parents.

However, some hurdles appeared that seem to hinder the pathway to fulfilling these expectations. Most prominent among the hurdles identified were these two: 1) the limited English skills by the Hispanic parents and 2) the lack of meaningful communication between Hispanic parents and the school. The parents articulated a strong desire to be involved in their children's education and to assist them with their homework, but many felt that their weak English skills greatly restricted their ability to do so. Oscar described his strong desire to support his child, but identified his lack of English skill as a major hurdle. "For me, the ability to support and participate in school is very important but the greatest obstacle is not speaking English, but I try to support where I can" (personal communication, November 3, 2010). This feeling of being inhibited by the lack of English was stated by almost 90 percent of the parents. Cecil described the difficulty of not understanding the English homework sent home, and therefore not being able to help his first grade child with homework. "I can't help much because I don't know English. I try to help him read. We get books from the library and I help him read. I don't understand the books or his homework very well. Another mom helps me when I ask her. If I don't understand a paper, she tells me. Sometimes my son knows how to do things because they send review papers of what they did in class, but he has to do it himself" (personal communication, October 26, 2010).

This lack of English contributes to this communication hurdle. Misunderstandings can happen easily and sometimes parents sought outside help to make sense of communications from the teacher or school. My observations of this are what originally motivated me to explore how we might improve communications with the Hispanic parents of our students. A parent with more advanced English skills commented on the difficulty for the parents with less English fluency:

> I was thinking about that parent literacy night we had. I did mention to the teacher if we could have training for us as parents at least once a month – let us know how to read to our kids and teach us. I was putting myself in

other mom's shoes and I was like, "How do they do it?" It has to be up to the kid. At home, who are they going to ask? It is helpful to understand the language, the way it sounds, how it's written, and how to read. I like to read, but sometimes it takes me a while to get it right and I have to go back and read it. I know English, how to read and write, and it is still hard for me to sound out and break up the words, and pronounce vowels (Camelia, personal communication, October 15, 2010).

Ongoing communication is particularly challenging for families where parents or guardians work multiple jobs or longer hours. While it was difficult to discern whether communication issues were due more to the lack of English fluency on the part of the parents, or to the lack of effort on the part of school personnel, several parents did note that some teachers were easier to communicate with than others, and this appears to relate to individual teacher differences. Rosi, one of the parents, said it this way, "We talked a lot with one teacher, but not the other teacher. It is important that a teacher is sincere and caring. The other teacher was not like that. She was stricter and not personable" (personal communication, November 18, 2010). In contrast, Sandra spoke of the patience and understanding of her child's teacher. "If my son doesn't understand she explains it again so he understands. We have very good communication. The teachers try to explain all the things so I can understand them" (personal communication, January 22, 2011).

An analysis of the rich responses from the Hispanic parents led to four themes that suggest strategies for partnering with these parents. They recommended: 1) provide Spanish-speaking advocates for school contacts; 2) deepen the understanding of Hispanic culture by teachers; 3) create literature to help in the Hispanic families' transition; and 4) offer opportunities for the Hispanic parents to learn English.

An advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of others. Hispanic families may benefit from an advocate who can help facilitate cooperative relationships and effective communication between the families and the school. Competency in the Spanish language would be preferred as many Hispanic parents identified language interpreters as crucial in the communication process. The advocate should help interpret the school's perspective to the Hispanic families and give voice to the perspectives of Hispanic parents. One parent fondly describes the impact of the assistance of a newly hired, Spanish-speaking ESL teacher,

> At first, it was a little difficult at the beginning, because there was not someone who spoke Spanish in the school. When a lady was hired to help, she translated for conferences and helped me. She helped me translate papers from school. She helped me fill them out if I didn't understand. Now you're here to answer questions. She said she can also speak for us if we have difficulty communicating our concerns. It's difficult to speak my concerns [not knowing English] (Oscar, personal communication, November 3, 2010).

Advocates can be school staff, teachers, paraprofessionals, or community volunteers. In the responses of our parents, they listed concrete examples of how this type of assistance would be helpful, such as in communicating a child's absence or health issues, exploring ESL options, and explaining homework.

Teacher and school empathy and understanding can help overcome cultural hurdles that often accompany the changing demographics in a school. Hispanic families seem to be aware of the prejudices or generalizations of school personnel. As one parent observed, "My only comment is that all has been good and thank you very much for being so accessible because many teachers are not very accessible, maybe it's because of the language" (Mario, personal communication,

January 8, 2011). Linguistic and cultural barriers are difficult to bridge. Contacting parents early in the school year and making home visits can help initiate positive contacts and increase cultural sensitivity. When teachers extend themselves to meet specific needs and find common ground with parents, partnerships are enhanced.

Based on the suggestions and expressed needs of the Hispanic families, we created and disseminated a welcome packet that included pertinent school information (in Spanish), the name and contact information of an interpreter, and a contact list for Spanish-speaking families. This encourages networking and support systems to be established early in the transition to the school and community. This welcome packet is now a standard tool used by this public school to connect with Hispanic families when they settle in the town and it stems directly from the ideas shared by the families we surveyed and interviewed.

Overcoming a different language is a hurdle that educators have faced for many generations. Hispanic parents suggested hiring Spanish-speaking staff, translating notes home to parents, and offering adult ESL classes. The alienation felt by parents, due to linguistic and cultural differences, can be ameliorated through the efforts of school personnel to lower these hurdles. Our Hispanic parents were grateful for teacher or school notes we were able to translate into Spanish and for the adult ESL classes we were able to organize. Presently the weekly school newsletter is translated by the new Spanish teacher and parents look forward to reading about important announcements and school articles in their native language.

Yet this is only one side of the communication challenge. These parents expressed an interest in learning English themselves so they could participate more fully in the school community. Oscar described this need clearly:

> We could improve parent-teacher communication by having English classes for parents. If we had classes so we could learn to communicate interpersonally with teachers about concerns we have, just basic vocabulary, if she's not doing well, how she's doing, and if she needs help with homework we do not understand. It would help us to participate in school, like when parents come to read in class I don't read very well . . . or when there is a field trip and I'm nervous to talk to other parents. These are reasons it would be great to have an English class for parents. I want to talk to teachers by myself, but they can't understand me because I have such limited vocabulary. Sometimes I understand what they are saying, but I can't respond or ask questions because I only know a few basic words. There are things I want to ask that I don't know how to say (personal communication, November 3, 2010).

As this need became known in the community, several adult volunteers from local churches responded with adult volunteers who were willing to meet regularly with the Hispanic parents to assist them with their English skills. Ultimately, almost 80 percent of the parents of our Hispanic students enrolled in these English classes!

Perhaps due to our own personal or cultural bias, we were initially surprised that our Hispanic parents responded so positively to our efforts to connect with them. Once initiated, their eagerness to be involved with our school led to stronger partnerships in the support of their children. Our experience suggests these partnerships with parents are more likely to be established if school personnel took the time, effort and intentionality to improve connections with Hispanic families through stronger advocacy, increased understanding of Hispanic culture, and expanded English language learning opportunities. In doing so, effective partnerships should help strengthen the link between Hispanic parents and the schools their children attend and ultimately lead to stronger school engagement.

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GRADUATE STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON THE CREATIVE READING APPROACH: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF LATINO/A ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
by
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Abstract
This qualitative study examined graduate students' perceptions of the creative reading approach, a framework for transformative education developed by Ada (1987, 2003). The creative reading approach uses dialogue to encourage students to critically interpret reading, connect texts to their lives, and impact their realities. Participants were graduate students pursuing master's degrees in education who realized they could promote empowerment, engagement, and higher-order thinking through creative reading in their Latino/a students, most of whom were English language learners (ELLs). Creative reading helped participants understand their students and provide relevant instruction. The value of critical reflection in teacher preparation programs was also evident. Reflective exercises allowed graduate students to become aware of their beliefs and critically analyze instructional methods. Finally, participants displayed characteristics of advocates for Latino/a ELLs. Teacher preparation programs that produce reflective teachers who are advocates for their students are needed to provide transformative education for Latino/a ELLs.

The number of Latino/a students is increasing dramatically in the United States (Gándara, 2010; Villalba, Akos, Keeter & Ames, 2007). Latinos/as constituted 17 percent of the American public school population in 2000 (Villalba, et al., 2007). Many Latino/a students are of immigrant origin. According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are currently 11.3 million youth of immigrant origin in the United States, of which more than half are Latinos/as, and two thirds of those Latinos/as of immigrant origin have very low English skills (Batalova & Fix, 2011). Moreover, Latinos/as have the lowest education levels among the different ethnic groups in the Unites States (Gándara, 2010). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported in 2005 that 89 percent of Latino/a students in middle and high schools were reading below grade level (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). In addition, Latinos/as drop out of school at higher rates than other student groups (Gándara, 2010). The NCES reported that the Latino dropout rate is greater than 28 percent (Lys, 2009). Therefore, the education of Latinos/as should be an important focus in U.S. schools today and in teacher preparation programs. This article describes the results of a study that was conducted to examine the perceptions of graduate students pursuing master's of education degrees regarding the creative reading approach as a transformative educational option for their Latino/a students.

Teacher Preparation and English Language Learners
The education of Latinos/as, especially those who are also English language learners (ELLs), requires committed, well prepared teachers (Freeman & Freeman, 2007). Although the achievement levels of Latinos/as in general are low, the academic achievement of ELLs is even lower (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). There is growing concern about the low academic achievement levels of Latino/a ELLs (Good, Masewics, & Vogel, 2010). The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that ELLs scored considerably below English dominant students in both reading and math (Goldenberg, 2008). In addition, Valenzuela (1999) points out that U.S.-born Latinos/as of Mexican origin are performing at lower levels than their immigrant counterparts as a result of the subtractive nature of the schooling they receive in U.S. schools where their cultural identity is not valued. ELLs need teachers who become their advocates and who provide a "liberatory educational experience" that can empower them (Houk, 2005, p. 44).

The education of ELLs is a responsibility of all teachers and of the entire school community (Soltero, 2011; Valenzuela,1999). However, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported in 2009 that few teacher preparation programs (less than 20 percent) require courses to prepare teacher candidates to teach ELLs (Daniel & Peercy, 2014). In fact, most ELLs are receiving instruction from teachers who are not adequately prepared to meet their needs (Heineke, 2014). Fortunately, a few changes in the experiences provided to candidates in their teacher preparation programs can make a difference in their understanding of how to effectively educate ELLs (Daniel & Peercy, 2014). Teacher preparation programs, then, should include opportunities for teachers and candidates to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become effective teachers of ELLs (Heineke, 2014). These learning experiences should be complemented with opportunities to engage in reflection (Liu & Milman, 2013).

Exploring the body of literature on teacher preparation for teaching ELLs is a starting point to address the issue. However, the existing literature on teacher preparation for ELLs is mostly theoretical in nature, so there is a need for more research exploring teacher preparation for working with ELLs (Athanases, Wahleithner, & Bennett, 2013; Heineke, 2014). This study explored the perceptions of graduate students of education about the creative reading approach, which was introduced to them as a framework to provide transformative education for their Latino/a students, who were mostly ELLs. Gonzalez, Yawkey, and Minaya-Rowe (2006) provide three core principles to improve the academic achievement of ELLs that are important to introduce in teacher preparation programs and are addressed in this study. First, they advocate for a holistic approach to the education of ELLs in which the cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional domains of students are developed. Second, they stress the importance of the interaction between the students' first and second languages. Finally, they emphasize the role of the teachers in supporting ELLs by becoming their mentors and advocates.

In addressing the three core principles mentioned above, Gonzalez, Yawkey, and Minaya-Rowe (2006) provide several pedagogical principles to promote the academic achievement of ELLs. The first of these principles is the "development of higher-level cognitive strategies" (p. 193). They explain that ELLs need to understand concepts at a deep level by applying their newly acquired knowledge and using it to solve problems. In addition, they state that when students learn in two languages, they engage in higher levels of thinking. Therefore, they promote the use of students' first languages to strengthen their identity and lead them to become independent thinkers.

Students who develop proficiency in two languages have greater cognitive advantages over monolingual students (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). For example, bilingual individuals have the ability to think abstractly and divergently. In addition, bilingual individuals have the ability to ignore irrelevant information and keep important information in mind in problem solving situations (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Moreover, ELLs' first languages provide a strong foundation for the development of English language skills (Freeman & Freeman, 2007). For example,

students who learn to read in their first language reach higher reading achievement in English than students who only receive reading instruction in English (Goldenberg, 2008).

As was mentioned above, developing literacy in the native language positively impacts the reading achievement of ELLs. An additional factor that improves reading achievement is engagement in literacy. Guthrie and Davis (2003) explain that students who are struggling readers are "disengaged from literacy" and are "notably unmotivated" (p. 60). In fact, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) researchers identified engagement as the student characteristic that has had the strongest correlation with reading achievement (Brozo, Shiel & Topping, 2007/2008). Meltzer and Hamann (2004) define engagement in literacy as "persistence in and absorption with reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking even when there are other choices available" (p. 10). Moreover, they explain that students need to be motivated to engage in literacy. Therefore, motivation and engagement are very closely related (Meltzer & Hamann, 2004).

Meltzer and Hamann (2004) assert that it is of utmost importance that teachers motivate ELLs to engage in academic tasks. They provide three specific strategies that teachers can follow. First, they recommend that teachers should present students with literacy tasks that are relevant to students' backgrounds allowing students to make connections to the material. Second, they stress the importance of encouraging collaboration among ELLs as they complete literacy tasks. Finally, Meltzer and Hamann (2004) suggest that ELLs need classroom environments where they are valued and respected, where they have the opportunity to voice their opinions, and where they can make decisions about tasks such as assignments and topics.

Valuing students' identities helps educators create a learner-centered, culturally responsive environment. Culturally responsive pedagogy incorporates students' cultural experiences into instruction and promotes equity while students develop the ability to critically analyze their realities (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Gay (2003) claims that the curriculum should be meaningful and familiar to the students. She explains that when the curriculum is relevant to the students, interest and engagement are increased. Teachers need to know their students to provide relevant instruction. Freeman and Freeman (2007) stress the importance of teachers of ELLs knowing their students well. They mention that teachers must seek information about students' cultures, languages, families and histories. They add that "teachers should understand the political and cultural context in which their students live and learn" (p.30).

One way to ensure relevance in the curriculum is to incorporate culturally relevant books. Freeman and Freeman (2007) encourage teachers of ELLs to use culturally relevant books that resemble students' realities. Some of the features of books that should be analyzed by educators in order to identify relevancy to their students are the theme, setting, plot or experiences described, the language used in the story (including colloquial and idiomatic expressions), and characters' ethnicity, gender, and age.

Teachers can contribute to raising students' self-esteem by believing they are capable of making sound decisions and achieving important things. However, minority students have been the object of discrimination in schools (Cummins, 2001). Latinos/as, in particular, have experienced poor education conditions in comparison with mainstream students. Latinos/as often have less qualified teachers and poorer facilities (Gándara, 2010). In addition, educators often have low expectations of Latino/a students (Oakes, 2007). As a result, they are placed in low tracks where

their opportunities are limited, their achievement declines (Oakes, 2007), and their culture and history are devalued (Valenzuela, 1999).

Students need teachers who hold high expectations of them and believe in their potential to succeed academically. Jimenez (2005) demands a challenging curriculum that keeps ELLs on grade level. He asserts the importance of ELLs interacting with mainstream students and being valued in their schools. Jimenez stresses the fact that ELLs want to learn English, a desire that is shared by their parents. In order to fulfill their potential, ELLs need the support of their teachers.

Teachers should become advocates for ELLs (Gonzalez, Yawkey, & Minaya-Rowe, 2006). Teachers have the power to create inclusive classrooms where students feel welcome, develop a sense of belonging, are respected, and feel safe. Teachers also have the ability to help students build a bridge between their culture and the mainstream culture. Teachers should help students comprehend instruction in a way that will allow them to not only internalize it, but make it fit their realities and appreciate the relevancy of instruction to their lives (Gonzalez, Yawkey, & Minaya-Rowe, 2006). Other school professionals such as administrators and counselors can also serve as advocates for Latino/a ELL students. The education of ELLs is a collective responsibility of everyone in the school community (Soltero, 2011). Research conducted by The Council for the Great City Schools identified effective practices employed by school districts that were making a positive difference in the academic achievement of ELLs. The study found that in school districts where the achievement of ELLs was improving, there was an advocate for ELLs in a decision-making position who was securing the necessary support for these students. In addition, the community was also supportive of ELLs (Horowitz, et al., 2009).

Teachers who are advocates for their students can help empower ELLs. Power differences exist between ELLs and English-dominant students in U.S. schools (Jimenez, 2005). In fact, Cummins (2000b) explains that ELLs experience "coercive relations of power" (p. 9). That is, all the power is exercised by the majority group, to which most teachers belong. Cummins (2001) emphasizes that the power relations that exist in schools replicate those of society and have a direct effect on student achievement. He explains that language minority students have historically been undervalued in schools, where they have received the message that their cultures, languages, and identities are inferior. Moreover, Cummins (2001) emphasizes that these same minority students have had a history of underachievement and impoverished living conditions in the United States.

