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“The Heart of a Teacher: Innovate, Integrate, Motivate, Celebrate!”

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Building Connections Between Pre-Service Educators and Middle School Students: Designing Meaningful Learning Opportunities Through *I Am Malala*

Anne Katz and Lynn Roberts,
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In order to design curriculum that is relevant, engaging, and meets the needs of accreditation agencies in the field of education, such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, faculty in the Armstrong State University College of Education are examining how they can transform their current course of instruction to emphasize more real-world practices. This will allow them to better prepare students for the demands of twenty-first century teaching. The collaboration described in this article addresses this need by providing freshmen pre-service teacher education candidates enrolled in Education 2110: Investigating Critical and Contemporary Issues in Education with knowledge and practice directly related to authentic community-based literacy learning. Specifically, Armstrong students enrolled in this course wrote letters, met, dialogued, and exchanged journals with middle school students involved in the “Teens for Literacy” program at a high-needs school in the Savannah-Chatham County School System. Middle school students subsequently visited the college campus, where university students designed a meaningful learning experience and led the class session.

Goals and Objectives

For faculty to be effective in supporting students’ learning, they must connect with

Association of American College and University tenets that “broaden students’ perspectives and engage them in problem-centered inquiry about pressing and perennial issues. By bringing students into communities where they learn from those whose experiences and views (may be) different from their own, it also builds important capacities we need to succeed as a diverse and collaborative democracy” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2015). The purpose of this collaboration was to provide teacher candidates with a meaningful opportunity to interact with local public school students in conjunction with the university’s Common Read text, *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* (Yousafzai, 2013). Candidates are not currently given the opportunity to interact with students in an authentic manner before they are expected to observe and teach in the field.

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities text *General Education Transformed: How We Can, How We Must* (Gaston, 2015), “Too many students experience general education not as a conspicuously useful and meaningful component of a coherent baccalaureate education, but as a curricular impediment that they must ‘get out of the way’ prior to study in a major. . . . They may be unable to visualize a meaningful trajectory in their curriculum, with an attendant loss

of motivation and commitment to persist” (p. 5). By providing students with direct experience in dialoguing with middle school students about the Young Readers’ edition, *I am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World* (Yousafzai, 2015) and the issues presented in the book, this project assists the College of Education at Armstrong State University with accomplishing its strategic goal of providing transformative student learning experiences and retaining students in the College of Education.

Participants

Middle School Students

Thirteen middle school students are chosen every year to serve as a literacy leadership team at an urban K-8 public school. The students participate in a variety of literacy-focused activities, such as a recent Banned Book Week field trip to the local public library, during which they researched and read excerpts from once-censored literature to library patrons. Other projects include the creation of video book trailers and introduction of local children’s book authors to the school community. Middle school students have strengthened their literacy skills and displayed growth as leaders, creative thinkers and public speakers. As the year evolves, Armstrong students are invited to serve as volunteers and mentor for various literacy initiatives.

College of Education “Living-Learning” Community Students

In a Living-Learning Community(LLC), students with similar interests and goals have the opportunity to live together and study together in the context of university housing. Students apply for a Living-Learning Community on their housing application. The College of Education LLC is designed especially for students who are interested in becoming teachers or have career goals that involve working with children. Students have access to a designated advisor as well as faculty and student mentors to help with homework or other academic and “college-negotiating” issues.

As a component of the university’s “Navigate” orientation sessions, students are provided with information about the LLC and can register for a special section of EDUC 2110 Investigating Critical

and Contemporary Issues in Education. This foundation course presents an overview of issues facing the field of professional educators, including social and political contexts of education settings in Georgia and the United States. The course provides an introduction to the use of research to support practice through an investigation of essential philosophical questions and current educational issues. Students connect these studies to reflections on their own practice as they develop skills of analysis and argumentation. This particular section is a hybrid, flipped classroom format and includes students with an interest in Early Childhood, Middle Grades, and Health and Physical Education. In fall 2015, there were ten female students in the College of Education LLC. All were from the state of Georgia, with the majority from the surrounding areas of Atlanta.

Typically, no field experience is required for this course. However, Armstrong students gained the added benefit of applying theory to practice during this past fall semester. One of this year’s highlights involved 10 first-year students from the College of Education’s LLC, an innovative program headed by Assistant Professor of Health and Physical Education Lynn Roberts. “I believe that the program will foster success in my field,” said Taiylar Hibbard, a member of the Living Learning Community who aspires to be a health and physical education teacher. “It emphasizes the points that are made in our lessons,” helping students make real-world connections.

Activities and Methods

This collaboration entailed hands-on, authentic training on literature discussions around a young education activist for 10 Armstrong College of Education teacher candidates and 13 middle school students from a local urban K-8 public school.

Pen-Pal Dialogue and College Student Visit to Middle School

Armstrong students spent the semester exchanging pen pal letters with middle school student literacy leaders, sharing insights about school, reading, writing, college life, and the Young Reader’s middle school edition of the Common Read book *I Am Malala*. For example, one college student shared, “Even though I am a long way from home, I am enjoying college. . . . As I was reading your letter, I noticed you mentioned you like

to read. Reading and writing is very important so continue to do so. It will pay off in the end. You like to write poems so you should write me one. I enjoy reading poems. My favorite poem is 'And Still I Rise' by Maya Angelou.

The middle school student shared,

We read Malala's idea of making the world a better place. My idea of making the world a better place is to end poverty . . . put the homeless in a home and give them the education they never had. Nobody will have to fend for themselves. . . . I will also give pets from the shelter [to those] who dream of having a real family. What is your idea of a better world?

Both students were engaging in writing for an authentic audience and sharing valuable insights.

University students visited the school in October. "We discussed not only the Malala book, but also shared reflections on our experiences as students," says Jasmin Laney, an early childhood education major. "The visit was very successful. We had the opportunity to put a face with a letter and to encourage one another in future scholastic pursuits." Another student noted the following in her final reflection journal:

I believe that working with the book, *I Am Malala*, was the right choice and added to the experience. It introduced the students to another culture that they may not have known a lot about. More importantly, it introduced a current world issue that they may not have taken a deeper look into without the book or the program. Also, *I Am Malala* allows them to gain another perspective on a world issue, one that is not very well known or talked about. Plus, it opened up another of genre of literature that they may not have been introduced to before. When I was their age, I was not very interested into nonfiction books; I preferred fiction. It is good to introduce them to different genres early in their academic career.

Middle School Student Visit to University Campus

In November, the middle school students visited the university. The field trip began with a campus tour led by the College of Education

students, highlighting the university's Learning Commons study center, university buildings, the Student Union Center, and the campus library. This visit provided an opportunity for the students to have a window into the college experience from the perspective of a college student. An Armstrong student reflected on the visit afterwards by noting,

When we were giving the tour around campus and explaining what classes were in the different buildings, I heard many of them making comments like, "I'll have lots of classes in the science building because I want to be a biologist." and "That looks like a cool place to study." They were so excited to tour campus, and I believe it was a wonderful experience for them.