In order to change the above mentioned power imbalance, Cummins (2000b) advocates for "collaborative relations of power" (p. 9). He explains that minority students should participate in the creation of power through transformative pedagogy. "Transformative pedagogy aims to create patterns of educator-student interaction that effectively challenge and transform the ways in which schools have traditionally reproduced social and economic inequalities" (Cummins, 2000a, p. 540). As ELLs collaborate with other students and educators, they develop the ability to forge their own identities, make their own decisions, and positively impact their lives. Valuing students' realities and experiences can be the starting point in the empowerment of ELLs (Cummins, 2001). In addition, minority students can be empowered when teachers are culturally responsive to their students' characteristics and needs (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The empowerment of Latino/a ELLs along with a boost in their academic achievement can be accomplished through transformative pedagogy. Harrell-Levy and Kerpelman (2010) explain that transformative pedagogy empowers students by incorporating collaboration, critical thinking, and creative thinking into instruction.

They explain that transformative pedagogy involves collaboration among teachers and students. Transformative teachers encourage students to question their own beliefs and engage in critical analysis of their own and others' perspectives. Dialogue and reflection are important means to achieve transformation both at the personal and social level. Transformative teachers should make instruction relevant to their students as they demonstrate to their students that they value them and care about them. Therefore, transformative teachers are advocates for their students. Cummins (2000a) argues that ELLs can benefit from transformative pedagogy to transform the coercive relations of power to which they are subject into collaborative relations of power, and he calls for the empowerment of ELLs through the implementation of creative reading.

Ada (1987) developed an approach to reading based on Paulo Freire's work. She called it creative reading. Through this approach, Ada (2003) promotes transformative education for ELLs. Ada (2003) explains that transformative education allows students to establish connections with the material being learned, to analyze it critically, and to incorporate their new understandings in a meaningful way into their lives. Ada's and Cummins' perspective of transformative education fits a social-emancipatory view based on Friere's work. This view calls for the liberation of oppressed groups as they critically analyze their realities, becoming conscious of their situation and transforming their world (Taylor, 2008).

Creative Reading

The creative reading approach has four phases that constitute a dialogue between the teacher and the students. Dialogue is important in transformative education in combination with reflection because it results in "personal and social transformation" (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010, p.81). Although Ada (2003) describes each phase separately, she states that in the creative dialogue the phases develop simultaneously and there is movement from one to another in no particular order. The following are the four phases: descriptive phase, personal interpretive phase, critical phase, and creative phase (Ada, 1987).

The descriptive phase consists of asking students questions that allow them to comprehend the reading at a deeper level. Traditional "who, what, when, where, how, and why" questions are asked (Ada, 2003, p. 85). The personal interpretive phase encourages students to establish personal connections with the text. Students are asked questions that help them reflect on whether they have experienced similar situations as those described in the story. Students are also encouraged to place themselves in the characters' situation and to reflect on how they would feel or react in those instances (Ada, 2003). Dirkx explains that as readers, we try to make sense of text based on our personal experiences. Therefore, there is "interaction between texts and our inner lives" (Dirkx, Mezirow & Cranton, 2006, p. 128). Ada's personal interpretive phase incorporates this important aspect of transformative education.

The critical phase is also referred to as the critical/multicultural/antibias phase. In this phase, students are encouraged not only to think critically, but to evaluate situations and adopt positions. Students are asked to engage in dialogues where they exercise their critical thought. For example, they could determine the pros and cons of a situation. They could also think about the consequences of certain actions. Students could consider alternative behaviors or positions. They could also examine how diverse individuals would feel, think, or react in different circumstances (Ada, 2003). All this is done based on the story plot, events, and characters. Mezirow explains that transformative education involves "a rational process" of reflecting critically about our own beliefs to transform our "frame of reference" (Dirkx, Mezirow & Cranton, 2006, p. 134). Students are encouraged to engage in this rational process during Ada's critical phase. Finally, in the creative phase students can "see a connection between their own lives and the thoughts and feelings to which the text has given rise" (Ada, 2003 p. 86). The creative action phase allows students to fulfill an important goal of transformative education: to incorporate their new understandings to positively impact their lives (Ada, 2003).

In light of the opportunities that the creative reading approach presents for Latino/a students in the U.S., a study was conducted in an attempt to identify graduate students' perceptions regarding transformative education as an educational option of their Latino/a and ELL students. The purpose of the study was to identify graduate students' perceptions of Ada's creative reading approach. This study intended to determine whether graduate students perceived the creative reading approach as a viable way to engage their students in critical reflections of the material they read. The study also intended to determine graduate students' willingness to incorporate the approach in their teaching.

Method

This study was conducted in a university in south Texas, close to the border with Mexico. The institution serves primarily Latinos/as, although there is a growing number of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The participants in the study were 26 graduate students who were enrolled in a curriculum and instruction course required for different master's programs. Participants were pursuing master's degrees in educational leadership, English as a second language, early childhood, or curriculum and instruction with emphases in science, mathematics, or reading. Half of the participants were novice teachers who were in their first three years in the teaching profession. Nine of the participants had between 4 and 9 years of teaching experience, while 4 participants were veteran teachers with over 10 years of experience in the classroom. The participants worked in school districts with predominantly Latino/a populations. All but one of the participants reported that 100 percent of their students were Latino/a, and almost half (12) of the participants were teaching in English/Spanish bilingual classrooms at the time they were enrolled in the curriculum and instruction course.

Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the perceptions of graduate students regarding the creative reading approach?
2. What are the effects of experiencing the creative reading approach in the college classroom on graduate students' willingness to use the approach with their Latino/a and ELL students?

Data Collection and Analysis

As was mentioned above, the participants in this study were graduate students enrolled in a curriculum and instruction course in one of three different semesters over which the study was conducted. One of the topics covered in this course was critical pedagogy. Participants read about and discussed critical pedagogy and transformative pedagogy. They were also introduced to Ada's creative reading approach, a four-step framework for transformative education. Participants were provided with specific examples of how to carry out each of the phases of the approach using culturally relevant books for Latino/a students. Participation in the study was voluntary. Therefore, not all students who took the course became participants in this study.

Data on the perceptions of the creative reading approach and on education for Latino/a students were collected from two sources. First, participants completed

an anonymous survey. The survey contained demographic questions, general questions about education for Latino/a students, and specific questions about critical pedagogy and the creative reading approach. The second source of data consisted of reflective essays that participants wrote after they followed the creative reading approach to design a literacy lesson. In their reflections, participants elaborated on their perceptions of the creative reading approach and on its potential to provide instruction for Latino/a students. Although all students in the course designed lessons following Ada's creative reading approach and wrote reflective essays, only the reflections of students who signed an informed consent form were used as data for this study.

A qualitative data analysis of the survey responses and reflective essays was conducted separately. The survey responses and reflective essays were read a first time to obtain a holistic view of the data. The data was then analyzed systematically looking for patterns and categorizing them (Creswell 2003, Merriam, 1998). Data from the survey was organized into patterns first. Then the same procedure was followed with the data from the reflective essays. Subsequently, the patterns obtained from the surveys and from the reflective essays were compared. Common patterns were arranged thematically, focusing on repeated ideas (Grbich, 2007). Finally, the responses were read an additional time to identify disconfirming evidence or confirming evidence supporting the themes.

Results

The graduate students who participated in this study expressed their opinions about Ada's creative reading approach after reading about it, experiencing a demonstration lesson, and designing a lesson following the four-step framework. They revealed their perceptions through a survey and in reflective essays. All participants had positive opinions about the approach. The data revealed that participants saw great potential for implementing transformative education in their classrooms with their Latino/a and ELL students by following Ada's creative reading approach. They understood the approach as a framework developed based on Freire's critical pedagogy. One participant commented, "It was great to cover Freire… before learning about Ada['s approach] because it definitely helped me make sense of the whole idea." Another participant explained that through this approach "readers develop new ways of thinking, responding to, and understanding the world through reading."

The majority of the participants expressed interest in applying the creative reading approach in their classrooms. Several participants commented that the first three phases of the approach were already part of their instruction in different ways. That is, after reading a story, they were already asking comprehension questions about specific parts of the story, they were asking their students to make personal connections with the story, and they were asking some abstract questions that required students to be critical about the ideas presented in the reading. However, participants found the fourth phase to be the newest and most challenging for them since it encourages students to take action. That is, students are prompted to implement change in their lives in light of the ideas presented in the story. Although participants were not required to incorporate this method into their instruction, a few decided to implement it. It is important to note that those participants who used the method recommended it to other teachers. The most salient themes regarding the possibilities for implementing creative reading with Latino/a and ELL students were empowerment, engagement, higher-order thinking, getting to know students, relevancy, and valuing students' languages and cultures.

Empowerment

Graduate students who participated in this study felt that students would be empowered by receiving instruction following the creative reading approach. They stressed the importance of students voicing their opinions during discussion. For example, one of the participants who implemented the creative reading approach stated that her students "truly enjoy[ed] sharing their personal experiences" during the second phase. In addition, she stressed that the third phase "allow[ed] the students to voice their opinions on social issues." She added that "students [were] given the opportunity to value themselves as important people in society." Therefore, Latino/a and ELL students were empowered by developing voice in their communities. Empowering traditionally underprivileged students not only brings benefits to them, but instills a sense of accomplishment in the teacher. One participant mentioned, "Empowering my students provides me with a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment at the end of the year."

Engagement

Participants felt that the creative reading approach would be a good tool to promote engagement of Latino/a and ELL students in education. Participants explained that students become engaged by putting "the message of the story into action," and by "actively interacting with the story." One participant explained that through this approach, "students get to be fully involved in the stories." A participant who used the creative reading approach in her classroom shared that "during the lesson [her students] were engaged and most importantly participated." Another participant mentioned that she planned to use the creative reading approach because she usually "had a hard time helping the kids get really involved in the stories" and noticed the potential this approach has for student engagement. A third participant who implemented the method with her students testified that "there [were] many interactions generated from this method [and] that students [were] really exposed to meaningful and rich activities."

Higher-Order Thinking

Graduate students also expressed their belief that students would be able to use higher order thinking skills when instructed through Ada's creative reading. They identified making "generalizations and inferences" as important objectives that were addressed in this approach. One participant explained that through the creative reading approach, "the reader examine[s] the text much more critically once into the critical analysis phase and the creative action phase." Participants also identified problem solving as a skill that would be developed in phase four as students would explore solutions to real world problems. One participant mentioned students would become "individual thinkers." A participant who implemented the approach added that this analysis gave students "the power to think" as they examined their personal issues. One more participant explained that students would "focus their energies on thinking about implications of what the author stated, [and] think about how the author's ideas might work in another context."

Getting to Know Students

The second phase of the creative reading approach asks students to establish personal connections with the reading material. Graduate students felt that by listening to students' experiences, they would be able to have "a closer relationship with the students." One of the participants who used the method with her students indicated that the "creative reading approach gives students and teachers the opportunity to get to know each other by sharing their personal life experiences." She pointed out that she and her students "were able to understand each other and see each other's perspective." Interestingly, she commented that although she and all her students were Latino/a, they "all have had different life experiences and relate to the story in a different way." It is important to note that this participant

implemented the method during summer school. Nevertheless, she concluded, "I learned so much more of these students whom I have known for three days than my students I had during the regular year of one hundred and eighty days."

Relevancy

Participants felt that by using the creative reading approach, they would increase the relevancy of instruction to Latino/a and ELL students' lives when used in combination with culturally relevant books. One participant mentioned that by using this approach they would be "making every reading lesson meaningful to [students'] personal lives." Graduate students felt the method made "reading come alive" by making "a story relevant to our lives today." One participant felt students would "value their experiences and value their life" when authors write about experiences similar to theirs. In addition, another participant pointed out that "students are successful when they can relate to the text and when they have background knowledge of the subject." Moreover, a graduate student who implemented the method with her students mentioned that they "really enjoy[ed] having an opportunity to explore possibilities and commonalities with… different characters."

The participants in this study believed that teachers can promote Latino/a and ELL student success in school by providing them with culturally relevant materials through which teachers can teach about their culture and as a result raise students' self- esteem and build self-confidence. Participants elaborated on the importance of acknowledging and respecting students' culture and native language. It is important to note that half of these graduate students were bilingual teachers who imparted instruction in Spanish. They believed in addressing students' cultures through well-developed lessons, and not only superficially during holidays. Participants explained the importance of getting to know students as individuals to match instruction with their needs. They mentioned that books and themes that value students' heritage and to which individual students can relate would be important tools to use with their students. Moreover, when reflecting on Ada's creative reading approach, participants recommended that "teacher[s] choose reading material that is culturally relevant to the learners. Cultural[ly] relevant material would provoke an interest in reading and therefore cover all the phases of the creative reading approach more meaningfully."

Discussion of Findings

This study explored the perceptions of graduate students regarding Ada's (1987, 2003) creative reading approach. Participants believed that the creative reading approach allows educators to empower, engage, promote higher-order thinking and get to know their students. In addition, participants felt that when the creative reading approach is implemented using culturally relevant books, it allows educators to make instruction relevant to Latino/a and ELL students and demonstrate that they value and respect students' languages and cultures. Therefore, the results of the study revealed the participating graduate students were advocates for their students and had the potential to become transformative teachers.

An indicator of participants' advocacy role was their belief in getting to know their students well. Participants elaborated greatly on the importance of valuing Latino/a and ELL students' backgrounds and first languages. They stressed the importance of using students' first languages for instruction. First language instruction provides the foundation for English proficiency and academic achievement (Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Goldenberg, 2008). Participants also believed in exploring students' cultures profoundly, avoiding touching on their

cultures superficially only during holidays. Participants stressed the importance of knowing their students and selecting culturally relevant materials. This is consistent with Freeman and Freeman's (2007) call for teachers of ELLs to know their students well. Knowledge of students facilitates the planning and delivery of instruction that is relevant to students. Likewise, transformative teachers provide relevant instruction to their students. "In transformative pedagogy, the teacher provides students with the relevant learning material and asks them to engage it in a personal way…" (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010, p. 83).

When students are exposed to relevant and responsive learner-centered instruction, their motivation and engagement increases (Meltzer & Hamann, 2004). Motivation and engagement are key factors to help ELLs succeed in school (Meltzer & Hamann, 2004). The graduate students who participated in this study considered Ada's creative reading approach as a viable option to engage students in the act of reading. Creative reading, in combination with culturally relevant books, was perceived by graduate students as a way of providing meaningful and engaging instruction for Latino/a and ELL students.

Participants also held high expectations for their students which is an additional indicator of their advocacy role. Participants elaborated on the potential Latino/a and ELL students have of becoming "independent thinkers" and engaging in higher-order thinking processes. These graduate students saw the creative reading approach as an opportunity to encourage their students to think critically while presenting them with culturally relevant books. Materials that are relevant to students serve as a support as they are challenged to read and think critically. This is aligned with Soltero's (2011) claim that ELLs need teachers who challenge them but provide the necessary supports for them to be successful. In the same manner, transformative teachers "challenge students intellectually and emotionally while, at the same time, provide them with a social environment that supports their abilities…" (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010, p. 85). Encouraging students to think critically and holding high expectations for them empowers students. Empowerment starts "by acknowledging the cultural, linguistic, imaginative, and intellectual resources that children bring to school" (Cummins, 2001, p. 653). Moreover, transformative pedagogy "empowers students to think creatively and critically" (Donnell, 2007 as cited in Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010 p. 77). Therefore, the results of this study show that the participating graduate students displayed the potential to become transformative teachers as they displayed advocacy towards the empowerment of their Latino/a and ELL students.

Finally, the results of this study reinforce the value of reflection in teacher preparation programs. Bruner (1996) explains that reflection allows individuals to make sense of learned material. By critically reflecting on new material, graduate students had the opportunity to evaluate teaching methods and approaches and to put them in perspective. Reflecting on new ideas allowed graduate students to focus on the potential benefits of the creative reading approach, which was new to them. In transformative learning theory, critical reflection is "rooted in experience" (Taylor, 2008, p. 11). According to this premise, reflection allowed graduate students to express their ideas based on their personal and professional experiences. This gave insight to the teacher educator on how students interpreted the material using their background knowledge. Bruner (1996) also explains that comprehension is dependent upon individual experiences and contexts. In this case, writing reflective essays gave graduate students the opportunity to display their personal understandings. For example, the participants in this study were not asked any specific questions about culturally relevant materials in the survey nor were they asked to mention culturally relevant books in their reflective essays. Nevertheless,

providing relevancy through the use of culturally relevant books in the education of Latino/a and ELL students was a theme evident in both the surveys and reflections that revealed the participants' personal understanding of the material. Through critical reflection, participants displayed their role as advocates for their students and potential transformative teachers as they elaborated on how creative reading fosters empowerment, engagement, higher order thinking, and relevancy for Latino/a and ELL students as well as giving teachers the opportunity to get to know their students and to display the value they place on their students' first languages and cultures.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

The crisis that Latinos/as, especially those who are ELLs, are undergoing in education is well documented (Gándara, 2010; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Latinos/as have low achievement levels and high dropout rates (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006; Gándara, 2010). Therefore, Latino/a ELLs need teachers who become their advocates to help them succeed (Houk, 2005; Soltero, 2011) and who have the vision to guide them in the transformation of their underachieving reality.

The graduate students who participated in this study displayed the characteristics of advocates for their students and the potential to become transformative educators. This was evident as they expressed their perceptions on the creative reading approach: Participants explained the importance of empowering their students, engaging them in learning and fostering higher order thinking. They elaborated on the importance of knowing their students and valuing their languages and cultures. Graduate students took the initiative to better themselves by returning to school to continue their education. Therefore, they have the potential to positively impacting the education profession. This is especially important in areas with large numbers of Latino/a and ELL students. Teacher educators should help teachers and candidates view themselves as advocates for their students, take back their newly acquired understandings to implement in their classrooms, as well as share that with other teachers in their schools, as did some of the participants in this study. In doing this, teacher preparation programs will be fostering transformative education as the acquired knowledge will not be just discussed in the college classroom, but it will impact teachers and candidates by transforming their beliefs, attitudes, and teaching practices.

Reflective exercises allowed the graduate students who participated in this study to put instructional methods and philosophies into perspective. Reflection allowed graduate students to critically analyze the creative reading approach and establish connections between the new learning and their students. Reflective exercises gave graduate students the opportunity to explore the applicability of the instructional methods in their own contexts and consider the benefits those instructional methods may have for their students. Therefore, based on the results of this study, teacher educators should consider engaging their students in reflective exercises to explore material, understand it in a more profound manner, and have a transformative effect in their beliefs and teaching practices.

Most importantly, the results of this study showed that graduate students displayed very positive perceptions regarding Ada's creative reading approach. They were open to learning about this framework for transformative education and willing to implement it with their students. Therefore, teacher educators can incorporate Ada's creative reading into their instruction to provide candidates and teachers of Latino/a ELLs with a framework to impart transformative education that will validate students' identities and allow them to reinvent themselves in light of the critical analysis of texts.

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that the graduate students who participated in this study displayed the characteristics of advocates for Latino/a ELLs. Participants took the creative reading approach presented in the college classroom and implemented it with their students, showing initiative and willingness to grow. Most importantly, they acted as agents of change. One participant mentioned that she shared the creative reading approach with a first year teacher. Many others took back the information to their colleagues. Collaboration among educators is essential to make a positive difference for ELLs. Soltero (2011) and Valenzuela (1999) explain that educating ELLs should be a schoolwide endeavor. The graduate students who participated in this study displayed an ability to impact others in their schools by sharing their knowledge in an attempt to impact education beyond their classroom. Moreover, their reflections demonstrated great potential for them to become transformative teachers who influence positive change in their students and colleagues.

Latino/a ELLs are growing in numbers and present in all areas of the United States. Therefore, their needs must be understood by all teachers. Latino/a ELLs need teachers who are their advocates, who believe in them, challenge them academically, and support their learning by providing relevant and engaging instruction. This study concludes that creative reading, a transformative education framework, is a viable option to get to know students better, engage them in learning, and challenge them to think critically. The implementation of the creative reading approach may very well result in the empowerment of Latino/a ELL students as they experience transformative education (Cummins, 2000a). Teacher preparation programs that produce reflective teachers, who are advocates for their students and who are willing to take on the challenge of exploring ways to improve the quality of instruction students are receiving in schools are the key to provide the kind of transformative education necessary to help Latino/a ELLs succeed in U.S. schools.

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM BEGINNING TEACHER CANDIDATES: ENHANCING URBAN SERVICE-LEARNING TUTORING
by
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Abstract
This exploratory qualitative study examined beginning teacher candidates' (BTC's) goals and associated supports and challenges during an urban service-learning tutoring (USLT) experience. Weekly writings of 21 BTC's, classroom observations, and informal interviews were analyzed using a constant comparative approach. Findings revealed teacher modeling, rich dialogue, articulated belief systems, and attention to logistical preparations as impacting achievement of candidates' learning and contribution goals. A model for cultivating communities of practice across organizational stakeholders to simultaneously enhance outcomes for BTCs and the students they serve through urban service-learning tutoring experiences is advanced.

Early-career teacher attrition is a long-standing challenge (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012), particularly for urban schools (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Thus, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) seek to expose candidates to urban schools even prior to formalized field experiences. Specifically, the IHE discussed in this article seeks to deepen interactions with school partners to develop urban professional development schools in which both teacher preparation and p-12 learning goals are supported through sustained democratic boundary-spanning opportunities Zeichner (2010) calls third spaces. Third spaces value school-based expertise to "bring practitioner and academic knowledge together in less hierarchal ways to create new learning opportunities for prospective teachers" (2010, p. 92). An early step in this process was the implementation of urban service-learning tutoring (USLT) in a partner school setting. USLT held promise as a way to include school faculty in the teacher education process early on and to extend candidates' opportunities to contribute to p-12 student learning in urban settings.

Service-learning (SL) blends coursework and community engagement to provide contextualized opportunities for students to address community needs through active participation in challenging and authentic situations (ASLER, 1995). Citing the National Society for Experiential Education, Furco (1996) conceptualized "any carefully monitored service experience in which a student has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what he or she is learning throughout the experience" as an example of SL (p.2). Furco asserts "Service-learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring" (1996, p. 5). Traditional field-experiences focus primarily on IHE students' learning within an authentic context, SL increases support for the aims of school stakeholders. Because SL is not a traditional field experience, teachers can engage with IHE students as authentic partners free from the communication barriers resulting from simultaneous mentor and evaluator roles (Feiman-Nemser, 1996).

SL holds potential to address multiple challenges in education. SL is often employed to support development of positive teacher candidate dispositions toward the diversities of urban learners and communities. Essentially, these efforts are designed to induce in candidates the conviction that they can successfully execute

the behaviors to produce desirable outcomes (Bandura, 1977), thus influencing candidates' tendency to persist through challenging and previously unfamiliar situations surrounding urban students' learning. Urban SL experiences use settings such as churches, community centers, and social justice organizations to influence candidate dispositions through engagement with lived experiences, contextual barriers and supports, and commonalities between candidates and the recipients of their service (Coffey, 2010; Miller, Dunlap & Gonzalez, 2007; Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000; Wong, 2008). School-based SL opportunities focused on recipients' educational outcomes often attend to diversity by focusing on language (Wong, 2008) or race (Coffey, 2010; Miller, Dunlap & Gonzalez, 2007), positioning SL students as helpers or tutors to advance the educational attainment of students who face related barriers to academic success. Exploration of learning supports to academically and economically challenged learners is often complicated by intersections presented by language and racial differences. This study addresses this challenge by examining SL in the context of school-based tutoring in which the students served face academic and economic challenges, but are racially similar to the teacher candidates providing service. Initial SL engagement with perceptibly similar students may prompt BTCs to focus on teaching actions and attention to individuals and specific learning needs rather than foregrounding potentially long standing deficit-based connections between race, poverty and low-academic achievement. For example, Coffey (2010) found that Black teacher candidates engaging with Black students in a SL context "realized for the first time that they might be challenged in the classroom to teach students who looked similar to them, but had dissimilar home lives and school experiences" (p. 339). Implemented early in coursework, such SL experiences may motivate BTCs to focus on strategies for relationship-building and tailoring content approaches to the individual needs of all students. This type of USLT may hold promise as a scaffold upon which to build effective address of language/race in subsequent programmatic experiences.

Notably, SL is recognized for its potential to be more challenging for faculty than other work with students due to the logistical issues as well as balancing of the tensions, trials, and unique commitments of participating entities (Jacoby, 2013).This study grew out of a desire to improve my own practice as a teacher educator engaged in SL and to respond to calls for use of candidate perspectives for program improvement (Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000; Torrez & Krebs, 2012). The study focused on BTC goals, support systems and lived experiences as guides to improvement of the pilot USLT experience. Two broad research questions framed the study: (1) How does engagement in the USLT experience influence BTCs' goals?, and (2) What aspects of the USLT experience support or challenge BTCs' ability to achieve USLT goals?

Method
The USLT experience was piloted as an embedded 25 hour component of a freshman-level Introduction to Middle Childhood (grades 4-9) course prior to any field experiences at a midsize, public University in the Midwest. A key impetus for integrating the USLT component was to provide scaffolded firsthand experiences to allay candidate concerns regarding urban teaching early in their programmatic experiences. Programmatic data identified interest in urban teaching as deterred by candidate fears regarding high-stakes testing outcomes, providing targeted academic supports, personal safety in urban settings, and building rapport with urban learners. Course presentations by faculty with recent teaching and administrative experience addressed political influences, standards and mandates, teaching approaches, and program transition points. Frequent group discussions and

reflective writing integrated the experience with perspectives from two required texts. Ron Berger's an *Ethic of Excellence* (2003) advanced high quality student-centered teaching strategies and Linda Perlman's *Not Much Just Chillin'* (2003) attended to the multifaceted nature of middle schoolers' development.

Each of the twenty-one students who enrolled in the course and participated in this IRB approved study had no prior experience with SL and had only engaged in p-12 school settings as students. Fifteen of the BTCs self-identified as white females whose own experience of schooling occurred in suburban settings of a middle-class socioeconomic standing. Of the four male participants, two self-identified as from urban schools with struggling academics. Though outwardly homogenous as mostly white females from suburban backgrounds, (which mirrors the teaching workforce), the group displayed variation in academic confidence, determination to pursue a teaching career, and whether they had provided or received academic tutoring.

The school, Fairpark PreK-8 (all names are pseudonyms), is in an urban district within a mid-size industrial city. Demographically distinct from the candidates' early conceptualizations of an urban school, student backgrounds are reported by the state as 78.9 percent White, 12.3 percent Black, 4.6 percent Hispanic, and 4.0 percent Multi-Racial. 99.9 percent of the 466 students enrolled are classified as economically disadvantaged. A relatively high 26.8 percent have identified special needs. Despite a highly-qualified staff, a key challenge facing the school is the rating of "Academic Watch" based on having met one of 15 state indicators and not achieving adequate yearly progress in reading and mathematics.

To establish placements, the Principal sent an email to the entire teaching staff stating that tutors were available through the University. Four of the seventeen teachers employed at the school requested a tutor. Seven BTCs/tutors were assigned to MathLab, a pilot-year small group setting to help students likely to struggle with standardized mathematics exams. Primarily run by Mr. S., Mrs. P. was frequently present during BTCs' MathLab visits. Three BTCs were assigned to Ms. W's 3rd/4th grade mathematics classroom, four served in Ms. B's 5th/6th grade language arts classroom, 17 served in Friday shifts in Ms. B's 5th/6th grade writing classroom, and four worked in Mrs. N's first grade classroom. Most BTCs served in more than one setting, 13 served in a setting with another tutor, and 17 experienced one or more rescheduled visits.

Data sources included ten sets of weekly narratives by BTCs. Prior to visiting Fairpark, each BTC wrote a pre-reflection articulating perspectives on the setting, initial goals, initial concerns, and prior SL or volunteer experiences. In reflections after each visit, BTCs described an "ordinary occurrence" from the visit, explained their perspectives on why the occurrence happened, and articulated connections to course content. At the conclusion of the USLT experience, each candidate wrote a post-reflection in which they commented on their overall experience, responded to their pre-reflection, and discussed their intent to further engage with SL and/or urban schools. These data sources were optimal for both course-based learning and for study data because they encouraged participants to focus on daily activities and to engage in reflection (Jacelon & Imperio, 2005). Supporting triangulation, notes from class discussions, email exchanges, observations of BTCs the partner teachers, researcher memos, and informal interviews of the teachers, Principal, and course instructor also informed the analysis.

Grounded theory approaches employing constant comparison of data (Creswell, 1998) were used to generate findings rooted in the data. Four analysis passes through the data enabled constant comparison of new data to previously emergent themes for refinement and data categorization (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). First, open coding to identify categories (Creswell, 1989) revealed a) BTC goals, b) expression of vantage points and goals by others, c) influential activities and experiences, and d) BTC attributions for classroom events and outcomes. Axial coding was then employed to identify relationships among themes to promote deeper understanding of BTC experiences. In selective coding, I identified BTC statements which best exemplified categories and illustrated the developing theory of how BTCs conceptualized opportunities to learn and contribute within the USLT context. Finally, in theoretical coding connections were extended from the model grounded in the data to the extant literature on the development of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977), simultaneous renewal (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004) and legitimate peripheral participation within communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). To confirm conceptual fit, an outside coder coded narrative excerpts from each theme and category.

Findings

BTC goals for the USLT experience were initially broad and similar. Most intended to "learn about the logistics of teaching and to gain experience" (Anastasia, pre-ref)) and to "contribute to Fairpark students' learning." Multiple pre-reflections mirrored the sentiment of Brenda's words, "I learn in classes by examples professors show, but this will be first hand." BTCs wanted direct engagement to support theory to practice connections (Pre-ref). A second theme in early goal statements was the use of examples and non-examples to inform professional decision-making - to see "the do's and do not's of teaching."

BTCs with prior tutoring experience had more specific goals. For example Cathy, who had tutored throughout high school, focused on teacher professionalism and rapport:

"During my experience at Fairpark, I hope to learn how to interact better with the students on a professional level. Also I would like to observe how others interact with students and learn from their strengths and weaknesses. Having this experience will allow me to get a glimpse of what teaching will be like. I will be able to see how teachers maintain authority but still make one-on-one connections with the students"

Across ongoing engagement in the USLT experience, BTCs' goals became increasingly focused on the intersection of teaching content and pedagogical processes, and tended to place attention on needs of individual learners and how learning could be more engaging and relevant to their students. In her third reflection, Clarissa discussed her goal to connect math to interests for a girl who was disinterested and slow to progress in her review:

"What I learned was that the little girl who invited me to lunch was so smart and funny, and she had such a lovely singing voice as well…I valued learning the children's lives outside of the classroom setting where we could only really discuss what subject had been assigned to us…How can I connect to what she likes to make her care about math?"

Brenda, who had previously tutored in reading and math reflected upon her work with boys studying least common multiples and focused on developing the boys' automaticity: "They had to use calculators for common multiplication. I tried showing different techniques… They cannot learn more if already struggling on stuff they need to know" Further elaborating on her desire to help the boys, she alluded to conceptual understanding, assessment and learned helplessness expressing concern that the boys were relying too heavily on the calculators – "I want to make sure they get it, not that they can just press the right buttons"(Ref 8). Across the 15

weeks, BTCs' motivation for further pedagogical study increased. Based on her contributions of one-on-one time focused on building reading comprehension, Kathryn shared, " It troubles me to think that they think that they cannot read just because they have trouble reading . . . I appreciate listening to their reading and helping them sound out new words, but I want to have a better understanding of where the kids are at in their reading developments and what new techniques I can learn to help teach them more effectively" (Ref 3). Throughout the BTCs' writings, the theme of their own learning was intertwined with the theme of promoting learning for the students they served. Attempts to advance their students' learning helped BTCs to identify new areas in which they needed to develop additional knowledge and skills. The BTCs valued opportunities to engage with the students as opportunities to simultaneously learn and contribute.

Whereas most BTCs did not explicitly articulate a goal related to changing their perceptions of urban learners, dispositional changes were evident in their writings. BTCs who initially described fears of student behaviors tended to see their students in a different light. Positive student descriptors such as "bright," "friendly," and "capable" increased across BTC writings. Changing perspectives from positioning students and families as sources of academic shortcomings, several BTCs located responsibility within teachers' locus of control stating that students were "held back by methods that get them to rely on others and on tools they really don't need" and "dealing with behavioral distractions." As site liaison, I noted that while no BTC identified taking charge of their own learning as a goal, several increased in personal responsibility for learning and described themselves as gaining "courage" and "mustering up" the chance to ask questions and engage in unanticipated ways. Three aspects were consistently identified as supports or challenges– modeling and dialogue from partner teachers, alignment between espoused and enacted beliefs about teaching and learning, and the perceived relevance and logistical contexts of BTC engagement. BTC preparation and dispositional characteristics influenced the impact of each of these aspects. Specifically, BTC engagement in rationale-seeking and ownership of their learning was related to the content of their learning and perceptions of opportunities for learning and contribution.

Modeling and dialogue influenced BTCs' ability to help their students learn and to understand content/process connections and classroom management choices. Contexts in which partner teachers articulated rationales and unpacked tutoring approaches assisted the BTCs in developing confidence and effectiveness at supporting students' content understandings. For example, Jonathan reported the process of providing targeted extra help to math students:

> When I got there, Mrs. W had me grade homework. Apparently, a lot of the students got a particular question wrong, so she showed me how to explain it to them….they were done with their test, I helped them correct their homework (Jonathan, Ref 4).