Following the tour, College of Education students led an hour and fifteen minute course, with all activities designed by these future educators. Professor Roberts opened by welcoming the "Teens for Literacy" group to the Critical and Contemporary Issues in Education course. They began with an outside team-building, icebreaker activity entitled "Connections," led by the university students, in which each individual described an interesting fact or talent and linked with someone who shared that item.

In order to build upon the reading of *I Am Malala*, students shared a video link from *The Daily Show* (Comedy Central, 2013). This was followed by a discussion of the video clip, in which university students guided the middle school students to discuss Malala Yousafzai's memories of the Taliban's rise to power in her Pakistani hometown. The college students also discussed Malala's suggestions for Americans who would like to assist overseas and the importance of education.

The discussion was followed by an interactive "chart talk" activity with post-it notes in order for students to reflect upon how their opinions about the value of education evolved since reading and listening to Malala's story. Three large sheets of chart paper were introduced and displayed; students' responses for each of the chart talk activities included the following quotations:

"How has your opinion of education changed?"

- My opinion on education has changed. I feel like kids should value education because some kids don't get it, but it is so important in life.

- I used to believe that education was important, but now I believe that it's really important because some people don't have access to it.
- I think education is important. I used to think it was boring and just something we had to do. Now, I see how it can transform.
- I feel as though education is power because without education, we will not be able to advance in our life such as being able to know how to use technology.
- Education is fun. Learn more and be somebody.

"I believe in . . ."

- freedom of expression.
- treating everyone fairly and equally.
- changing things up and being myself.
- myself . . . showing good examples to small children.
- I believe that no matter what race or gender, everyone deserves a free education.

"I would stand up for . . ."

- anyone being bullied.
- my family.
- all the kids that need education.
- the value of education.
- myself and my dreams. I will let nothing get in my way of achieving greatness.

The final activity centered on "I Am From" poems, inspired by George Ella Lyon's "Where I'm From" template (1999). Students were provided with sample sentence starters to spark their poetry writing:

- I am from _____ (an everyday item in your house)
- I am from _____ (detail about home-smell, taste, or feel)
- I am from _____ (plant or flower)
- I am from _____ (family tradition/family trait/family habit)
- I am from _____ (family members)
- I am from _____ (things you were told as a child)
- I am from _____ (family foods)
- I am from _____ (family ancestry/nationality/place)
- I am from _____ (family mementos, pictures, treasures)
- I am from _____ (song or saying)

The college students and middle school students conferenced and chatted as they drafted their poems. The class concluded with all parties sharing their poems at the front of the classroom; each middle school student departed with a campus map and brochure of university programs as well as a hard copy of the Young Reader's edition of *I Am Malala* to take home as a keepsake.

Evaluation and Reflections

This pilot project provided the opportunity for authentic feedback from Armstrong teacher education candidates and middle school students, as well as public school administration and College of Education faculty. Middle school students were able to meaningfully interact with future educators, learn what it means to be a college student, dialogue about a meaningful text, and envision a future as a college student. College counselors and the school principal expressed the value of this initiative for their school population.

In addition, this collaboration provided insight into the placement of authentic learning in the College of Education curriculum. "Teens for Literacy" provides a meaningful platform for Armstrong students to participate in and support community literacy endeavors. Future educators in the LLC were provided with a platform to apply their textbook learning and place their classroom discussion of theory into practice. A College of Education student noted the value of the initiative for fostering a genuine interest in reading as she stated the following:

Our goal for the students was to help foster a healthy love and respect for reading. Today, with electronics and the Internet, books are becoming very obsolete, very quickly. After high school, the majority of graduates never read a book again and that is a shame. Hopefully, we helped the students to understand that reading is amazing. I firmly believe that it is one of the best skills you can give anyone. If you give someone money, that gets spent and it is gone. If you give someone things, they get old, broken, or stolen. But if you teach someone to love reading, that can never really be taken away from them. Hopefully we planted a seed for that love of reading.

Another student voiced these sentiments in her final reflective journal:

I think the “Teens for Literacy” program allowed us to gain first-hand experience with these middle schoolers . . . and to see what it was like to connect with them. The teens were able to gain a relationship with college students and get a glimpse of what our class is like and what college is like in general. I think (and hope) that I impacted my pen pal Kayla by writing her letters. I just wanted to encourage her and get to know her as well as I could. I think *I Am Malala* was a good reference to have because her story is so impactful and relevant to all of our lives. It is inspiring to read whether you are in middle school, college, or are a teacher/professor.

This high-quality learning experience for candidates will help better prepare them for their future careers and connect them to community schools. The scholarship of teaching and learning utilizes student feedback to continually improve teaching and learning experiences (Horspool & Lange, 2012). Many candidates have expressed that they could benefit from more authentic teaching and learning experiences prior to formally entering the College of Education. One of the key elements of the scholarship of teaching and learning is the continuous improvement of the practice of a discipline (Schulman, 2000). The goal of this community-based literacy project was to address the concerns of the candidates as well as facilitate the College of Education faculty’s knowledge base. As evidenced in the chronicles of this article, we took meaningful strides toward achieving both of these goals.

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Learning Outcomes and Initiative Development in Teacher Candidates from Professional Development School-Based and Traditional Cohorts

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Introduction

Different pathways to certification have led to a re-examination of teacher education programs. Currently, there exist over 100 alternative paths to certification; most of these provide shorter programs with more intense workloads than do traditional programs (NCEI, 2005; O'Connor, Marlow, & Bisland, 2011). Students seeking alternative routes to teacher certification may fill shortages more quickly than those pursuing traditional undergraduate and/or graduate study in teacher education. Traditional teacher education programs utilize a variety of strategies and theories in the preparation of teachers (Kozleski, Sobel, & Taylor, 2003; Sleeter & Grant, 2007). In addition to coursework, preservice teachers complete field experiences in area public schools. At one institution of higher education, teaching faculty have also traditionally supervised interns in the field placement. The dual role of course instructor and field supervisor facilitated faculty engagement with local schools. Beyond that, this College of Education faculty viewed their role as primarily one of guide and instructor; college faculty typically did not have detailed or intimate knowledge of specific initiatives or professional learning activities taking place at area field sites. Surveys of inservice teachers who completed traditional teacher education programs indicated teachers selected a traditional teacher education program based on factors including the program

philosophy advertised by the college, the length of time allotted for program completion, and the availability of graduate degree programs (Sandoval-Lucero, Shanklin, Townsend, Davis, & Kalisher, 2011).