Classroom observation confirmed that the teacher regularly demonstrated and discussed how to assess student work samples and how to engage individually or with up to four students to provide alternate instructional approaches. In contrast, limited teacher modeling/dialogue and Brenda's not asking questions challenged her learning and contributions:

> This teacher was a lot different than Ms. B. I feel all of the kids are lost. He separated the kids into groups of three to go into the hall with us. I have three boys and we go over their workbooks. The boys acted like they were never taught how to do the problems! (Ref 4)

Though Brenda saw the boys as having very different academic and social needs, she did not ask Mr. S about his rationale for grouping or ask for approaches to tutoring them. She left for the day feeling that she made little impact on the boys' progress. The following week, Brenda's pedagogical gains were limited and she attributed limited student learning to teacher actions:

"I took a step back, took a deep breath, and explained the concepts to them over and over until they seemed to understand"…"It upset me how many students, in 4th grade, didn't know the difference between a dime and a nickel. Although at first I was frustrated, I realized that it wasn't the students' fault that they have not been taught this…." Absent conversations with the teachers about such key factors as student attendance, special needs, authentic practice with bills and coins at home (as compared to debit, credit and/or food stamp cards) and prior academic mastery, BTCs tended to attribute student difficulties to "lack of teaching" of foundational concepts. Exploration of social aspects of middle school learning evidenced similar challenges. Ms. B, exemplified by Brenda, was criticized by Trish:

> We got all the way through the first draft and editing and he was only a few sentences from finishing his paper when class ended. I did have to dictate the paper to him to get him to write which was frustrating. He loves getting out of class and always asks to work with me. I feel like he is missing a lot of class by annoying the teacher until she just lets him work with tutors. (Ref 4)

Trish was able to provide a meaningful support to student learning, but she did not understand the connection between her student's need for one-on-one interaction to help him focus and to write down the ideas that he was able to formulate on his own. Mrs.B did not explain and Trish did not ask about the student's progress or why he was assigned to a tutor. Instead, Trish attributed the placement to Ms.B's having "used tutors as a way to deal with student disruptions" (Ref 4).

Alignment also contributed to BTCs' goal attainment. BTC writings revealed that they assumed their instructor's beliefs about teaching and learning were represented in the texts and that their partner teachers' beliefs were represented by actions in the tutoring context. Information sharing between the instructor and Fairpark faculty was indirect and due to scheduling preferences occurred through me as site-liaison. Fairpark faculty sought consistent assistance with test-preparation and to contribute to teacher candidate learning. The course instructor placed limited value on testing data and instead hoped for the BTCs to experience "life in schools" by assisting with "best practices" at a broad range of grade levels. Whereas the instructor devoted a class session to exploration of Fairpark's report card ratings and the mandates and pressures surrounding high stakes testing, Fairpark faculty perspectives on how instructional grouping processes or review activities paralleled their typical instructional practices were not part of the course.

BTC comments in early class sessions and written pre-reflections evidenced recognition of alignment between course instructor and Fairpark faculty beliefs about teaching and learning. Most expressed that students being selected to participate in small-group or individual tutoring showed commitment to supports for individual learners. Over time, however, BTCs came to perceive gaps in course and school-based alignment. Like Trish, several BTCs began to develop teacher-centered or negative attributions for student selection for and engagement in tutoring. Whereas many of the BTCs found their partner teachers' intentions to parallel the "spirit of good teaching" evidenced in the course texts (Victoria, Ref 5), others became frustrated by what they perceived as a lack of scaffolding mastery learning (Brenda, Ref 8). They did not see multiple drafts, peer critique or community showcases of student learning as depicted in Berger's text. No reflection entries related to math evidenced BTC recognition of connections to students' lives and

experiences and though some such experiences were detailed in language arts, the BTCs expected such actions to be ongoing occurrences with active roles for them. Mirroring Kathryn's statement "I wish that we could be doing some sort of project that integrates multiple subjects together instead of doing the same thing every day" (Kathryn, Ref 7), several BTCs writings argued that teaching/tutoring strategies selected by the teachers did not build on student interest or support student motivation as advocated by course texts. However, rather than inquiring about the instructional choices she observed in the review context, she ended her statement with "but I also understand that when they are that little it is important for them to have some sort of structure." Kathryn's hesitation to inquire may have been rooted in perceptions of power relationships as suggested in Alison's sixth reflection: "I didn't want to overstep my bounds… I am a helper, but I'm also a guest. My plan is not to seem critical and make bad impressions, I know that there's a lot for me to learn."

As the BTCs delved more into the second text, which focused on the multifaceted social and cognitive development of middle school students (Perlman, 2003), reflections focused on students' academic confidence. For example, Clarissa and others articulated that teaching the students to rely on calculators rather than to celebrate and use what they knew in new situations "would only hold them back later in life…they aren't learning that they are smart enough to come up with the right answer on their own." In contrast, when central concepts of the texts were clearly mirrored in what they were asked or allowed to do with the students, BTCs relayed easily understanding new ideas about teaching and learning and readily described rewarding contributions which they found highly motivating. Victoria's writing illustrates this relationship:

> … I had them teach the material to me. This was nice, because it actually helped me understand how they learn at their age. It was very interesting to see how they learned; for example, instead of just spouting out numbers and fractions, they explained it to me with pictures, and using the blocks. It was clear that they learned better with a hands-on approach, so this is how I chose to explain it to the students who were struggling, and it seemed to be more fun and positive for them. (Victoria, Ref 3).

Perceived relevance and contexts of engagement influenced BTCs' learning and contributions. Initially, district post 9/11 safety measures such as locked classroom doors, and badge-access hallways elevated BTC concerns about safety in the urban setting. Over time, these concerns waned and issues of access to learning and contributions became more prominent. Specifically, BTCs' stance toward assigned tasks and reschedulings due to school and district functions or teacher absence influenced achievement of learning and contribution goals. For example, as it became evident that some substitutes used inappropriate instructional and interactional practices, BTCs were either reassigned to another context, or notified that their services would not be needed for that session. BTCs offering suggestions about how they might be helpful or "gently insisting" that they help or learn through observation were typically utilized in alternative sites. Other BTCs, however, silently left the building stressed by the "loss of assigned hours."

Teaching-based interactions with students were consistently regarded as opportunities for both learning and contribution. However, BTC writings showed that tasks centered on student assessment, data analysis, observation, or preparation of materials was less frequently regarded as opportunities for learning or meaningful contributions. David's writing illustrated a value for data collection and analysis uncommon across the BTCs: "I helped partner with one of the students in their 'six minute solutions'. This is basically a partner reading assignment to judge how many words a student can read in a minute. It was used to chart daily progress and it was through a bar graph…I felt good about helping to get information that the teacher would use to decide what to do next" (David, Ref 1).

BTC's who intentionally took ownership of their experiential learning and viewed the school as a complex social system were readily able to see such tasks, and even placement in unanticipated observational settings as opportunities. BTCs who viewed the school as a system comprised of many "moving parts" including volunteers and tutors from our same university, others, and the external community, recognized logistic issues as "nothing personal" (Cathy) or "nothing that couldn't be worked out" (Jonathan). These BTCs worked their ways into other classrooms and did their best to learn and contribute. Jonathan and Clarissa's comments illuminated differences in conceptualizations of observational/materials preparation tasks:

> … there were still too many people, so three other girls and I ended up folding booklets the whole time. What troubled me was not being able to help with anything… sad I didn't get to engage with any of the children. (Clarissa)
> I'm not a grandparent type just looking to give my time. I want to interact directly with kids and learn to teach, really teach. So if there's nothing to do but staple, I'm going to staple and watch and listen and think. I'm going to get something out of it. (Jonathan)

Though initially viewed as a challenge by both BTCs and the course instructor, rescheduled tutoring sessions offered some benefits. Teachers who had not initially signed up for a BTC tutor were exposed to the SL experience by reassignments and enjoyed both the benefits of extra help for their students and had the opportunity to "sample" what engagement as a SL partner teacher could be. For example, Cathy's reassignment from the MathLab due to a meeting evidenced both logistic challenges and benefits of unforeseen rescheduling:

> Today was a very confusing day. I was scheduled to work with Mrs. P and the MathLab kids. When I entered the classroom Mrs.P explained to me that she had a meeting during math lab and wouldn't have the kids. She asked many teachers if they wanted some help and many of them were also attending the same meeting. She then sent me to the office to ask if they could think of any teachers to help. They couldn't find any but then Mrs. P. thought of the perfect teacher, Mrs. R. Mrs. R is the science teacher for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. She is always busy and had never had a (BTC Tutor) in her room. As soon as I entered the classroom I could see that she was very glad to have me for the short amount of time I had. I wasn't sure what to expect out of the science class but I was excited to experience it. As Mrs. R started teaching she was perform [*sic*] the different experiments that each group was about to do. One group in particular was testing the magnetic force of different items and seeing which material was more magnetic. Other experiments were evaporation, simple machines, and more… I was so impressed by Mrs. R's interaction with the students. She understood that each student learned differently and she made sure every kid was able to understand the experiment they were working on… Getting this opportunity to work with a science class (and Mrs. R) has been my favorite moment at Fairpark so far…

Discussion

BTCs and the students they served learned through the USLT experience and benefits were realized for both BTCs and school stakeholders (Furco, 1996). BTC interactions with students and written reflections showed that all BTCs

demonstrated positive rapport, empathy for their students, and interest in student lives and experiences (Wong, 2008). Across the experience, BTC focus on pedagogical concerns and improved teaching practice increased. BTCs consistently sought to understand the causes of the academic outcomes they observed in the students they tutored. BTCs' desire for answers to causal questions about student learning in the USLT setting is a positive learning outcome. Rockquemore and Schaffer (2000) describe such questions as characteristic of engagement, the final stage of social and psychological development through SL and contingent upon the development of personal relationships with real people. Participating faculty from Fairpark, and the school Principal appreciated the academic assistance made available by the BTCs tutoring of Fairpark students. At the conclusion of the experience, the majority of participating BTCs indicated increased interest in continuing to work with urban learners and participating in SL in post-reflections. These facts identify the USLT experience as a service-learning success in a context of high economic and academic disadvantage. BTCs gained experiences and habits of mind which serve as a positive foundation for engagement with increasingly diverse learners.

Theoretical coding of BTC data revealed how Bandura's (1977;1997) contributors to self-efficacy beliefs, (mastery experiences, vicarious modeling, verbal persuasion, and physiological states) which influence persistence in the face of challenging situations influenced outcomes of the USLT experience. Using BTC experiences as a foundation for connecting to theory also clarified how contributors to the most beneficial USLT experiences can be fostered and cultivated for maximized goal attainment and consistency across BTC experiences. Modeling and dialogue from partner teachers, alignment between espoused and enacted beliefs about teaching and learning, and perceived relevance and logistical contexts of BTC engagement emerged as either key supports or challenges to BTC learning and contribution in the USLT context. Enactment of each construct was shaped by communication, development and articulation of shared beliefs, and partnering by Fairpark and University faculty to support BTCs in learning and enacting skills essential to tutoring. The work of scholars of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002), legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice (Lave, 1991), and simultaneous renewal of school settings (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004) inform recommendations for enhancement of the USLT experience.

A central feature of service-learning is the SL blending of coursework and community engagement to provide contextualized opportunities for students to address community needs (ASLER, 1995). Both Fairpark faculty and campus-based University faculty were central to BTCs ability to learn and contribute in the USLT context. Planning for the USLT experience by Fairpark and University faculty, however, did not occur in an integrative or collaborative fashion – the organizational stakeholders did not function as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Communities of practice engage in collective learning by attending to both the pursuit of shared enterprises and attendant social relations (Wenger, 1998). A shared domain of interest is a central feature of effective communities of practice. Though members from distinct organizations each bear belief systems, priorities and professional actions stemming from their primary organization, these potential constraints are mitigated by the shared domain of interest (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). A "well-developed domain becomes a statement of what knowledge the community will steward….is a commitment to take responsibility for an area of expertise and to provide the organization[s] with the best knowledge and skills that can be found" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 32). The construct of

legitimate peripheral participation supports both the collaborations needed to design the experience as well as implementation efforts between BTCs and partner teachers. Legitimate peripheral participation is enacted when newcomers to a specific type of professional practice work collaboratively with a veteran professional who offers support and guidance in authentic and meaningful tasks as the newcomer develops the mastery required to take on more independence in the new professional arena (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Goodlad and colleagues emphasize the importance of such collaborations to *mutually beneficial* enhancements of educational practices, a construct they advance as simultaneous renewal (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004). Specifically, Goodlad and colleagues advocate for faculty members from schools and educator-preparing institutions to work together and to use one another's expertise to inform and improve their own (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004). Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, (2002) argue that deep professional learning and maximized goal achievement hinges upon "sharing tacit knowledge [that] requires interaction and informal learning processes such as storytelling, conversation, coaching and apprenticeship" (p. 9). A context of trust is also essential to the improvement of collaborative professional practice because of the objective analysis of outcomes needed to inform subsequent action. Goodlad and colleagues illustrate how such collaborations foster improved learning environments through ongoing assessment and mutual support. Simultaneous renewal, or mutual benefits for all stakeholders, result from collaborative engagement in school renewal:

> …school renewal creates an environment – a whole culture- that routinely conducts diagnoses to determine what is going well and what is not. The locus of power and influence shifts dramatically. Opportunities arise to capitalize on what's already working and to build on current successes, to zero in on those areas in need of particular attention and to formulate and pursue over a time a vision of what an organization might be (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004, p. 156-157)

In short, communities of practice focused on simultaneous renewal influence how organizational stakeholders scaffold BTCs toward mastery experiences, leverage their potential as vicarious models and providers of verbal persuasion, and plan for physiological states of BTC tutors. These practices shape the extent to which benefits can be realized for the p-12 learners served by BTC tutors. In the sections that follow, recommendations informed first by BTC experiences and bolstered by academic literature to collaboratively strengthen the USLT experience are advanced. The recommendations support collaborative, flexible interactions between university and school faculty (Zeichner, 2010) to familiarize all stakeholders with key aspects (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002) that inform mutually beneficial, measurable goals (Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley & Goodlad, 2004) and support BTC self-efficacy development for urban tutoring and subsequent teaching (Bandura, 1977).

BTC writings identified perceived disconnects between espoused and enacted beliefs about teaching and learning as hindering their ability to achieve learning and contribution goals. It is recommended that prior to the start of the USLT term, school and university faculty should work together to define and articulate shared domains of interest. For example, "realizing Fairpark student learning gains through the cultivation of tutoring capacity among BTCs," may emerge as an appropriate shared domain. Within the context of the shared domain, course instructors should collaborate with school faculty to select course texts, which emphasize best practices in tutoring contexts like those the BTCs will experience and integrate school and course aims and to identify speakers who can reinforce

ideas or provide linked counter-perspectives. Teacher participation will be essential as the texts and discussions are not only important source of verbal persuasion for the BTCs, but also guide BTC practices perspectives that scaffold them toward mastery experiences. Flexible dialogue among stakeholders prior to the USLT experience should focus on goal setting to meld individual and organizational expectations for BTC tasks and associated outcomes. Teachers should collaborate with University faculty to craft scaffolded entry points and an appropriate continuum of BTC tutoring activities. Together, school and university faculty should work to address known challenges, such as logistical concerns and rescheduling needs that were identified to prompt stressed physiological states in BTC tutors. Incorporating the expertise of all stakeholders, a list of ways to help and learn in alternative settings can be provided to BTCs early in the term to reduce stress and unproductive physiological states by preparing them for the possibility of unanticipated settings and helping them recognize the potential of observation/support tasks. Informal dialogue to revisit goals and determine next steps should continue across the experience.

BTC writings identified modeling and dialogue as influencing their learning and contributions. Partner teachers should share approaches for introducing tasks to BTCs to promote concise provision of rationales and a framework for intended practice thus strengthening their capacity as vicarious models. In addition, University stakeholders can support these efforts by providing partner teachers information gleaned from BTCs regarding comfort with asking questions, and prior tutoring experiences. Partner teachers can extend their modeling roles and integrate them with classroom discussions surrounding effective tutoring of middle schoolers by providing videos of themselves engaging in effective tutoring followed by a brief discussion of the rationales for student grouping and tutoring choices enacted on tape. Because the demands of the schoolday limit opportunities for dialogue between partner teachers and BTCs, the call to demonstrate solution-focused flexibility surrounding communication and provision of relevant information advanced by Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, (2002) is essential to maximizing the success of the USLT experience. Such tools as email, Skype, discussion boards, or periodic meetings support direct interactions with faculty and feedback to BTCs that extend the opportunities for verbal persuasion beyond the scope of the site liaison alone. Such supports promote effective tutoring experiences and differentiation for individual BTCs making mastery experiences in tutoring interactions more likely.

Patterns in variations among BTCs attributions for student learning outcomes and teacher modeling and dialogue signaled a need for enhanced opportunities for BTC understanding of teachers intentions and rationales as well as other contributors to student learning, students' funds of knowledge, and how students could be best supported in displaying content understandings. Absent dialogue, BTCs tended to attribute student learning challenges to teacher actions. It is recommended that sources of modeling, verbal persuasion and dialogue to deepen BTCs' awareness of opportunities to learn and contribute and to make meaning of student learning are extended through intentional exposure to perspectives from all sources involved in the USLT experience.BTC writings suggest that access to peers as vicarious models of productive perspective-taking and navigation of emotions associated with tutoring may help BTCs who exhibit blaming tendencies to focus on heightened student learning through improved tutoring practices. Setting and revising learning and contribution goals and discussing mechanisms for goal attainment (Bandura, 1977) with peers should be an integral part of USLT related course meetings. As evidenced in both the work of Coffey (2010) and Pultorak (1996), discussions and informal interviews serve as powerful tools for reflection. Thus, discussion-based peer debriefing should complement the individual processing prompted through written reflections to maximize benefits of tutoring in the presence of peers within a single school setting. Dialogue with partner teachers should be included in course meetings through flexible arrangements which could include panel discussions, Skype or message boards. Such dialogue on issues including tutoring roles, assessment of tutoring effectiveness, their own trajectories of learning to teach, and differences between tutoring and the teachers' typical teaching practices is likely to promote heightened partner teacher reflection on practice and open doors to dialogue about strategies for improvement creating a context of partnership and authentic legitimate peripheral participation between partner teachers and BTCs. Such interactions bolster capacity for effective verbal persuasion by course instructors by supporting relevant theory to practice connections and instructional decision-making in follow-up discussions with BTCs. A key role of the site-liaison should be to help BTCs to reflect in action on site about connections between course-based experiences and observations of their tutoring practice, thereby recognizing a wider variety of mastery experiences and situating greater control over their learning with BTCs. These modifications to the USLT experience promote the likelihood of BTCs having scaffolded BTC learning and contributions to p-12 student learning in a context of cross-organizational support.

Conclusions

Overall, this study illustrates how engagement in an USLT experience in one school facing high economic and academic need influenced BTCs' goals for learning and contributing to student learning and illuminated contributors to the achievement of BTC goals. This study revealed the capacity of USLT to positively influence BTCs' interest in continued engagement with both urban learners and SL. This study offers teacher educators seeking to develop similar SL experiences a model for partnership to build on BTC experiences and honor their authentic concerns in crafting experiences to meet individual needs of both BTCs and the students they serve. This study relied on the experiences of a small number of participants in a potentially unique setting; thus teacher educators should consider the similarities and differences of their own candidates and settings as they apply or adapt insights gleaned from this work. Additionally, prior to my roles as site-liaison and researcher, I have served in the roles of teacher candidate, partner teacher, and teacher educator and acknowledge the existence of my own lived experiences as influences upon the lenses through which I approach the work of developing high quality SL experiences. Further research may shed light on whether similar experiences are common to contexts in which more of the BTCs attended urban schools as part of their own education or racial and/or linguistic differences exist between BTCs and the students they serve. Long term studies may examine the ways in which BTCs are carrying the student focus they develop in USLT experiences with same race students into more diverse subsequent experiences. As programs seek to better support and retain teacher candidates through rigorous preparation for long-term teaching in urban settings, many opt for earlier field engagement through SL. SL experiences which effectively attend to BTCs' developing efficacy beliefs regarding urban teaching, and yield simultaneous benefits for BTCs and p-12 learners require collaborative and multifaceted planning. It is my intention that this article begins to advance the conversation around how candidate experiences can be coupled with theoretical foundations to enhance collaboration among educational stakeholders to yield mutual benefits.

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HELPING PRESERVICE AND INSERVICE TEACHERS UNDERSTAND THE COMMON CORE: AN INQUIRY APPROACH
by
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Abstract
The Common Core State Standards is a topic of interest to K-12 educators. It is important for teacher educators who work in higher education to help practitioners tackle Common Core implementation. Practitioner inquiry, a topic teacher educators know a great deal about, can serve to connect the Common Core State Standards to the work of teacher educators, as they help practitioners bridge their current practices and Common Core implementation. We begin this paper by reviewing the Common Core Sate Standards and practitioner inquiry. Next, we describe a school that has used practitioner inquiry as the mechanism for better understanding the Common Core, and finally, we describe a "field trip" that was taken by preservice teachers to this school and the ways this field trip inspired them to use the process of practitioner inquiry to understand new developments in teaching throughout their careers, such as the Common Core.

Despite growing controversy that surrounds the Common Core State Standards, the implementation of these standards continues to be an ever-present reality for inservice and preservice teachers across the United States (Grennon-Brooks & Dietz, 2013; Ravitch, 2013; Tienken, 2011; Tienken, 2012; Yatvin, 2013). Because the Common Core is a topic of high interest to K-12 educators, it is important for teacher educators who work in institutions of higher education to play a role in helping practitioners tackle Common Core implementation. One topic teacher educators know a great deal about – practitioner inquiry/action research – can serve to connect the Common Core State Standards to the work of teacher educators, as teacher educators help practitioners bridge the gap between their current practices and Common Core implementation. The purpose of this paper is to describe the ways practitioner inquiry/action research can serve as a powerful tool that teacher educators can use to help both practicing and preservice teachers navigate the Common Core.

We begin our paper with brief overviews of the Common Core State Standards and practitioner inquiry to make the case for the important role practitioner inquiry can play in helping teacher educators support the implementation of these standards in school settings. Next, we illustrate the connection between practitioner inquiry and the Common Core by describing the ways we facilitated a year-long inservice teacher professional development experience on the Common Core through inquiry at a local elementary school, and the ways we subsequently used this site to create a "field trip" experience for our preservice teachers to this school in order to inspire these aspiring teachers to use the process of practitioner inquiry to understand new developments (such as the Common Core State Standards) in teaching throughout their careers.

The Common Core State Standards: Background and Definition

While once an international leader in education, in recent years students in the United States have scored far below other countries on international assessments (OECD, 2010). Hence, the United States has faced a decline in global competitiveness.

The decline of the United States as an international leader in education has likely resulted from the rapid changes in our world in the past twenty-five years. For example, advances in technology have greatly accelerated the pace at which knowledge is created, as well as the pace that anyone with a computer can access that knowledge. To illustrate this point, Darling-Hammond and her colleagues (2008) report that, "During the four years between 1997 and 2002, the amount of new information produced in the world *was equal to the amount produced over the entire previous history of the world*" (Darling-Hammond et. al. as cited in Calkins, 2012, p. 9). As a result, the types of jobs available and the skills they require have also dramatically changed, with only 10 percent of the labor workforce consisting of low-skill jobs in contrast to 95 percent just twenty-five years ago.

Despite these rapid and dramatic changes, schools and schooling in the United States have remained relatively unchanged, no doubt leading to the United State's decline in global competitiveness, as well as students leaving their K-12 schooling experiences unprepared for their futures. For example, statistics indicate that many students need to spend up to a year of their first year in college in remediation. In fact, between 1995 and 2000, institutions reported a 25 percent increase in the number of students needing an average of one year of remediation upon entry to college (Parsad & Lewis, 2003). Clearly, the static nature of our school system is problematic.

Almost 50 years ago, John Dewey recognized this problem when he stated, "If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow" (1968, p. 167). Not robbing children of their tomorrows became a problem that state after state tried to tackle on their own by developing, implementing, assessing, and redeveloping, reimplementing and reassessing their own set of state standards. Because states have been working alone, efforts have been duplicated and vast differences in curriculum can exist from New York to California and every state in-between. This led some educators to call for the creation of a national set of standards.

After decades of failed efforts to create these national standards, in 2009 Governors and State Commissioners from 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia, through their involvement with the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) and the Council for Chief State Schools offices, came together to tackle the task. The standards for each area (English Language Arts, Math, Speaking and Listening) were written by one or more anonymous authors as a road map to better prepare students for life after high school. As the committee collaborated on these standards, they worked toward a common goal of preparing American students for the future to compete in a global economy. Beginning with the end in mind, the creators pulled from the highest performing state standards, colleges, and experts in content areas to determine content and skills students leaving high school need to master to be successful, whether their track would be continuing on to college or entering the workforce.

Hence, the Common Core State Standards were born and are defined by their developers on their website as follows:

> The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers,

school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. (http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards)

The publication of the standards and many states' adaptation of them evoked much controversy, with many educators debating their value and purpose (see, for example, Gewertz, 2012; Grennon-Brooks & Dietz, 2013; Hiebert & Mesmer, 2013; Ravitch 2013; Tienken, 2011; Yatvin, 2013). Although surrounded by controversy and varying opinions, teachers in the states that have adopted the Common Core standards are being expected to implement them, and teacher educators are playing a role in creating many professional development efforts to help schools and districts achieve this goal.

Practitioner Inquiry: Background and Definition

The most prevalent professional development efforts around the Common Core State Standards that have been implemented throughout the nation are inservice days, institutes, webinars, trainings and conferences (Dana, Burns, & Wolkenhauer, 2013). While workshops, inservice days, institutes, webinars, trainings, and conference opportunities can be of high-quality and useful in developing a foundational understanding of the Common Core, research indicates that effective and powerful professional learning does not occur by workshop alone (Killion & Harrison, 2006; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Desimone, 2009).

Unfortunately, however, the most prominent way that districts seek to provide for the professional learning of their teachers has been with an "event" mentality – for example, sending teachers to a workshop delivered on an inservice day when teachers work but students have a holiday (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Classroom teachers often refer to these days unaffectionately as "sit and get" days ("I am forced to attend this event, I sit through the day, and then go back to my classroom with little support for implementing what the district has defined as important"). Administrators often refer to these days unaffectionately as "spray and pray" days ("We bring teachers together, we spray them with new knowledge, and we pray that they get something out of it") (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2010). Hence, when planning professional development for teachers and principals with an event-only mindset, already soured by one-shot only professional development experiences, it would be easy for teachers (and principals) to approach the Common Core State Standards as curmudgeons, educators who are irritable and resistant to the changes implementation of the Common Core will mean to their practice, which makes the work of teacher educators implementing professional development efforts quite challenging.

In their book *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement*, Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman use the term *curmudgeon* to compare and contrast two different frameworks for reading the Common Core Sate Standards:

> Educators have a choice. We can regard the Common Core State Standards as the worst thing in the world. Frankly, it can be fun to gripe about them… (Yet), the field of American education is changing in ways that are more dramatic and more far-reaching than anything any of us could have imagined. If we are going to play a role in shaping the future, then we need to … see hope and opportunity. As a part of this, we need to embrace what is good about the Common Core State Standards – and roll up our sleeves and work to make these standards into a force that lifts our teaching and our schools. For there is good in them. We would be pleased indeed if students in all our classrooms could do this level of work independently (p. 3; 8).

Calkins and her coauthors conclude that rather than approach the Common Core State Standards as curmudgeons, educators need to approach them as gold. To shift to a gold mindset for approaching the Common Core, teachers need more than a one-day workshop or weekend conference. Teachers need a system of professional learning that is embedded into their everyday school experiences.

Leading the way to create these systems of learning, Learning Forward (formally the National Staff Development Council) argues that professional development must insist that "every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves" (NSDC, 2014). According to Learning Forward, high quality professional development is primarily conducted at the school, facilitated by well-prepared school principals and school-based coaches or other teacher leaders and "occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals, and other instructional staff members where the teams of educators engage in a continuous cycle of improvement." The emphasis is on systematic, planned, intentional, and regularly scheduled efforts to embed teacher learning within teachers' daily lives. The term that encapsulates this concept is *job-embedded professional development*. The importance of a district creating the structures, time, and resources for all of its members to engage in this important learning work is imperative to changing teaching practice to implement the Common Core.

Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman (2012) write that the real work of the Common Core is not about adding some new component to the curriculum that teachers might learn about in a workshop or inservice day or curriculum compliance. Rather:

> The real work of the Common Core is about accelerating student achievement. And for this to happen, schools need to build the ongoing systems of continuous improvement that make learning – on the part of students and teachers alike – part of the culture and infrastructure of the school. (p. 182)

Inquiry is one way teacher educators can help schools and districts achieve that goal.

Simply stated, inquiry is defined as systematic, intentional study of one's own professional practice (see, e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; 2009; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Inquiring professionals seek out change by reflecting on their practice. They do this by engaging in a cyclical process of posing questions or "wonderings," collecting data to gain insights into their wonderings, analyzing the data along with reading relevant literature, taking action to make changes in practice based on new understandings developed during inquiry, and sharing findings with others (See Figure 1).
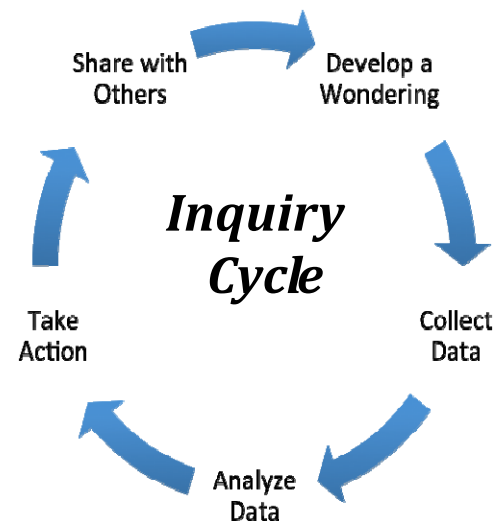

Figure 1: Inquiry Cycle (Reprinted from Dana et al., 2011)

The concept of teacher inquiry (also referred to as action research) has been around for ages, with its roots in the work of John Dewey (1933), popularized by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s (Alderman, 1993), and shortly thereafter applied to the field of education by Stephen Corey (1953). Since its inception, many educational innovations have come and gone, but the systematic study of educators' own practice is a concept that has proved it has staying power (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Hence, teacher inquiry is a logical mechanism with which teachers and administrators can gain insights into the Common Core, what they mean for teachers and students, and how the Common Core can be actualized within the reality of teachers' everyday work with students in the classroom.

Using Practitioner Inquiry to Implement the Common Core: An Illustration

Carter G. Woodson Elementary School is located in a large urban school district. Woodson is in one of the poorest neighborhoods in the county where 44.2 percent of children live in poverty; 97 percent of the students are African American, and 99 percent of the students receive free lunch. In 2007, Woodson was deemed a "failing" school. After the failing grade, Cheryl Quarles-Gaston became the principal of Woodson and was tasked with turning the school around.

As teacher educators, we had the opportunity to work with Cheryl and Woodson over a number of years, and introduced this school to the process of practitioner inquiry just after her school was deemed failing by the state. Cheryl found inquiry an intriguing idea and felt a systematic study by the school's faculty of what *wasn't* working, in order to build on what *was* working, could improve Woodson's climate and learning conditions. Under her leadership as an active inquirer, every teacher at Woodson committed to studying his or her own practice and within a few years every administrator, teacher, and student at the school was engaging in inquiry. Woodson was transformed by the experience. Five years after receiving a failing grade from the state, Woodson students made 92 learning point gains on the state standardized assessment (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) and received an A grade from the state, along with recognition as one of the state's highest performing schools (See Dana, Burns, & Wolkenhauer, 2013).

The teachers and administration were empowered by their new way of work (a collective inquiry-stance) and the performance of their students. Through the inquiry process teachers were inspired to take on new challenges and to improve upon their practice. This eagerness and empowerment allowed Woodson teachers and administrators to tackle the new Common Core State Standards with little fear or trepidation. While other schools and districts were waiting until they had to fully implement the Common Core, Woodson preemptively worked to shift their teaching methods to meet this new set of standards. The Woodson administration outlined a yearlong professional development process for their teachers in which all teachers would utilize the inquiry process to systematically study the implementation of the new standards in their classrooms. Cheryl Quarles-Gaston knew that she could not lead all the professional development around the Common Core State Standards on her own, so she formed a leadership team consisting of herself and her assistant principal, her instructional coach, reading coach and a teacher from each grade level. She also invited us, local teacher educators, to join in and support their inquiry efforts. This leadership team worked together to ensure that all the teachers at Woodson were provided the support they needed to not only conduct their inquiry projects, but also to simultaneously learn about the new standards.

A Yearlong Glimpse of the Inquiry Work at Woodson Elementary

Our leadership team began studying the Common Core and participated in a book study together using *Pathways to The Common Core* (Calkins et al., 2012). We devoted much of our summer to searching for and critically reading resources around the Common Core in order to develop a library of resources for teachers. Using these newfound resources, our team designed a professional development experience for the teachers upon their return in August. The goal of this professional development was to ensure that all teachers had a general understanding of the Common Core State Standards. Understanding the background information on the Common Core, our team expected that giving teachers time to explore the standards would be sure to raise questions for them. This process would naturally lead teachers to "wonder" more about the impact the standards would have for both themselves and their students. The teachers' wonderings about the new set of standards, therefore, would lead to yearlong, individualized professional development using the inquiry process for the remainder of the school year.