A more recent adaptation to the traditional model of teacher education is the Professional Development School (PDS) model; this model is based on collaborative partnerships between university faculty, Pre-K or K-12 teachers and administrators, and teacher education candidates (Breault & Lack, 2009; NCATE, 2008; Polly, Frazier, Hopper, Chapman, & Wells, 2012). The PDS model has been shown to improve teacher preparation and subsequent K-12 student learning (Henry et al., 2012). Undergraduate students who are part of a PDS consistently score higher on planning, instruction, management, and assessment than do students who are not part of these models (Polly et al., 2012). A distinguishing characteristic of the PDS model is that opportunities for direct connections between theory and practice are purposefully created through collaboration between higher education and K-5 partners (Behrens & Sorenson, 2011; Breault & Lack, 2009). For example, in response to the increasing number of children and families who are English learners, teacher education programs now address issues related to teaching children from ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2000; Knight & Wiseman, 2005). For this institution, pre-service teachers working in one PDS site receive extensive field experience

working with English learners and connect their field work with course content (Reece & Nodine, 2014). In PDSs, greater access for research and pilot projects is often given to higher education partners; this access affords more opportunity for field experiences tailored to the unique learning needs of children from diverse backgrounds.

Evidence exists that pre-service teachers in PDSs achieve better outcomes for their students than do pre-service teachers in traditional model teacher preparation programs when they are teachers of record or while in field placement (Theiss & Grigsby, 2010; Wong & Glass, 2011). In addition to documented academic gains for their students, PDS candidates are rated or self-rate higher on efficacy scales and have a greater sense of professional identity, as well as rating lower on stress (Castle & Reilly, 2011). Castle and Reilly reviewed eleven research studies that addressed teacher development in PDS models and concluded that PDS candidates were better able to apply their content and pedagogical knowledge; used more varied teaching methods; were more effective than traditional students at all aspects of instruction including planning, motivation, classroom management, and assessment; and were more focused on student needs, more reflective of their own learning, more understanding of the content of learning beyond the classroom, more confident in their knowledge and skills, more prepared to teach students from diverse populations, and generally more prepared for teaching.

The majority of the research conducted in professional development settings indicated positive relationships between PDSs and student teacher knowledge in the classroom and greater self-efficacy than typically found in traditional teacher preparation programs. This study considered both the self-efficacy of the student teachers and the increased professional knowledge of curricular issues over the course of one academic semester, as well as a brief background on the teacher education program (the pilot project that became the Happy Valley Professional Development School Model) and the serendipitous research project that grew from the lead author teaching two child development classes to two cohorts with differing opportunities for learning and practice.

Teacher Education Program and PDS Development

The university in this study has a student body of over 6,000 students, primarily traditional college students, who are residential students eighteen to twenty-two years old and attending college full time. The university was chartered in 1873 to serve Appalachian Mountain populations, and the communities surrounding the university are characterized by growing Hispanic populations and rural poverty. For the purpose of this research, economic poverty is measured by the number of students at a particular school who qualify to receive free and reduced breakfast and lunch. The average rates of free and reduced lunches range from 31% to 95%, with an average rate of 61.4% (Hall County Family Connection Network, 2013). The population of public school students in this geographical region faces increased academic risk due to poverty and language barriers (University of North Georgia, 2012; United States Census, 2012).

The teacher education program at this institution accepts approximately 100 Early Childhood Education/Special Education candidates into the program each fall. Although additional programs in middle, secondary, and graduate education also are offered, this research focuses only on the learning outcomes of two cohorts in the dual certification Early Childhood/Special Education (ECE/SPED) undergraduate program. The ECE/SPED program is highly regarded locally and regionally; in the six-year history of participation in a PDS model, more than 60% of the seniors received job offers before the completion of their final semester, and nearly all the graduating seniors had job offers before the start of the school year (University of North Georgia, 2013).

The pilot PDS collaboration began as a partnership with the Sunnydale County, Georgia school system. Sunnydale County comprises one of the largest and most rapidly growing Hispanic populations in the state; this population struggles with issues of language barriers as well as gang violence and drug trafficking (University of North Georgia, 2012). The school system consists of 20 elementary schools with a total enrollment of 25,807. Fifty-nine percent of the students receive free or reduced lunches and 37% of the overall population consists of Hispanic families (Baldwin

& Covert, 2012). Twenty-five percent of families report speaking a language other than English at home, and 35% of the families with children under age 14 live below the poverty line (Hall County Family Connection Network, 2013; United States Census, 2012).

In 2008, the Dean of the College of Education, two university faculty members, and an elementary school principal piloted a unique PDS collaboration with a dual-language (Spanish-English) immersion school in Sunnydale County. Interns volunteering to complete their field experiences within this new model participated in longer field placements and increased professional development activities with school faculty (Baldwin & Covert, 2012; Reece & Roberts, 2012). Due to the tremendous success of the initial pilot, four more schools were added to the partnership within three years. An essential piece of the PDS was that preservice teachers attended classes on site, and PDS partner school faculty members served as guest speakers and presenters in methods classes. With both field experiences and courses being held in partner schools along with collaboration and shared teaching between university faculty and PDS partners, more opportunities were available for students to make connections between theory and practice (Baldwin & Covert, 2012; Behrens & Sorenson, 2011). Subsequently, course key assessments were re-designed to reflect this authentic field placement learning (Reece & Roberts, 2012).

This collaborative partnership among the university faculty, elementary school personnel, and students is unique in several ways. The focus of the PDS was originally the dual-immersion language component guiding intern relationships, interactions with mentor teachers and children, and instructional techniques. The school administrators, dual language coordinator, and literacy coach shared expertise with the interns during regular class meetings. Research-based assignments focusing on partner school initiatives were added to the traditional coursework; students were given multiple opportunities to practice literacy, math, and science teaching while mentors, professors, and administrators provided feedback. The goal of such intimate collaboration was to better prepare monolingual preservice teachers to work effectively with children and

parents of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. School administrators and mentor teachers met regularly with faculty to collaborate on literacy initiatives, and professional learning was determined at each site based on the needs of the participants. For example, one administrator at a partner school with high poverty and Limited English Proficiency students requested help in providing additional social studies instruction. As a result, a two-week intensive “Social Studies Blitz” was created when student interns volunteered following the end of the semester to teach social studies vocabulary and content to children (Reece & Roberts, 2012; Reece & Nodine, 2014).

Preservice teachers attended all school and system-based professional learning opportunities throughout the year, typically alongside their mentor teachers, which further strengthened that relationship and heightened their sense of awareness of what their individual professional learning needs may be. Student teachers were also involved in a variety of school settings, such as an Arts Academy, Technology Academy, Creative School of Inquiry, and Bilingual Language Academy, which provided a feel for future teaching experiences and the different situations they may encounter in the schools. Involvement in professional learning opportunities and school-sponsored activities outside of the classroom reinforced the role of flexibility in their work, which was also demonstrated in classroom behavior.

Methodology

First semester juniors in the Early Childhood Education/Special Education teacher preparation program are enrolled in several methods classes, including an introductory Childhood Development course. This course includes typical development in all domains from pre-natal to adolescence. During the fall of 2011, the lead author taught this course on-site in the elementary schools with one class of 21 students and on campus with 28 students. The on-site class was a PDS teacher preparation model, and the campus students were part of a traditional teacher education model.

During the 2011-2012 transition from a traditional program and a PDS pilot cohort to a full PDS model, the College of Education included one cohort pursuing a traditional teacher

education model. This model involved all coursework being delivered on the university campus, and student field placement consisted of approximately 12 hours each week in elementary school classrooms. In contrast, PDS students spent between 24 and 30 hours a week in the school, involved in teaching, participating in faculty meetings, attending and leading professional development learning opportunities, and meeting with parents. Faculty researchers were interested in discovering if the students who spent substantially more time in the schools and participated in more varied activities would make greater gains in content knowledge and pedagogy than students who spent a limited number of hours in the classroom.

During the first three years of the PDS experience, many anecdotal examples of the heightened learning of the teacher preparation students occurred; however, the demands of program development limited the development of a cohesive research project comparing student learning in two settings. Having two groups of similar students learning in two distinctly different settings allowed for a deeper examination of the impact of a PDS model on undergraduate content knowledge and pedagogy development. The students had no prior academic background in child development knowledge; therefore, a pre- and post-test of child development knowledge was developed. The questions reflected information students could potentially learn in the classroom, in their placement settings, or in both places. We included a locus of control study to investigate the role of efficacy in student development, and as a third measure, final course grades were included to evaluate the results of each model.

Participants

The students enrolled in the university reflect the typical pool of teacher candidates in America. Eighty-six percent of the student body is white, and the majority of the students in the teacher preparation are female. For this study all participants were white, 47 students were female, 2 were males, and the average age was 21. These class demographics were similar to other semesters. The instructor had previous experience with approximately half of the

students in each class, having worked with them in pre-education courses.

One important characteristic that distinguished these two groups of students was self-selection. At the time of this study, the PDS model was still being piloted; therefore, students could choose to attend the PDS or remain on campus for the traditional educational experience. Students were given information about both programs prior to registration.

Data Sources

Several data sources were included in this study. Pre- and post-tests of general child development questions were developed and administered to the two groups of students on the first and last days of the semester. Questions were divided into those that students could most easily learn while in the child development class (e.g., Describe the levels of play), those that students could most easily learn in their field placement classroom (e.g., Give examples of how you would recognize social skills in four year olds), and those that could be learned in either setting (e.g., Define discipline and explain what methods have been shown to be successful in teaching children to be self-disciplined). Topics included recognizing pre-reading and math skills, social studies and science concepts, social skills, nutrition, fine and gross motor skills, environmental influences on health, social and emotional development, levels of play, discipline, and choosing playmates.

The Locus of Control scale, developed by Nowicki and Strickland (1974) was used to assess the self-efficacy of the students. Locus of control is the belief of how much power a person has over the events in his or her life and helps to explain one's traits and behaviors. An internal locus of control is the belief that the course of one's life is mainly in the control of the individual. People with higher scores on the scale tend to believe that life events just happen and that their behavior has little effect on events. We were interested to investigate whether there were differences between the students who chose either of the teacher preparation models with regard to locus of control aspects.

Course grades were also included as an assessment of learning. The key assessment in the Childhood Development course was an

extensive case study. The case study required students to gain parental permission to observe the child, complete several developmental checklists, obtain samples of children's work and provide analysis of the work, report and analyze all areas of development (social, emotional, physical, cognitive, language), and make final recommendations for optimal learning experiences for the child.

This case study assessment, coupled with a pre-kindergarten observation, allowed students to articulate the value of early childhood care and education to children's cognitive and social-emotional development, provided students an opportunity to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding about child development, allowed them to recognize the role of cultural and socioeconomic factors on a child's development, and allowed them to consider the role of heredity, prenatal, and neonatal influences on development. Students demonstrated competency in basic research, identified developmental and learning challenges, and identified appropriate methods for addressing children's special needs.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this quantitative study consisted of a comparison of final course grades, a comparison of locus of control groups, and a

comparison of pre- and post-test scores for the traditional and PDS models of students. SPSS 22.0 was utilized to analyze the data.

Findings

Pre-and Post-test

The students in the PDS cohort improved their scores for all questions related to child development knowledge to a greater degree than did the campus based traditional cohort, as can be seen in Table 1. The difference in scores on science concepts, muscle concepts, environmental factors, and knowledge of play, discipline, and friendship were noticeably higher. These were some of the questions that could be more easily answered with experience in the classroom and from meeting with families, leading to the tentative conclusion that more time in the classroom with elementary school children and time with their families led to greater understanding of child development topics and the interrelationship between family life and learning.

The PDS cohort scored slightly higher on the pre-test, with an overall average of 3.6 incorrect responses, while the traditional cohort scored an average of 4.2 incorrect responses. The post-test scores are markedly dissimilar, with the PDS cohort scoring an average of .15 incorrect responses and the traditional cohort scoring an average of 1.7 incorrect responses.

Table 1
Independent T-Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test

Variables	Pre-Test				Post-Test			
	Mean Trad. Cohort	Mean PDS cohort	T	p	Mean Trad. cohort	Mean PDS cohort	t	P
Reading	1.75	1.95	1.61*	.002	1.96	2.00	1.00	.079
Math	1.71	1.80	.59	.280	1.89	2.00	1.32*	.016
Social Science	1.09	1.25	.60	.793	1.71	1.75	.19	.425
Social Skills	1.60	1.66	.31	.637	1.89	2.00	1.36*	.076
Health	1.66	1.67	.73	.843	1.82	2.00	1.98*	.000
Art	.35	.57	1.40	.931	.85	1.00	2.12*	.000
Muscles	1.00	1.71	1.52	.419	3.14	3.85	2.58*	.000
Environment	1.57	2.33	1.85	.852	3.10	3.90	3.25*	.000
Purpose	.96	1.00	1.00	.079	1.00	1.00	.97*	.032
Play	.14	.38	3.64	.376	1.42	3.09	1.23*	.002
Discipline	.78	1.00	1.12	.426	1.21	2.09	5.47*	.001
Friends	1.21	1.38	.85	.402	1.53	1.85	1.78	.247

*Note: $p < .05$

There were no mean differences on the pre-test between the traditional and PDS models. This indicates that the knowledge of the two groups were similar before the intervention. Mean scores of all subset areas with the exception of reading, social science, and friendship in the PDS cohort are significantly higher than mean scores in the traditional cohort. These results support our hypothesis that the PDS students would increase their child development knowledge to a greater extent than the traditional model students.

Locus of Control

The Locus of Control scale used in this study sorted results into low, average, and high scores. Low scores (0-8) indicate a high internal locus of control, describing people who take the initiative in most activities. These people take responsibility for their own successes and failures. Average scores (9-16) indicate people whose internal and external control beliefs are situation-specific. In some cases, people who score in this range believe they are in control of their successes but in other cases they believe they have no control over their successes. High scorers (17-40) view life as more a game of chance than one in which their actions make a difference.

The two groups of students did not vary to any significant extent on the Locus of Control Scale. However, for the traditional campus cohort, the mean score was 10.2, while the PDS cohort had a mean score of 8.3. These two cohort groups do vary slightly in degree of self-efficacy with the PDS cohort scoring closer to the notion that they are responsible for their own lives than the campus cohort group. The fact that the students in the PDS cohort believe they have control over their lives and outcomes of their actions may be responsible for their decision to choose the PDS model rather than the traditional teacher preparation model.