During their first three days back at work after summer break, our leadership team led Woodson's teachers through the professional development experience we had planned. The teachers were presented with background information about the Common Core State Standards, and then worked together with their colleagues, both within and across grade levels, to study the new standards. The teachers analyzed the new standards and identified some of the shifts that would be required of them if they were to help their students meet these standards. At the end of the three-day professional development, the leadership team led the faculty through an activity where teachers journaled about any apprehensions they felt around this new set of standards and what it meant for their teaching practices and their students. The teachers then worked individually to use these tensions as an impetus to develop a personal wondering about the Common Core. Some examples of wonderings included:

- How can I effectively utilize nonfiction text in my first grade classroom?
- How will using a problem-solving graphic organizer that is designed to emphasize the requirements of the CCSS influence math fluency and performance among students?

- How can the use of an interactive whiteboard help us better integrate technology into our teaching practices in order to better implement the CCSS?

Developing the wondering was the first step in their journey of using inquiry to systematically and intentionally study their practice as they implemented the Common Core.

At the first faculty meeting, the teachers each developed an inquiry plan. In this plan the teachers outlined their wondering along with any related sub-questions they had. They worked together to identify the data each teacher would need to collect to gain insights into their question(s). This data provided information to the teachers that informed their practice, specifically as it related to the implementation of the new standards and what this meant for their teaching methods and their students' learning. This data also included any resources or literature the teacher could utilize to support his/her learning related to his/her wondering.

October/November – Data Collection and Data Analysis

Formative data analysis takes place throughout the inquiry cycle. Data collection and data analysis do not exist independently of one another and proceed in a chronological lock step-manner (Dana, 2013). In October and November, the teachers at Woodson both collected and analyzed their data. Faculty meetings and professional development were structured to allow teachers time to process their data and work through any obstacles they faced as they collected data and studied their wonderings. Teachers collected both qualitative and quantitative data in their classrooms, which provided a narrative and holistic picture of what was happening in their classrooms. The quantitative data mostly included student test scores, while the qualitative data included teacher journals, student work, literature, field notes and interviews. While time was spent on helping teachers to work on their formative data analyses, these months also allowed a time for the leadership team to provide teachers with additional resources to support their individual learning around the Common Core State Standards.

While data analysis happened throughout the process, it was also important for the teachers at Woodson to critically engage in a summative analysis, where each teacher completed a holistic analysis of his/her data. At the November faculty meeting each teacher brought all of the data they had collected to that point. The teachers then engaged in activities where they each analyzed their data set as a whole for a more in-depth look into what was happening in their classroom. For many teachers, this November meeting was critical because it allowed them a chance to critically analyze and look at their data in different ways. Many of the teachers had not done a lot of work with qualitative data (i.e., teacher journal, anecdotal notes, student work samples), but found it to be invaluable as they studied their own practice. The qualitative data helped the teachers to think about their experience through a narrative lens and really tell the story of their inquiry journey into understanding what implementation of the Common Core State Standards would mean to their teaching practice. This analysis was the perfect preparation for each teacher to think about how they would share their learning with others in December, at the school's inquiry showcase. While analyzing their data, teachers pondered some of the following questions:

- What have I learned about myself as a teacher?
- What have I learned about my students?
- What have I learned about the Common Core?
- What are the implications of what I have learned for my practice?
- What new wonderings do I have?

One of the most powerful steps in the inquiry process is when teachers are able

to come together and share their learning. In December, the teachers at Woodson gathered together to showcase their learning. They participated in a roundtable conference-like format so that all teachers could benefit from one another's learning. Figure 2 provides a glimpse at the nature of this showcase, and the types of studies around the Common Core teachers at Woodson engaged in.

Figure 2: Sample Common Core Inquiry Showcase Program (Dana, Burns, & Wolkenhauer, 2013)

Fall Teacher Inquiry Showcase **Carter G. Woodson Elementary School/** **University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning** *Focusing on Our Future: Navigating the Common Core at Woodson* **December 12, 2012**
Table One: Using Technology to Meet the CCSS Robin Bivins, Jovanna Hackman, Deon McKinney, Intermediate ELA Teachers Sabrina Alston, Varying Exceptionalities Resource Teacher *How can the use of the promethean board help with effectively implementing the CCSS?* The CCSS require students to utilize technology and resources to prepare them for college or careers. As ELA teachers, we realized we had not utilized enough technology to meet the new standards. In this presentation, we will share the ways we planned together as we worked to align the standards with our instructional delivery while utilizing our new promethean boards. We also allowed students to utilize the promethean boards. Come learn what happened when the promethean board was introduced into our instruction and the ways integrating this technology into our instruction fit together with the Common Core State Standards.
Table Two: Non-Fiction Text and the Common Core Lareal Haslem, 2nd Grade *How can I effectively utilize non-fiction text in my first grade classroom?* My students often lack background knowledge or schema necessary for many non-fiction books. Yet, integrating more non-fiction text into my instruction is an important feature of the CCSS. Learn more about what I learned about using non-fiction text in my classroom to help my students meet the ELA CCSS.
Table Three: The Role of Graphic Organizers in CCSS Implementation Darlynthia Smith, 5th Grade Math, Nyeika Thorne, 4th Grade Math, Ashlyn Williams and Shirley Pugh, 3rd Grade Math *How will using a problem-solving graphic organizer that is designed to emphasize the requirements of the CCSS increase math fluency and performance amongst students?* The CCSS will require students to build on their knowledge from one grade level to the next. They will also require students to become more proficient at problem solving. The first standard for mathematical practice is "make sense of problems and persevere in solving them." Come learn about the ways we worked as a vertical team to create a graphic organizer that will support students as they develop problem-solving skills as well as the ways we are continuing to work to align our efforts across grade levels.

This process benefitted all of the teachers at Woodson in a variety of ways. First, this process allowed teachers to clarify their own thinking around the Common Core Standards. As teachers shared their thinking with others, they gave their colleagues access to their learning and together they were able to discuss, question, and relate to one another. Through this sharing they were able to push and extend their thinking beyond their individual learning.

Collaborating throughout the inquiry process was an avenue for the Woodson teachers to learn from one another and to build a collaborative culture. Teachers not only learned about the new set of standards, but also learned about their own teaching practice and the power they each had to take control of their own professional learning. The teachers were eager to continue this learning after December, and the faculty engaged in another cycle of inquiry beginning in January. Each teacher was able to continue with the inquiry they began in August or restart the process with a new wondering. Woodson's faculty followed similar steps to their first experience in the inquiry process.

Connecting Inquiry into the Common Core to Preservice Teacher Education

As we worked with Woodson teachers in this yearlong inquiry into the Common Core, we were simultaneously working with preservice teachers at a nearby college of education as they grappled with understanding new developments (such as the Common Core State Standards) in the school systems where they taught during their internship experiences. Students in this teacher preparation program are introduced to inquiry early in the program as a mechanism for unpacking the complexities of teaching while learning to integrate content knowledge and pedagogy with an intentional focus on student learning. As they enter their senior year and internship experience, therefore, they are already familiar with the process of inquiry, so the goal of their first internship semester is to explicitly deepen the process in connection to their developing identities as educators who take action to solve problems of practice (Delane, Hooser, Richner, Wolkenhauer, Colvin, & Dana, in press).

During their internship experience, these college of education students take a seminar that contains coursework with concrete content and pedagogical learning aims, while remaining integrated and responsive to the unique needs and culture of each student's internship classroom and school. For this reason, these preservice teachers engage in cycles of inquiry that focus on personal questions of practice based on the daily work and teaching dilemmas of their own internship classrooms, as well as the school's identified goals for improvement. In order to emphasize the importance of inquiry as practice, as opposed to inquiry as an assignment for class (Wolkenhauer, Boynton, & Dana, 2012), and to help solidify the power of inquiry as a way to continuously improve classrooms and schools, we incorporated a field trip to Woodson Elementary School into the seminar. We planned our trip on a day when students were not expected to be in their own internship school sites, but were attending a full-day seminar at the university instead.

When we first arrived at Woodson for our field trip, Cheryl Quarles-Gaston met with us in the library to introduce our preservice teachers to the school's context as one of the poorest neighborhoods in Jacksonville, Florida, ranked as one of Florida's lowest performing schools in 2007. She then shared the school's inquiry story, as we reported in the section above.

After her introduction, our students and accompanying university faculty were divided into several smaller groups. Members of the leadership team each hosted one small group for a schoolwide tour. Each small group had the opportunity to see every grade level (PreK – 5) and at least one electives teacher (i.e. art, technology, science lab). Before entering each classroom, the Woodson host explained the teacher's current inquiry. For example, before entering the 5th grade classroom of Ms. D. Smith on one field trip, we were told that she was currently studying student autonomy in learning. She was working to develop student-run CCSS mathematics workshops where her 5th graders would take on teaching roles,

content decisions, and the responsibility of making connections between the math being learned in the classroom and their lives outside of the classroom. As we entered the classroom, fifth grade students were pressed closely together against the whiteboard. Hardly noticing we had entered, they continued to lead a teaching session on the ways in which numbers form patterns and relationships (CCSSMATH.CONTENT.5.OA.B.3), and where they noticed these patterns and relationships in the world outside of school. Their teacher, who was facilitating the student-run discussion about word-problem solving from the back of the room, explained that this was a part of their deeper study into the ways in which they might develop operations and algebraic thinking, a strand of the Common Core State Standards for 5th graders.

Midday, the small groups returned to the library to debrief what they had seen from their morning classroom visits. They had an opportunity to talk with members of other small groups, who had seen different classrooms, as the leadership team facilitated discussion to help them connect the work Woodson teachers were doing with their own inquiries and internship experiences, as well as projections to their careers as elementary school teachers. Each student was asked to write down burning questions they had about the experience.

During lunch, substitute teachers had arrived to take over instructional responsibilities for the teachers we visited. The teachers then joined us in the library to share their insights into inquiry and the ways it has impacted their teaching through the Common Core, and students' learning. The university students were invited to ask their questions to the panel of teachers. Questions focused primarily on the logistics of schoolwide inquiry and Common Core implementation, but the preservice teachers also asked questions about the ways teachers can use inquiry to understand new developments in teaching more broadly. Woodson teachers discussed inquiry as a way to focus on their craft in order to become more reflective teachers, and better learners for themselves and their students. They discussed inquiry as a way to ground their teaching, especially during times when the school system makes changes to policies and procedures. With inquiry, they explained that they were confident in being able to take new developments/demands, question them and study them thoroughly, and then figure out how to use the best parts of them to connect to their students. "We are generators of knowledge…we are all thinking machines," one teacher explained. "This is our way of work because we put our belief system into check and make our values obvious." Cheryl added, "My teachers are fearless leaders who are confident that our students are learning…We aren't worried because we rigorously question our work and ask 'is this meeting the needs (of our school)?'"

Upon returning to the university, preservice teachers reported feeling inspired to have similar intentional focus in their own teaching practice by using inquiry as a mechanism for aligning their teaching philosophies and the implementation of the Common Core. Several students who attended the fieldtrip asked to be placed at Woodson for their second internship field placement the following semester, in order to further develop this focus. A year after our first fieldtrip, students from the college of education program are regularly placed at Woodson and conversations have begun about developing a professional development school between the university and Woodson Elementary School.

Conclusions

As the Common Core State Standards remain of high interest to K-12 educators, it is important for teacher educators to be engaged in the process of preparing and supporting teachers' work within the new set of standards. From our work with teachers at Woodson Elementary School, we have learned that practitioner inquiry is a valuable tool for unpacking the Common Core. Our work indicates that through inquiry into the Common Core, teachers can lead systematic and intentional studies of what the Common Core will mean for their specific teaching practices and students' learning. Through inquiry, teachers' practice is informed by data collection and analysis, which leads to the collective sharing of experiences, and therefore, the added benefit of learning from others.

Furthermore, we have seen how the creation of an inquiry culture in a school can yield rich field placements for preservice teachers, and that if internship placements aren't possible, a field trip (structured in a way similar to the one we described in this paper) can provide critical opportunities for preservice teachers to see inquiry in action. Through an examination of inquiry though the experiences of veteran teachers, it becomes clearer to preservice teachers the importance of inquiry as a mechanism for aligning their teaching philosophies and the implementation of the Common Core and other new developments in education throughout their careers.

While the Common Cores State Standards remain controversial, they are a reality for many K-12 educators. It is important for teacher educators to help practitioners tackle Common Core implementation. Practitioner inquiry can serve to connect the Common Core State Standards to the work of teacher educators, as they help practitioners bridge their current practices and Common Core implementation in order to best meet teacher and student need.

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INTENTIONAL PLANNING AND ENGAGING STUDENTS: PRESERVICE TEACHER LEARNING DURING LESSON STUDY
by
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Abstract

This paper will discuss lesson study and the role this strategy can play in helping preservice teachers apply academic knowledge to meet student learning needs as part of a clinical field experience in a professional development school (PDS). This paper begins by briefly reviewing the literature on lesson study. Next, I provide a description of the specific ways lesson study was used as a learning tool with four preservice teachers at one PDS. Then I will share a detailed discussion of the ways that preservice teachers experienced learning during lesson study by examining the observations and discussion from the first and last lessons in this iterative cycle. Finally, I will discuss two themes identified from the data that capture these preservice teachers' learning through lesson study: (1) Planning with Intentionality, and (2) Engaging Students as Learners.

Introduction

I have taught lessons before and reflected on them, but I have never been given the opportunity to teach a lesson, reflect, make changes, and then get to implement these changes in a class again. I think this is where the most learning takes place. We actually get to see if our new ideas and changes are for the better and how they affect student learning. – *Preservice teacher reflection on lesson study*

Professional Development Schools (PDSs) are a collaborative effort between K-12 schools and universities formed to improve the preparation of new teachers and the development of practicing teachers to increase student learning (Goodlad, 1990; Holmes Group, 1990; National Association of Professional Development Schools, 2008). For prospective teachers, these collaborations provide a clinical site as they learn to enact their content knowledge and pedagogy in the context of school settings. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2010) recommends teacher preparation programs provide opportunities and support for prospective teachers as they apply academic knowledge from coursework to support the learning of students in these clinical sites. Lesson study is one learning strategy that is focused on the application of knowledge in classrooms in ways that result in student learning. This learning strategy provides collaborative support as a group of teachers plan, teach, observe, critique, and revise a study lesson with the goal of improving both student learning and teaching practice (Lewis, 2009; Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2010).

The purpose of this paper is to report on an effort to use lesson study as part of the clinical field experience with preservice teachers at one PDS. Lesson study has been firmly positioned in the literature as a viable framework for improving teaching practice within the context of the classroom (Chokshi & Fernandez, 2004; Murata, 2010; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). By incorporating lesson study into clinical preparation, the potential exists to systematically address the learning needs of preservice teachers by developing their capacity to apply academic knowledge to meet student learning needs. Thus, this paper will discuss the learning that occurred

during one lesson study cycle in order to better understand the ways that lesson study addresses preservice teacher learning needs.

This article will begin with an overview of the literature on lesson study. Next, a description of the specific ways lesson study was used as a learning tool with four preservice teachers at one PDS and the methodology used to study this experience will be described. This will lead to a discussion of the ways that preservice teachers experienced learning during lesson study by examining the observations and discussions from the first and last lessons in this iterative cycle.

Lesson study includes multiple professional improvement strategies that center on the observation of live classroom lessons (the research lesson) by a group of teachers who collaboratively analyze it for the purpose of improving student learning (Lewis, 2009). This collaborative analysis process invites educators onto the center stage as teachers, and away from the stance of audience participant that is often carried over from their experiences as students (Lortie, 1987). From this new position pre-service teachers can study and reflect on their classroom problems, developing a more complex understanding of student needs (NCATE, 2010).

Lesson study is an intentional process with identifiable steps. According to Stigler and Hiebert (1999), first a problem in student learning is defined and then a research lesson that addresses the problem is designed. As the lesson is taught, observers gather data on student learning. Teachers then collaborate to evaluate the lesson, examine student and observation data, and finally revise the lesson. The lesson is then taught to a different group of students generally with a larger audience of educators in attendance. The process of teaching and systematic analysis is then repeated. The cycle is concluded by the sharing of results. This may take the form of a report or be included in published books. Teachers examine a lesson plan, classroom context, and student learning to identify ways to improve their practice (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2010). For pre-service teachers these examinations have potential to challenge beliefs about teaching held over from their time as K-12 students, beliefs that Lortie (1987) described as naive understandings that if unchallenged lead to the repetition of simplistic teaching traditions. Thus lesson study is about more than creating exemplary lessons; it is about collaborating with colleagues to systematically examine and challenge assumptions about what it means to be an educator.

Several empirical studies of lesson study have been done with the intent to explore preservice teachers as they engaged in the process. These studies reveal how preservice teachers learn from lesson study, the provision of intentional supports by others as preservice teachers engage in the lesson study process, and promising outcomes for preservice teacher learning.