Final grades

There were notable differences in the final course grades for the PDS and the traditional model cohort members. The entire PDS cohort of Childhood Development students, 100%, received an A for the course. In the traditional preparation cohort, 83% received an A for the course, 10% received a B for the course, and 7% received a C for the course. The two cohort groups differed considerably in degree

and quality of class participation as well as depth of knowledge demonstrated through the case studies.

Initiative and Leadership

The most interesting distinction between the two cohort groups was the quality of classroom discussion and the degree of initiative demonstrated. The PDS students were in the schools for field experiences 12-18 hours a week more than the students in the traditional cohort. The PDS students were involved in pre-service activities, professional development opportunities with the teaching faculty, parent conferences, and special events such as Science Fridays, Social Studies Fairs, Technology Fairs, and Science Olympiad. These opportunities to interact with school administrators, faculty, and families appear to have given them a broader perspective of the interrelated stands of education and community.

One example of leadership and initiative occurred with two PDS students placed at the World Language Academy who approached the authors of this article with a proposal to attend the NABE (National Association of Bilingual Educators) conference. These students minored in Spanish and were already using their Spanish language skills with students at two elementary schools. They wrote a proposal for funding for NABE, as they desired to learn more about strategies for teaching English learners. Their proposal was given to the Dean of the College of Education; he authorized funding for the two students to attend NABE. Following the conference, the two students prepared a research paper incorporating best practices in bilingual education supported by information from NABE sessions. These students wrote, "After NABE, we took the strategies to our [mentor] teachers and implemented some of these methods in our classrooms during our student teaching" (Acquiviva & Cowden, 2013). The students utilized strategies in two different PDS partner schools: one was a dual-immersion bilingual school and one incorporated one-way immersion strategies with English Language Learners. The passion and initiative shown by these two PDS students reflects a "school-university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community" as well as professional development that is mutually

beneficial for interns and mentor teachers (NAPDS, 2008). The World Language Academy intern wrote:

I used the strategies of drama and play in the classroom during indoor recess to help my students learn tricky vocabulary we were studying and to sharpen their brains to learn more new things. When conferencing with some of my English Language Learners, I used tiered vocabulary instruction to help students comprehend what we were reading. The dramatic arts workshops I attended at NABE helped me to meet the needs of my students in ways I wouldn't have considered otherwise. (Acquiviva & Cowden, 2013)

The intern in the one-way immersion school wrote:

After attending a mini session on the importance of using graphic organizers with English Language Learners, I incorporated graphic organizers into my lesson plans to help my students understand difficult vocabulary. (Acquiviva & Cowden, 2013)

These two students presented their paper during a spring research conference and are currently being recruited by school systems with high Hispanic populations. Both students selected the PDS model for their field placements; their experiences represent the life-changing opportunities afforded to interns in the collaborative PDS model.

The students participating in the PDS model came to each class with specific questions concerning children and families. Class discussions revolved around discussions of different areas of development, with students citing real life examples and specific classroom problems or strategies. Each discussion was peppered with "I have a student in my class who . . ."; "What does it mean when a kid . . .?"; "What can we do?"; or "My mentor teacher and I were meeting with the mother, and we discovered that . . . How can we help her? What resources are available for us?" (Nodine, 2012, field notes). Most interesting for a class of first-semester juniors was the number of students who came to class having identified a problem in their classroom and stated, "I found in the research that . . . do you think that would work for this child?"

By contrast, the campus-based students had limited time in the elementary classroom and asked questions that are more frequently heard in the college classroom such as "When is this due?" While several students posed higher-level questions,

they were coached in the abstract, with no specific child, family, or example in mind (Nodine, 2012, field notes). The students overall had less experience to draw from, with placements that were limited to time in the classroom, not multiple interactions with faculty, administrators, and families. These additional interactions had broadened the outlook and involvement of the PDS cohort but were not available to the traditional cohort.

The PDS cohort students were treated as part of the teaching faculty in the schools. This promotion to professional status ignited their autonomy and empowered them to take responsibility for multiple aspects of their learning and their work with children and families. An example that illustrates the degree of independence the PDS experience had on the students was a minor disruption of the daily class schedule for the Childhood Development course.

Generally the Childhood Development classes followed the same format. Students signed the roll, then completed a pre-discussion quiz followed by a group discussion and participation in small group activities to reinforce or demonstrate the key concepts from the discussion. Prior to each class, all necessary materials were laid out in the front of the classroom. One day after laying out the materials, the course instructor was approached by the school principal. After a longer discussion than expected, she returned to the classroom to discover that the students had signed in and taken the quiz as expected. Surprisingly, they had also figured out the group activity from the topics that had been listed on the whiteboard, divided themselves into groups, determined the goals of the assignment, and had begun working on the activity.

Upon reflection, given experience with typical college classes and college students, this behavior was remarkable. The Childhood Development course for the traditional model cohort was the following day, so as an informal experiment, the scenario was repeated, laying out the materials as always, putting the topics on the whiteboard, and then leaving the classroom before the students arrived. Not surprisingly, the students signed in, completed their tests, and then sat waiting patiently and texting.

This theme was expanded upon throughout the semester. In each case, where incomplete information was given, the PDS cohort would

figure out what needed to be done and proceed without questioning the instructor. The campus cohort would go as far as their instructions indicated and then stop. They would not ask questions or improvise. They would chat in their groups without any desire to take control of their own learning. These students were modeling the learning they had typically experienced throughout their educational lives – passive engagement. All of the students in the traditional cohort were bright students with good academic records; however, their experiences with traditional classroom culture did not encourage them to take charge of their learning and their more limited field placement experiences did not appear to challenge passive behavior.

Discussion and Implications

Although the sample is small, the course grades as well as the degree of increase in post-test scores do indicate that the PDS cohort gained more knowledge of child development than did the traditional cohort. PDS cohort members also exhibited a greater degree of personal responsibility, as indicated by the Locus of Control scores.

An unanticipated result of this model was the emergence of pre-service student leadership. The students took ownership of their learning and their direct contributions to the PDS. The students identified areas of need in their work with children and families, developed strategies to improve their own performance and the performance of the children, and provided support for families, tested the strategies, reflected on the results, and adjusted their strategies. These juniors participated in extended field placement hours; attended college classes, faculty meetings, and professional development opportunities with other teachers; coordinated science, technology, and social studies-based activities; and worked with parents. One intern from the pilot program, now teaching fifth grade at the Arts Academy, shared his view of the PDS model:

I never expected to be part of planning my field experience. When we [student and three peers] sat down with the special education pre-k team, it was really powerful to have them ask for our input and to have them listen to our ideas... We felt like part of the faculty from

the first day. (post study interview, transcribed notes, 2013)

Another student, who taught for two years and is now taking a year off to stay home with a newborn, echoed this idea of empowerment:

I felt like I could teach anywhere; I was confident and had an amazing experience in Teach for America because of my field-work in the PDS” (post study interview, transcribed notes, 2013)

Service and outreach are basic tenets of the PDS model; these preservice teachers returned to their alma mater after graduation to speak about their experiences to pre-education students and peers already in the program.

The unexpected findings from this small study were the high degree of classroom interactions and autonomy on the part of the PDS cohort. Given the typical college classroom culture of passive learning, this was the most striking outcome when comparing the two groups. Ultimately, the most interesting results were not the measures we examined, but the differences found in the two groups with regard to classroom interactions, thoughtful questions and quality of discussion, class behavior, and demonstrated initiative.

In this study, participation in the PDS model of field placement resulted in greater learning and developmental outcomes for the teacher education candidates. This increased learning resulted in the transfer of learning to their work with children and families as evidenced by follow up interviews with pilot PDS participants.

The success of this pilot led to the institution’s program-wide adoption of the Professional Development Community (PDC) model in teacher education. The teacher education program now includes five PDC cohort groups each year. New challenges include the tensions inherent in maintaining the integrity and collaborative relationships now that 140 students and faculty are involved with partner schools in five unique geographic and demographic settings.

Conclusion

The small sample size of 49 teacher education students from one university limits generalizability. Since students selected participation in either the PDS cohort or the traditional cohort, it is very possible those students choosing the PDS are more

pro-active by nature. The nature of the PDS encourages initiative, allowing students to be part of the planning and decision making process, and allowing students to take more responsibility and control than typically occurs in field placement settings. The improvement in learning on the part of the PDS cohort may be attributed to students spending more than twice as much time in the school setting than students in a traditional teacher preparation cohort.

Two of the students in the PDS cohort shared their thoughts about the PDS experience:

This experience has allowed me to be totally immersed in the school culture, pre-service and post planning activities, and weekly professional learning. This experience allowed me to spend more than twice as much time in the classroom as typical student teachers. (Kelli)

Being in the PDS this year offered me so much more experience by being completely immersed in the classroom than I could have imagined. It truly prepared me for what to expect as a teacher and helped me to apply what I learned and discussed in my college classes in my mentor classroom. (Jesse)

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A Primer on Social Linguistics: Honoring Linguistic Diversity in Classroom Practice

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In Wheeler & Swords' (2006) book *Code-Switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms*, the authors illustrate a common interaction between a teacher (Mrs. Swords) and a student with this dialogue:

Student: Janae need a marker.

Mrs. Swords: Janae what?

Student: She need a marker.

Mrs. Swords: Tarik! We've talked about this. Janae what?

Student: Janae *need* a marker!

Mrs. Swords: We don't say, "Janae need a marker." We say, "Janae needs a marker."

Student: Oh, OK. (p. 3)

In my Reading and Writing in the Content Areas classroom, I (Author A) asked my undergraduate pre-service teachers to think about this exchange, discuss it with a partner, and then share their thoughts with the entire class. The 22 students in my class ranged in age from 20 to 50 years old and represented Middle Eastern, African-American, White, African, and Multiethnic ethnicities. Prior to this class, we had discussed culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009) and funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1996), and although my pre-service teachers seemed in agreement about the importance of learning the cultural backgrounds of their students and trying to connect instruction to students' funds of knowledge, their cultural and community knowledge based on life experience, any time I suggested allowing students to speak in other languages or dialects in the classroom, I sensed surprise and resistance. Based on this resistance, I decided to veer from the syllabus and spend the hour discussing social linguistics.

As a researcher who studies language and literacy, as well as a former middle school teacher in a linguistically diverse school, I know the importance of honoring primary discourse for student motivation and achievement; this is an area I am passionate about, so I wanted to take this teachable moment to make sure my students were exposed to research in this area. In this article, I describe the linguistic diversity lesson I taught, and then Author B, one of my students, shares how she applied the lesson in her student teaching and the resistance she experienced from another educator. We conclude with a joint reflection on the experience. In order to protect the identity of the school and those involved in Author B's story, all names are pseudonyms and position titles have been changed.

Reading and Writing in the Content Areas

Reading and Writing in the Content Areas is a required course for all pre-service teachers in this undergraduate initial teacher certification program. The course description states:

In this course students examine reading and writing instructional strategies and materials in the content area classroom. Emphases are on adolescent literacy development, the process of reading and writing in middle grades, the role of textbooks and trade books, concept development, comprehension, vocabulary, and study strategies.

Although this description is accurate, it does not encompass the full breadth of this course. I added the following guiding course questions to the syllabus to emphasize the contextualized nature of literacy and the importance of connecting

academic literate practices to students' cultural and personal literacy:

- What is literacy?
- How is literacy defined in different cultures and contexts?
- How can teachers honor the literate practices of their students while facilitating the growth of conventional academic literary practices?
- How do proficient readers read? What processes do proficient writers use?
- How does reading and writing differ by content area?
- How can teachers in any content area support their students in becoming better readers and writers?
- What are the best strategies for facilitating effective reading and writing?
- What is the relationship between classroom culture and effective literacy instruction?

To facilitate this integrative approach to reading and writing across the content areas, I selected Schoenbach, Greenleaf, and Murphy's (2012) *Reading for Understanding* as the key text for the course. Through the articulation of four interrelated dimensions, Schoenbach and colleagues position cognitive reading skills (cognitive dimension) as one part of what students need in order to make sense of a text. Additionally, students need to feel safe and learn from and with peers and the teacher (social dimension), identify as readers and know their own strengths and weaknesses (personal dimension), and build on past knowledge, including personal interests, cultural beliefs and experiences, and school experiences (knowledge-building dimension).

Yet, with this integrative approach to content area literacy that acknowledges the role of personal and social aspects of learning in developing knowledge and cognitive skills, there was not specific attention in the text to how teachers should respond when students utilized a different dialect or language in speaking or writing. Even an additional reading I assigned, Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez' (1999) article on funds of knowledge, did not emphasize language as a key fund of knowledge that can be employed in learning.

I did not initially notice this gap between my stated course goal of honoring the literate practices of students and the selected curricula until I noticed a number of pre-service teachers in the class using deficit language regarding student speech and even their own dialects and accents. This observation became an impetus for more explicit attention to theories of linguistic diversity.

Code-Switching and Code-Meshing

Throughout this piece, the ideas of code-switching (Wheeler & Swords, 2006) and code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2013; Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2014) are suggested as methods for honoring primary student language and dialect while also fostering the development of Standard American English (SAE), the language of power in the United States. Code-switching uses the method of contrastive analysis, the comparison of two languages, to help students acquire SAE. In this method, the primary language, such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), is used as a resource to learn SAE. Students are instructed to consider the context and purpose of a literacy event and choose the appropriate language for the specific situation. Code-meshing, however, allows students to weave multiple language and dialects into one speech or written event. In both code-switching and code-meshing, major beliefs are the legitimacy of the students' primary language and the need to sustain that language instead of trying to erase it.