Learning how to learn from lesson study requires preservice teachers to give constructive and critical feedback. Sims and Walsh (2009) engaged their preservice teachers in collaborative planning, observation, and a debrief that asked learners to debate the effectiveness of teaching strategies and student learning. They found that pre-service teachers were not able to give constructive feedback and discussion instead they centered on the teacher's presentation of the lesson and not on the learning of students. Similarly, Myers (2012) analysis of preservice teacher's journals found their reflections were most often descriptions of teaching as opposed to observations on student learning and provided little evidence of critical reflection.

In addition to constructive and critical feedback, literature has also stressed the importance of learning to engage in collaborative relationships as part of a successful lesson study cycle. Barriers to successful collaboration include the traditional isolated nature of schools (Chassels and Melville, 2009) as well as

negotiating power relationships between pre-service teachers, school faculty, and university instructors (Saito & Atencio, 2013). These researchers cautioned that barriers to strong collaborative relationships must be addressed in order for group discussions to lead to new understandings about teaching and student learning. This literature suggests that for the lesson study process to be effective, pre-service teachers must learn to provide constructive feedback on the qualities of effective lessons and assess student learning while engaging productively with peers.

In order for the preservice teachers to learn during the lesson study process, experienced educators provided intentional supports to the preservice teachers. Cohan and Honigsfeld (2006) modeled constructive critique by providing feedback on lesson plans and essays completed during lesson study by undergraduates and graduate students. Sims and Walsh (2009) engaged in explicit actions to help their students' link observation data to lesson goals for student learning, critique lesson plans, and engage in rich discussion about instructional strategies. Marble (2006) provided discussion protocols and concrete ideas for integrating science and math lessons. Finally, Fernandez (2010) supported 18 prospective teachers by providing math content background and an over-arching learning goal.

In addition to educators providing the supports for preservice teachers to engage in lesson study noted above, repeated practice was also noted as a support. Fernandez (2010) found microteaching lesson study as a cycle of lessons to be beneficial as the many opportunities to teach, analyze, reflect, and reteach supported preservice teacher's construction of learning. The repeated practice with collaborative discussion also provided opportunities for preservice teachers to discuss critical feedback and try out solutions to identified problems of practice. Across this literature, the goal of the lesson study process was to support the preservice teachers and enable them to shift their focus beyond themselves to their students, to help them learn to be critical, and work effectively in collaboration with peers.

Empirical studies also discussed promising outcomes for pre-service teachers and evidence of their growing ability to shift their focus beyond themselves to their students. Studies have shown that preservice teachers constructed deeper understandings of content knowledge, teaching pedagogy, and ways to enhance the academic achievement of their students (Chassels & Melville, 2009; Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2006). They also gained experience in critical analysis (Sims & Walsh, 2009) and as collaborators in learning (Chassels & Melville, 2009). Marble (2006) found that in addition to developing a critical lens, preservice teachers began to view themselves as contributors to a knowledge base for teaching. This literature suggests that lesson study as professional learning holds promise as a mechanism to link university knowledge, dilemmas in student learning, and instructional improvement. This professional learning strategy has the potential to disrupt the trend of new teachers who rely on past recollections of school to solve current problems of practice and fail to incorporate new perspectives of teaching and learning (Lortie, 1975).

While these studies provide important information about effectively engaging in lesson study with preservice teachers, providing supports, and promising outcomes, few empirical studies have explored what and how preservice teachers learn during lesson study experiences in preservice teacher education (Chassels & Melville, 2009). More specifically, Murata (2010) stated, an exploration of the relationship between lesson study, instructional improvement, and teacher learning is needed (p 577). Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore what preservice teachers learn as they engage in the iterative lesson study process.

Because lesson study has been used as part of preservice teacher preparation, as a supervisor at one PDS located within a teacher education program at a large research university, I used this tool to connect academic learning to the classroom experiences of my preservice teachers. I was interested in closely aligning my work within the PDS to help my preservice teachers develop practices to meet the needs of elementary students and make intentional connections between academic learning from university coursework and practical learning from classroom experiences (Delane et al., in press). The lesson study framework met these needs.

The participants in this study are four preservice teachers engaged in a 16-hour per week clinical experience at a PDS during their senior year of a five year masters program. Olivia and Emma were co-teaching partners in one room, while Melissa and Jennifer were in the first grade classroom next door. All four of the preservice teachers were in the same cohort of students and had most classes together through the previous three semesters. Olivia and Emma had an interest in integrating arts and movement into instruction while Melissa and Jennifer shared an interest in strategies that help students engage in academics as more confident learners. Both of these interest areas were reflected in the lesson they designed and improved.

To prepare for the lesson study, it was important to align the study lesson with approaches to instruction that were used at this PDS site. One approach to instruction that was used extensively by teachers at this PDS was the gradual release of responsibility model. Hence, as part of seminar, the preservice teachers read the book *Better Learning through Structured Teaching: A Framework for the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model* (Fisher & Frey, 2013). This four part model is designed so that the teacher provides intentional support to help students gain independence in completing learning tasks. First, the teacher provides focused instruction to establish purpose and model thinking, referred to as "I-do". Next, the teacher uses prompts and questions to engage students in guided instruction, referred to as "we-do". Then, the students discuss and negotiate the learning task together during collaborative instruction, referred to as "you-do together". Last, the students use the knowledge practiced to create a new product in independent practice, referred to as "you-do" (Fisher & Frey, 2013). For the purposes of the lesson study, all four steps were included in one lesson.

In addition to learning about the instructional model, to gain an understanding of lesson study, we read *Brief Guide to Lesson Study* by Catherine Lewis (2011). Next, the preservice teachers collaborated and designed the research lesson, and created a rotating schedule where each preservice teacher assumed the lead teacher role and was observed by her peers, the author, the assistant principal, and their mentor teacher. The observers gathered evidence on the strengths of the lesson, student learning, ideas for improvement, and noted any questions. A collaborative discussion followed each of the four implementations of the lesson.

Each discussion followed a similar format. First, the lead teacher gave an overview of the lesson, and then each observer shared their observations, including areas of strength. As needed, the preservice teachers were prompted to share moments during the lesson when student learning occurred and to support their belief about student learning with observational data. Finally, modifications to the lesson based on the collaborative reflections and areas of concern were addressed. The pre-service teachers then revised the lesson and with a new pre-service teacher delivering the lesson, taught in a different classroom and were observed by the same peers. The final lesson was unique as a larger audience was in attendance (11 peers and 4 university and school faculty members) and learning from the lesson study process as a whole was discussed.

Methods

As we engaged in the process of lesson study during their clinical experience, I studied the ways preservice teachers were learning as they applied academic knowledge to the students in their placement classrooms. My research was guided by the following question: What happens when lesson study is used as a mechanism to foster pre-service teacher learning in a PDS?

The process of learning as constructing meaning is consistent with the framework of lesson study. Crotty (1988) stated that social constructionism is about the process through which understanding is created by both interactions with the world and with other inhabitants. Social constructionism as a theoretical perspective aligns with lesson study because the preservice teachers negotiated understanding of observed classroom lessons while noting strengths of the lesson, areas in need of improvement, and questions they have about the experience within a collaborative learning community. The framework of lesson study allowed for understandings to be constructed over an extended period of time about the ways theory from campus courses is enacted in the daily practice of teaching and learning at schools (NCATE, 2010).

To understand and document the experiences of the preservice teachers, the primary sources of data for this study were generated by the four pre-service teachers, Melissa, Emma, Olivia, and Jennifer, as they engaged in a lesson study cycle at one PDS over a five week period. These documents included co-constructed lesson plans and weekly revisions, observation notes, reflections from the debrief sessions, and transcribed audio recordings of lesson study discussions. These artifacts provided insights into the experiences of the preservice teachers throughout the lesson study process.

Typological analysis

Hatch's (2002) typological analysis method was used to analyze the lesson study artifacts. Typologies are used as a method of analysis when the phenomenon under study can be readily divided into meaningful parts (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2001). To answer the research question, I read the data chronologically and marked examples of text that related to the identified typologies: (1) instruction, (2) student learning, and (3) improving practice (Hatch, 2002). The data related to each typology, for example instruction, was then grouped so that each data set could be read as a single entry by typology.

Next, I read the data sets and inferential codes, such as 'lesson purpose,' which were developed to begin assigning meaning to the data read. I then looked both within and across the lesson study artifacts, working between the data and codes, and identified patterns that were justified by the data. The data were then reorganized to reflect the patterns of meaning found (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2001). I used this analysis to generate the findings from this study that are reported in the next section. Within this section, I support my findings with salient excerpts from the data. Unless otherwise noted, these data excerpts are from the observation and debrief notes of the preservice teachers.

Findings

In order to address what preservice teachers learned during lesson study, first, I provide a description of the initial lesson, and then a description of the changes preservice teachers made to improve the fourth and final lesson. Next, I share distinct categories of learning that emerged from the discussion of preservice teachers during the lesson study cycle.

The lesson objective the preservice teachers named was "The student will correctly use vocabulary squares to learn and understand vocabulary words" (lesson plan 1). The vocabulary square is a graphic organizer that divides a piece of paper into four boxes with a space in the center of the paper for the vocabulary word. The four boxes were labeled (1) Write the definition, (2) Use in a sentence, (3) Write a synonym of the word, and (4) Draw a picture. Melissa, the lead teacher for the first lesson, read the picture book *Night Noises* by Mem Fox (1991), asking the first graders to raise their hand each time they heard a word they did not know. Examples of words students raised their hands for included "wispy", "bristled", and, "bared". These words, and others, were written on the board as a list. Next, the students engaged in a vote to choose a word from the list they wished to learn more about, and then Melissa engaged in focused instruction to establish the lesson's purpose and modeled the strategy through a think-aloud as she completed the organizer. This was the modeled instruction or "I-do" part of the lesson. Instruction continued as the students voted on a second word and Melissa engaged in guided practice with the students and they completed a second graphic organizer together, the "we-do" part of the lesson. Then, students chose a word off of the word list and completed a vocabulary four square independently, the "you-do" part of the lesson. This work was collected and, in addition to observer notes, discussed at the collaborative debrief session, at which time the preservice teachers reflected on lesson content and teaching actions.

The preservice teachers' discussion of the first vocabulary lesson included student understanding of the lesson purpose. For example, Olivia shared her thoughts during the collaborative discussion and noted: "we gave them a purpose; good readers need to know the meaning of words when they read. This was good". In addition she noted that an area of strength in the lesson was the way Melissa restated the focus by reminding students, "why the strategy was helpful, so they would know the word the next time they read it".

As they discussed the purpose of the lesson, areas for improvement were debated. Emma stated that overall the lesson needed to have a "clearer focus, specifically tell students what we are learning." She also said, "we had to stop a lot for words, this led to a disconnect to the meaning of the story". As Olivia stated, "Our purpose needs to get stronger that is the main question to ask yourself as a teacher, what are we actually teaching our students, what do we want kids to learn? That is what I think is really important" (transcription of lesson debrief).

To define and deliver a clearly focused lesson, Jennifer thought that consistent language should be used, while Emma stated for the next lesson the teacher should, "tell students at the beginning of the book that we're looking for words we don't know, because students that *did* know words wanted to share". The lead teacher, Melissa, reflected that the first graders understood the meaning of the word synonym when it was defined for them and thought that future lessons should use "kid friendly terms to describe what they are supposed to do". The purpose of the lesson was to engage with new vocabulary words, and they felt the graphic organizer itself should be easily understood by the students.

Through their discussion, they also realized they needed to plan purposefully for what students' responses would be in relation to the vocabulary words. For instance Jennifer reflected, "We need to be careful with the synonyms, this wasn't thought out". This statement was made in relation to the word "bared". During the lesson, students named synonyms such as "smiled". In a similar fashion, Olivia teacher cautioned, "Be careful. The sentences we model need to really reflect the word meaning". While Emma stated, "the sentence with bared was awkward, next time don't do that". As the words were not planned prior to the lesson delivery,

the lead teacher was uncertain how to proceed when the students' word choices and responses were not quite correct.

At the conclusion of the debriefing, the preservice teachers were asked about any further reflections. Emma stated, for our next lesson we need to "pick the sentences, words, and, synonyms beforehand". In addition, she questioned her peers, "What if we changed the book so there are not as many words they don't know"? This was an intentional shift from the way Jennifer described their initial understanding of lesson planning, "when we first planned the lesson we were like, let's find a good book" (transcription of lesson debrief).

In addition to the discussion of preparing lesson content, teacher actions as they delivered the lesson were also observed and discussed. These actions included exhibiting desirable teacher traits and positive teaching actions. Jennifer commented, that Melissa was "friendly and engaging, she elicited the appropriate student response". While Olivia stated the instruction during the independent task, or "you-do", was effective because the lead teacher "gave step-by-step directions for the first boxes and then released for the last box, she was enthusiastic and said, "Hooray 1st Grade"! It was also noted as positive by Olivia that the lead teacher "reminded students to raise their hands" and by Emma that she "kept students quiet". In addition, Melissa was described as, "walking around a lot and helping". Being helpful was noted as a strength of the preservice teacher as she delivered the lesson.

The preservice teachers discussed actions that controlled the classroom environment in a positive manner such as when Emma stated, "She called on a variety of people to come to the board, this was well done". Likewise Jennifer commended Melissa because she "had them pick the word, asked them to think about what it means, helped them with the definition, asked them where to write the definition, and then had a student draw a picture. Good job". She also said, the teacher "gave students a fixed amount of time for the 'you-do'. This kept them focused".

Positive teaching actions in relation to lesson delivery were named. Olivia named "think-alouds, modeling, and write-alouds" as well as "a lot of teacher prompting". Students choosing the vocabulary words and voting for the word to model were considered positive teaching actions, as Olivia said, "Word choice gave students a voice". In this first lesson, students were asked to identify all words in the story they did not know, and from that list of words they chose a word to interact with on the graphic organizer. In addition, to choosing the words, Emma also identified voting for the words as an effective teaching strategy because, "voting gave students a choice".

The preservice teachers made general observational statements about the relevance of positive teacher behaviors and actions in their debrief notes as the assistant principal, Mr. Mathews, made statements such as, "well planned lessons equals less behavior issues", and "quality lessons equals student achievement", in addition to, "an engaging lesson is good for all students". Each of the preservice teachers had these words written in their personal notes.

While there were many positive observational statements noted in regards to teaching actions, they also discussed areas of improvements. The first area of improvement discussed related to student engagement. Jennifer noted that during the focus instruction and guided practice that "it was hard to keep the students focused". Olivia asked, "How can we teach this *but* keep their attention the whole time? They were super squirmy". All of the preservice teachers agreed that they needed to "make it (the lesson) more engaging". Although, like naming teaching actions, they did not name a specific recommendation to achieve these goals.

A second area of the lesson that the preservice teachers discussed as in need of improvement was the ability of students to complete work independently. Olivia commented that, "the students were having real difficulty finishing the four-square by themselves". Jennifer wondered, "How do we make the 'you-do' actually 'you-do'". While Emma connected the ideas of more guided practice and the students' ability to complete independent work, and asked, "What if we added the collaborative piece. It was a big jump between the 'we-do' and the 'you-do.' They were overwhelmed and couldn't do the work on their own". One specific recommendation they made was related to the graphic organizer itself. They had noticed that students could create a sentence in relationship to the picture they had drawn of the vocabulary word and Melissa questioned, "Should we switch the order of the worksheet"?

At this point in the lesson study cycle, the preservice teachers were comfortable making general statements that named observed behaviors for teachers and students but made few explicit recommendations that connected teacher actions, student engagement, and the ability of students to complete the assignment.

Lesson Four

By the fourth and final lesson, the preservice teachers made many changes to improve the vocabulary lesson. The learning objective from the lesson plan now read, "Students will effectively practice using vocabulary squares to learn, remember, and understand vocabulary words". This objective changed the focus to effectively practicing using the graphic organizer. Based on their collaborative work, they chose a new book, *One Nighttime Sea* by Deborah Lee Rose (2003). This was a counting picture book with action words that corresponded to the animal portrayed on each page, for example "plunge", "jostle", and "explode". As Olivia, the lead teacher for this lesson, modeled instruction she used the pre-determined words in her instruction. The preservice teachers also planned appropriate synonyms and sentences before the lesson, and identified words that were not appropriate such as "hatchling, pups, and porpoise" (lesson plan 4). The order of the vocabulary square worksheet was changed and first instructed students to draw the picture. Finally, Olivia also led students in collaborative practice, the "you-do together" part of the lesson. The lesson plan instructed her to tell her students, "Let's do one more practice, this time you will work together as a team." Each group of four students completed a large graphic organizer on chart paper, prior to engaging in independent practice, or "you-do". Like the first lesson, the discussion during the final debrief session will also be described in two categories, lesson content and teaching actions.