Method of Inquiry

During the lesson I taught about linguistic diversity, I recorded student responses on paper, as I often do in my courses, so that I can better summarize key points and direct the discussion. I was also curious about how students' initial reactions over time might or might not shift, so I noted some statements and questions as close to verbatim as I could. Due to the pacing of the class, I was not able to capture exact responses, and it was a few days later when I attempted to re-create the lesson in the narrative form represented here. Author B, on the other hand, was not taking notes during the incident she reports here; however, she recreated the

conversation a few days after the event and has made an effort to best represent the conversation that occurred.

What do you believe about language?

I started class with the dialogue that opened this article. I first asked two students to perform the dialogue about “Janae need a marker.” After my students had discussed the dialogue with a partner, they shared their thoughts with the whole class, and most students were in agreement with Mrs. Swords’ response. My students talked about the importance of students speaking correctly for future schooling and jobs and the role of the teacher as a facilitator of “correct” language acquisition. For the most part, they saw nothing wrong with how Mrs. Swords interacted with Tarik.

Next, I projected this quote from Gee (2012) onto the screen: “Nonstandard dialects and standard ones often serve different purposes. . . . It is an accident of history as to which dialect gets to be taken to be the standard” (p. 11). I explained to my students, “In his work, James Gee is asking you to consider what is *correct* English? Who gets to decide?” I then asked how we could determine what is true—which language is “correct”—if all arguments are subjective? After a minute of wait time so students could consider how they would answer, I shared Gee’s answer to this critical question. According to Gee, we as educators, and more importantly as humans, must establish conceptual principles as a universal foundation for talking about language. The “first conceptual principle governing ethical human discourse” is that you should consider whether your beliefs harm others. If your beliefs result in harm, such as negative consequences for students, this may be a reason to change your beliefs. The second principle is that you need to offer proof for your theories, especially if they give you power. Part of this second principle is that if you cannot explain or make overt a tacit theory, it is unethical, especially if that theory affords you benefits.

I asked my students to think about Tarik’s language in the example and apply Gee’s (2012) principles for ethical discourse: What did they believe about the way Tarik spoke? What did this

belief mean for their pedagogy? And most critically, did they gain anything from their belief? I again paused and let students think or write their responses to the ideas I was presenting, but before they talked with their peers, I wanted to share one more quote from Gee. I clicked to the next slide, which stated:

The traditional view of literacy as the ability to read and write takes literacy out of its sociocultural context and treats it as an asocial cognitive skill. It cloaks literacy’s connections to **power**, to social identity, and to ideologies, often in the service of **privileging certain types of literacy and certain types of people**. (p. 63, emphasis added)

Finally, I let students discuss. A few students said that they had never thought about language differences too deeply, other students seemed a little confused by the idea that there was not a “correct” version of English, and a number of students seemed excited by the idea that all dialects are equal. Illustrating the range of responses, one student fully agreed with Gee’s stance, stating, “As a teacher, it’s important to me that children who are not proficient in English know, ‘You’re not less than any other student.’” But another student expressed skepticism: “I wouldn’t want a student to feel less than another because they don’t speak English right, but if I don’t correct my students, they won’t ever learn to speak correctly.” It seemed to me that my students were overwhelmingly unaware of social linguistic theory, and for these students, this was a big, new idea.

What are the consequences of your beliefs?

After my students had explored their beliefs about language and some students had voiced that they may need to reconsider their prior beliefs, I wanted to share some of the harm I believed resulted from schooling structures that do not honor linguistic diversity. I started with the work of Ball and Ellis (2008) who reviewed decades of writing research regarding teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. In their review, Ball and Ellis concluded “that students of color are disproportionately relegated to classrooms using drill exercises rather than interactive, meaningful approaches that require extended writing, reflection, and critical thinking” (p. 507).

After sharing this quote, I asked, “What’s happening here? Why is it that students of color are not receiving the rigorous, authentic writing instruction that researchers know increase achievement and motivation?” Students seemed unsure how to respond to this, yet a few students noted that the Black students they worked with were more likely to be in lower level classes.

I shared with students my conclusions from linguistic research: teachers often assume that speakers of non-standard dialects such as AAVE need remediation due to a perception that these students are behind in literacy acquisition (Balester, 2012; McWhorter, 2000; Smitherman & Villanueva, 2003). However, these students are fully literate in a dialect that is not being recognized by schools. Importantly, AAVE is a systematic, rule-governed language; it is not a “sloppy” or “incorrect” version of English as it is sometimes misrepresented (Labov, 2012). I explained to my class how “Janae need a marker” is an example of a consistent rule in AAVE where the third person singular verb does not and with an –s like it would in SAE. When teachers do not know the rules of AAVE, they can very easily “correct” features of AAVE out of their ignorance of these structures.

Next, I cited my own work with a colleague: The devaluing of language is still a functioning practice in American schools. Those who will not conform, who will not accept that their history and language is deficient, all too often end up dropping out of school, or more accurately, being pushed out. Clearly, the right to literacy has been and is being violated for students of color. (Winn & Behizadeh, 2011, p. 156)

Thus, honoring primary discourse is a civil rights issue. Telling a speaker of AAVE or another dialect of English that he or she does not speak correctly is not only inaccurate, but it is damaging to that speaker. A few students responded to these ideas with excitement; these ideas were aligned with their understandings of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009), a concept they had all encountered in a past course on cultural diversity. I sensed a small but significant change occurring in the perceptions of my students toward language diversity.

What can you do in practice to honor linguistic diversity?

Connecting this new information with funds of knowledge research that they had already explored, I shared how I viewed language. I asked, “What is a particular language?” and then answered my own question, stating, “It is a fund of knowledge that deserves respect.” I was getting a lot of heads nodding at that point, but students wanted to know what this meant for them when they were in the field. One student raised her hand and said, “Dr. B, this makes sense to me, but I don’t exactly know what it would look like in my classroom.” I returned to the opening example of Mrs. Swords talking to Tarik. “This doesn’t work,” I said. “It may be well-intentioned, but it doesn’t work.” I turned to Wheeler and Swords (2006) review of research to bolster my claim:

Experts from applied linguistics can help us understand this surprising failure of our correction techniques. They explain that while ‘various strategies can be useful for learning Standard English equivalents[,] . . . one that does not work is correcting vernacular features’ (Wolfram, Adger, and Christian, 1999, p. 122). By vernacular features, they mean those patterns in a student’s speech or writing that are characteristic of the way the student talks with friends and family in the home community. (Wheeler & Swords, 2006, p. 4)

One solution that *does* work is code-switching. In this method, a teacher explicitly shows students who speak another dialect of English how to translate that dialect into Standard English. One way to explain this to students is to refer to SAE as “formal” English that is appropriate for school papers, interviews, etc., while other dialects are “informal” and appropriate for friends, family, etc. For example, a teacher can show speakers of AAVE how to translate the informal “She walk” into the formal “She walks.” Wheeler and Swords (2006) provide a checklist students can use to evaluate their writing for formal versus informal writing (p. 164). At the end of our discussion, I presented another dialogue between a student and Mrs. Swords, one that illustrates a code-switching approach instead of a correctionist view:

Student: Mrs. Swords, Sydni want to know if she can work in my group.