The final lesson observation and debrief also focused on setting the purpose for learning and choosing effective instructional materials. For example, Melissa noted the lesson purpose was stronger. She explained this was because the students were told to, "listen for words we don't know", followed by an explanation of "why we do this strategy, a return to the lesson purpose". Emma, who noted the disconnected reading in the first lesson, commented that Olivia read "quickly and smoothly, and did not distract the students from focusing on words they did not know". Finally, the preservice teachers felt it was important to have the students' practice their new vocabulary words within the context of the book to re-enforce the learning. Melissa noted that Olivia "re-read the book at the end, this makes the learning authentic and brings the (purpose of the lesson) to life".

Unlike the first lesson, in this observation, determining if the lesson purpose was met was described in relationship to the student actions. During the observation, Olivia read an introductory paragraph that "had many advanced and unfamiliar words" and then explained to students that "good readers notice when they do not know words and figure out what they mean so they can understand what they are reading" (lesson plan 4). Melissa noticed that the students responded to the introductory paragraph by stating "it had a lot of big words we don't know", and named this as evidence that students understood the lesson focus. Another example of student engagement as evidence of understanding came from Emma, who noted that, "students were telling what the word means before they finished the strategy". Finally, Olivia felt successful because "the students were acting out the different words". These descriptions of students were different than the first lesson when calling on multiple students and maintaining a quiet environment was discussed as a strength.

Despite the improvements made, the preservice teachers still discussed ways that the lesson purpose could be more tightly connected to student needs. For example, Jennifer thought "the focus of the lesson needs to be even stronger because all students didn't know why they were learning the strategy". In addition the expectation that students understand why the vocabulary strategy would help them understand words from the read-aloud today, Melissa felt that students also "need to know why the strategy will help them as overall readers".

The preservice teachers also discussed the ways students were able to learn in relation to the new picture book chosen for this lesson. This book was chosen for the read aloud because it had intentional picture support for the verbs as vocabulary words (plunge, jostle, explode, nibble) a development beyond their initial plan to "change the book so there are not so many words they didn't know". The lesson plan stated that, "Before beginning the foursquare, she will make sure the students' see the illustration from the page on which the word appears. She will act out the vocabulary word". The observers watched for the enactment of these supports in the lesson and made comments such as those by Melissa, who noted that Olivia "emphasized the word in the sentence", and did a "good job defining words not appropriate for the strategy- butterflies, hatchling, porpoise". These types of observations were found across preservice teacher notes.

The vocabulary words and appropriate responses were chosen ahead of time and written into the lesson plan itself. For example, the word jostle was defined as "to push roughly", and many synonyms were listed such as, "crash, nudge, and push." A sentence relating to the students experiences was crafted, "To get to the football game, I had to jostle my way through the crowd", and a definition "a person pushing someone else", was decided on and stated in the lesson plan. While agreed upon responses had been planned, both Emma and Jennifer noted that Olivia changed the example for jostle and instead related to getting in line to go to lunch. Emma stated she "liked how you related jostle to lining up". Jennifer reflected the lining up example was better than the football game example because, "this made 'jostle' relevant for students". In this lesson the preservice teachers began to discuss that knowledge is not enough; teachers must also understand the ways they can use their knowledge to help students engage with learning objectives. For example Emma stated, "Teachers have to know words and they have to know how they relate to the focus for learning" (transcription of lesson debrief).

The graphic organizer itself was also changed in order to support students' ability to use the vocabulary square independently to learn more about words. For example in the lesson plan, the word "synonym" was replaced with the directive "Write a word that means the same thing". The word "definition" was replaced with the directive, "Write what the word means". The preservice teachers were pleased overall with the students' ability to draw a picture, write a sentence, and write a word that means the same thing. But, as Melissa noticed, the "definitions were hardest for the kids". While Jennifer reflected that there was a lot of scaffolding and prompting

for the definition and thought that for the learning to be truly successful, "the 'you-do' should be independent from start to finish". Emma noted that the students "were mixing the order up" on the vocabulary square and Olivia responded by asking, "Does it matter"? since the students were able to learn, remember, and understand new words.

Teaching actions

Similar to the first lesson cycle, in addition to discussing the lesson content, preservice teachers also discussed teaching actions they observed as part of the lesson. While non-specific praise was given, such as Emma's comment, "good think-aloud", teaching actions were often qualified in relationship to the lesson content and student reactions. For example, Melissa felt the read aloud was stronger in this last lesson because, "scaffolding was provided using picture clues to help students understand word meaning". As planned, Olivia modeled for her students how to use "context clues" from the story, once they had identified words they did not know. This identification of words was purposeful, as the lesson plan stated that during the guided instruction, or "we-do," that "The teacher will reread another page from the story with the second difficult vocabulary word (jostle)". This was different than the first lesson because instead of the students identifying words and then the lead teacher filling in the graphic organizer, words were intentionally pre-planned and the modeling included how to use the context of the story to understand more about words in order to fill in the organizer.

In addition to the read-aloud, the actions of the lead teacher, Olivia, were described in relation to student engagement. These actions included, "explicit modeling" for students. This was noted as a positive by Jennifer because, "the students stayed focused, they knew what to do." Management tasks were also discussed in relation to intentional teaching actions that supported student engagement. This included an observation by Emma that, "giving rules for supplies was effective, it prevented student distraction during the lesson", and qualified the management task as important because it helped students learn. As Melissa stated, the question for a teacher is really, "What can I do? How can I push this learning more? How can I get the kids to understand?" (Transcription of lesson debrief).

While teaching actions themselves were debated, the actions of students were also discussed. Melissa counted the number of student hands raised during independent practice time; she counted 12, as a way to determine if students were able to engage effectively in the learning task as a result of instruction. This was much less than the 20 questions asked by students during the first lesson, a number tallied by the assistant principal, Mr. Matthews. While the preservice teachers were initially alarmed by the number of raised hands, this soon changed as the conversation continued. Olivia noticed that, "the students weren't asking what to do, they wanted to know if they did it right". This led to a discussion about student autonomy and Jennifer queried, "How do we help students know when their work is good enough"?

Many of the ideas for improvement in this final lesson were focused on helping the students know when their learning was "good enough" and their answers were correct. For instance, Emma made suggestions that included, "give specific feedback to students" and "more wait time would let students think". For Melissa, more think time was also needed during the guided and collaborative practice. She noticed that Olivia was "scaffolding using the picture and reminding students how to know what the word means", but she moved to the next box before the students had time to think. Supporting students in gaining confidence in their learning also included actions taken before students were asked to complete work on their own.

For example, Jennifer noted that during the guided instruction, or "we-do", students could "tell the teacher where to put the words (on the organizer) and how they know".

The discussion also centered on ways to break the learning into smaller parts that may be more manageable for students. First, Jennifer thought the lesson could be improved if the teacher were to "bring the whole group back together during the collaborative work to discuss before moving on to the next steps". They discussed that this extra step would help confirm the students work as they progressed through their group practice. Next, Melissa suggested they could, "possibly teach this in multiple mini-lessons, one for each step, and then tie it together at the end" because "students got a little lost with all four steps". She felt that breaking the lesson up would also help as, "the individual steps need to be stronger" and give students extended practice over time to help students "be certain about what to do".

Discussion

The analysis of preservice teacher lesson study artifacts led to greater understandings of the ways that lesson study supports preservice teacher learning as part of a clinical field placement at a PDS. As preservice teachers engaged in lesson study, they constructed new understandings of what it means to plan and implement a lesson. Two themes were identified from the data that capture these preservice teachers' learning through lesson study: (1) Planning with Intentionality, and (2) Engaging students as learners.

As they engaged in collective discussion, the preservice teachers constructed an understanding of lesson planning as an intentional teaching act that includes developing purposeful lesson content that embraces students as part of the learning.

By engaging in the lesson study process, the preservice teacher observations and discussions led them to develop more purposeful lesson content. This content included the construction and communication of a clearly defined focus for the lesson, pre-determination of vocabulary words and examples, and a picture book that enabled the lead teacher to model the vocabulary strategy for students. Constructing a clearly defined lesson focus was an important mechanism that enabled the preservice teachers to define and communicate the lesson intent for themselves and their students. The preservice teachers also became purposeful in choosing words for the strategy. Instead of students voting for words that may or may not have clearly defined synonyms, such as "wispy" and "bared", the preservice teachers chose verbs that had explicit synonyms and were easily acted out by the lead teacher. In addition, with the new book choice, the lead teacher was able to intentionally model how to use contextual clues from the story to figure out the meaning of the word. As the iterative cycle progressed, the lesson became less about completing the organizer and more about engaging students with the meaning of words in purposeful and intentional ways.

This new way of thinking about the connection between lessons and students was encapsulated by Olivia who reflected after the final lesson and said:

I have always taught and tried to make my kids get the lesson. But, I should be thinking about my kids and planning a lesson to help my kids. With this (lesson study) we took a lesson and it didn't bomb, but it didn't go so well and we didn't go to each individual kid and force the lesson on them. That doesn't make any sense, that wouldn't work. We went back and we changed the lesson to fit our kids (transcription of lesson debrief).

As the lesson became more focused on purposeful engagement with the meaning of words, students became more intentionally included in the learning process. The preservice teachers began engaging their students as learners by making the learning accessible to students and fostering student independence. They made the learning accessible to students by ensuring the language used with students was consistent and student-friendly. For instance in the first lesson the preservice teachers discussed the use of consistent language, "we're looking for words we don't know" so that students could easily engage with the lesson. The preservice teachers also changed the graphic organizer in order to make the learning content accessible to their students. The graphic organizer headings were altered to reflect student friendly language, such as "write what the word means" instead of the title, "definition". In addition students were asked to illustrate the vocabulary word first. This allowed the preservice teachers to model for students how to use illustrations from the picture book and the graphic organizer to learn more about the vocabulary words. Similar to the choice of verbs that could be acted out, the use of illustrations engaged the students in learning and showed them how to do the task on their own.

Once the preservice teachers had tightened the learning focus and made the content accessible, they addressed helping students gain independence as learners. For example, by the final lesson, the lead teacher modeled using the vocabulary square to learn about words, the students practiced once with support of the lead teacher, then the students practiced in groups of four. This repeated practice allowed the students multiple occasions to gain success with the strategy before being asked to try the task on their own. In addition, the preservice teachers noted that specific feedback and more wait time would give the students opportunities to think about their learning. Finally, the preservice teachers debated the value in teaching the model itself in multiple mini-lessons over time in order for students to develop certainty as learners. As Jennifer reflected at the end of the five week cycle, "My students need to know that they can do it, and have self confidence in knowing they can do it. That's what's important, that's just part of good teaching" (transcription of lesson debrief).

The understandings that were constructed by preservice teachers as they engaged in the lesson study process are examples of the ways that coursework can be intentionally connected to fieldwork in order to help prospective teachers meet the needs of the students they teach.

Conclusion

This study revealed that lesson study as a part of preservice teacher learning during clinical field placements led to greater understandings of the ways teachers purposefully prepare for lessons and engage students as learners. While more research needs to be done to understand lesson study and the value it holds for preservice teacher learning, this article provides evidence that lesson study holds promise as a mechanism to support preservice teachers as they begin to "connect what they learn with the challenge of using it" (NCATE, 2010, p.ii). As such, lesson study is one way to forge a common ground for connecting theory and practice across coursework and field experiences in ways that support preservice teachers as they learn to apply academic knowledge and pedagogy to meet student learning needs.

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Reports and Reviews

REVIEW OF ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH POVERTY IN MIND: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR RAISING ACHIEVEMENT, Eric Jensen, 2013, Alexandria, VA: ASCD, paper, 176 pages.
by
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Eric Jensen provides some hints and strategies for dealing with the special and difficult problems our poorer students bring to the classroom. The number of students living in poverty has grown exponentially, yet many educators are not aware of the realities. Jensen shows a good understanding of some of the difficulties and challenges students face, and he uses a research basis in this text.

This text has appeared at an opportune time, indeed, one in which the number of persons on the streets has risen, a huge number of families rely on food stamps and free lunches, and the homes of many families have been boarded up for a number of years, with most people not able to afford a house and the original occupants of those dwellings now living with relatives, in shelters, or in their cars. The number of unemployed and underemployed is astoundingly high. Workers have in many cases given up even looking for work. They are not counted in the artificially-reduced number of unemployed in our nation.

All of that having been said, the question is, "How do we begin to help students who face the stressors of hunger, despair, and stigma each day?" Jensen shows the data from research on these students, starting with health and nutrition issues and ranging to the stress levels and daily hassles students face. These and five other areas constitute the seven types of challenges facing students living in poverty, though I would suggest many of our students, in addition to teachers and teacher candidates, face many of these same difficulties. Jensen calls these "the seven engagement factors," and the other ones are: vocabulary; effort and energy; mind-set; cognitive capacity; and relationships.

Jensen bases his approach here more on the stressors facing poor students and less on technical information about the poverty numbers and facts out there. For that technical data, we would have to go to other sources. Jensen proposes "five rules for engagement" for teachers to employ in the classroom as a means of getting poorer students involved: upgrade your attitude; build relationships & respect; get buy-in; embrace clarity; and show your passion. Though I think these are good to use with any student, they seem to make sense in dealing with students who face the hassles and challenges of living with poverty on a daily basis, a seemingly unrelenting set of difficulties. Clarity is important, for example, because students living in poverty are often hungry and tired, and they need straightforward definitions and examples, in addition to encouragement and a positive learning environment.

Jensen acknowledges hunger and stress and the power they hold over students. He reminds us that students should be treated with dignity, and that they are the reason we have a job. The students are the future of our country, Jensen reminds us, not prison inmates. Students living in poverty, especially, come to school wondering if someone there cares about them, wondering if they are important. They may have difficulty concentrating, and difficulty feeling that the school day may offer something interesting and relevant in a world that may have forgotten them. Younger people, especially, have trouble making sense of a world in which there is so much hunger.

I will never forget one day when I was teaching at my first job in a community college. This was years ago, in the time when there was more money out there. One day on campus there was a special picnic. Hot dogs and chips were being served outdoors. For a few cents, students could buy a whole lunch. A student who had taken my English 101 class the previous semester came up to me at the campus picnic and begged me for 50 cents, saying he had not eaten in two days. I did not hesitate to give him the money. I told him to come to me anytime he was in that situation.

If Jensen's book is to be used in a topics class on dealing with poverty issues or other such use, including professional development meetings or retreats, I would definitely recommend one or more additional texts with more specific information on poverty be included. One good additional text would be: *Poverty in America: A Handbook,* Third Edition, 2013, by John Iceland. Another good text would be: *Someplace Like America: Tales from the New Great Depression,* Updated Edition, 2013, by Dale Maharidge, Photographs by Michael S. Williamson. These could both provide more of the technical information not included in the Jensen text. In summary, I would recommend this text because of the good teaching strategies and scenarios included. I think most of what Jensen includes is good information for working with any student, and certainly any student facing stressful situations.

REVIEW OF PUBLIC EDUCATION UNDER SIEGE, edited by Michael B. Katz and Mike Rose. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: ASCD. Paper, 2013, 247 pages.
by
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The editors have gathered here 23 readings on a wide variety of topics related to the attacks on public education. The readings are written from different perspectives, but all of the writers are educators who have strong opinions about what schools should do and be. We learn a great deal from hearing what these teachers, administrators, researchers, and consultants have to say about the current siege.

The writers of the articles generally agree that it is unfair for teachers to be held responsible for the main outcome of school: students' ability to hold a job. This at least seems to be the way to boil down what the public thinks schools should be doing and what non-educators are pushing for. The writers acknowledge the many disconnects, ranging from variables such as absent parents to poverty and from the lack of resources to the lack of community support. However, the writers do not coddle other educators.

One example of the straightforward tone taken on by some of the writers here is the way one expert notes that some school members want parents involved, but only in a peripheral way. Some teachers and administrators seem to want to hear from parents, but they assign them a second-class position in the education of the children. Some parents want a much greater role in the schools.

In Chicago and some other large cities, parents do indeed have a central role on various governing boards and school councils. The mayor is the person in charge of some of these school districts, and educators have learned not only to wear more hats, but to wear them in a different way.

The book is pro-teacher and shows the importance of getting results in a school but not at the cost of scrapping good teaching, essential subjects, and the whole reason we are in education: to teach students. The readings provide more than one perspective on teacher unions, and more than one point of view about standards and testing. All educators want students to set and embrace goals, all educators want students to learn something. There are just different ways to measure and value what students are doing each day in school.

There is a very informed reading on the beginning and maintenance of a charter school focused on environmental studies. It is very interesting to read why the teachers and administrators in this building prefer working for a charter school. There is another reading that tells of some of the evils of charter schools. Katz and Rose give us two very different points of view to consider.

I recommend this book for courses related to the current American schools and to foundations in social components of schools. Experienced educators can benefit from the different perspectives expressed. The book could be used in such courses, and also in longer professional development sessions. It can stimulate some lively discussions, I think.

The book could also be good for newer teachers or for teacher candidates. In fact, there is a chapter specifically for new teachers—it contains great hints. For example, new teachers are urged to seek out and learn from "good teachers" in the school. And to buy them coffee.

Who does not want a cup of coffee?