Mrs. Swords: Jawan, right now we're practicing talking formally, like we would with the principal or the mayor. Can you code-switch to Standard English?

Student: OK, Sydni wants to know if she can work in my group.

Mrs. Swords: Is that okay with everyone else in the group?

Student: Yes.

Mrs. Swords: OK, then it's fine with me! (Wheeler & Swords, 2006, p. 8)

Using the words "translate" or "code-switch" instead of "correct" is a small change, but a very important change communicating respect for primary dialect instead of positioning it as inferior.

I next asked my students to discuss. Based on concluding student comments, it seemed that over half of my students had shifted their views on how to approach dialect in the classroom. One student shared, "I definitely think it will change how I correct students now that I have the knowledge that I could be doing damage." Another student added, "It's helpful to know that there's a good way to respond to students who speak different languages in class." Additionally, a few students shared that they had mentor teachers who did not allow students to use another language, such as Spanish, or another dialect in the classroom, and they now saw this as a problem. I realized that I needed to clarify something at this point and said:

It is okay to require Standard American English in your classroom, but make sure you communicate your expectations to students. You can say, "This discussion will be in Standard American English, so think about how you would speak to an employer or the President; use formal English." Or you might decide that informal English or other languages can be used during group work or a particular discussion, and you can share that expectation with your students. What does NOT work is to never explicitly discuss your language expectations and then swoop in randomly to label student speech as deficient or wrong when that's not even accurate, and worse, it's damaging to a student's confidence and motivation.

I included this caveat because when I promote honoring primary discourse, inevitably someone complains that this will result in students never learning "how to speak or write properly." In both examples from Wheeler & Swords (2006), Mrs. Swords is trying to help a student acquire SAE, but in the second example, she explains that she wants the student to code-switch from AAVE to SAE. This approach demonstrates respect as well as being more likely to help a student learn how to use the appropriate language for the appropriate context.

Class was over, but the work had just begun. Some students took this conversation and immediately applied it in their student teaching, and one student shared the result of that application with me: my co-author, Author B. Next is a vignette from Author B who attempted to implement what she had learned the very next week in order to illustrate what this theory looks like in practice and the possible resistance that teachers attempting to honor primary discourse may face. Here is Author B's story in her own words.

Author B's Attempt to Practice What Author A Preached

After reading the quotes and discussing them in class, I found it interesting because it kind of reinforced what my mom always taught me: "It's not what you say, but how you say it." While I do understand that in order to make it in America, one must know how to speak "Standard American English," it is all in the way that we promote it in our classrooms. We have to promote Standard English as the *language of power* without belittling a student's personal dialect. I think that teaching students to code-switch is the most effective way to teach students that though learning Standard American English is important, it is not the *only* important form of dialect. I agreed with the quote already shared: "Nonstandard dialects and standard ones often serve different purposes. . . . It is an accident of history as to which dialect gets to be taken to be the standard" (Gee, 2012, p. 11). There is a time and a place for everything, including different dialects. Standard American English was labeled as "standard" because it was

the language that the privileged spoke, and they believed that everyone else should speak it, too.

On October 31, 2013, I was very nervous to receive my second teaching observation from a sometimes hard-to-please educator whom I will refer to as my mentor. She was a Caucasian woman with twenty years of experience as an educator, and she had a reputation for being a tough mentor. On the one hand, I was not that nervous because I had been observed before and pretty much knew what to expect, but on the other hand I was extremely nervous because I knew that the slightest mistake would turn into a lot of negative feedback, while all of the positive things were ignored. To give a little background information, my previous observation had been at an all-Black, Title I, “poor school,” where once this same mentor noticed the demographics she said, “I know that it is probably very rough here, and the teachers here most likely do not get a lot of parental support. Not to worry, I am sure you will be much happier at Douglas Middle School (a pseudonym); it is in a much better area and the demographics are a lot better as well.” Douglas Middle School was the middle school that I would be moving to in a couple of weeks for my practicum course. I am not really sure what made her think that was okay to say to me, being that I am Black myself, but I did not want to be confrontational, because my mentor’s opinion of me still meant a lot to me and I did not want to upset her. It was very offensive to me though, because I’ve gone to predominantly Black schools my entire life, with the exception of my college experience. Douglas Middle School used to be a predominantly Caucasian School (as I am guessing my mentor remembered it), until recent redistricting. Now Douglas Middle School is one third Caucasian, one third Hispanic, and one third African American. I was surprised and disheartened by the deficit view of my mentor teacher. On the day of my observation at Douglas, I was teaching a sixth grade social studies lesson on the causes of World War I. As a closing review, I asked one of the students to tell me why Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated. He responded, “Because Serbia ain’t want them people in Austria Hungary to have control over Bosnia.”

I responded, “Good job,” and proceeded to elaborate a little more on the topic before asking the next question.

After the bell rang, my mentor and I had a debriefing session to discuss my lesson. She brought up the student’s informal dialect and said that she thought that I should have corrected him because it was not beneficial to either him or the other students to allow him to speak that way uncorrected. She suggested that I correct students next time so that I make them aware of Standard American English because they may not hear it at home. I referenced the text that we read in Author A’s class the week prior, which stated that you have to prioritize what is the most important for your classroom, and that you should not allow correcting your students to get in the way of what you are trying to teach. I did not think that anything was wrong with the student’s answer. He may not have given his answer in Standard American English, but when there were just five minutes before the bell rang, I was trying to complete a quick exit review for my students, and taking the time out to ask him to code-switch would have been irrelevant to the task at hand. I was more interested in seeing if my students understood and retained the information that I had just taught.

My mentor did not see it that way; she felt that I should have stopped the student right then and there to “correct” him so that he, as well as the other students, knew that was an “incorrect” way to speak. I then responded, “Well [Author A] said that it isn’t good to just correct students like that in front of the entire class because sometimes that can shut them down and make them uncomfortable participating in the future. It’s a part of building community and creating safety in your classroom so that every student feels comfortable participating.” Her response was, “Well, was [Author A] an administrator?” as if she felt that I was challenging her, and as if her way was superior because she had previously been a principal. I responded “No, I don’t think so, but she did teach language arts so I know she has had experience with issues like this.” The discussion continued for about 10 to 15 minutes, and her final advice to me was that if I was uncomfortable correcting students when they spoke “incorrect” English in the classroom

(which I never said that I was, I just felt that there was a better way to go about it), then maybe I should put up a sign in my classroom that said “Standard American English only in this classroom,” as she had done when she was a teacher. We ended the debriefing session on a positive note and basically agreed to disagree on that matter.

I do not think she realized to what extent something like that would be offensive. I believe that displaying a sign like that would be offensive because saying “Standard American English only” is belittling every other language, and that is not what I want to do. I feel like all teachers should promote diversity and appreciate every culture, and that includes their language. I believe that this is important, *especially* in a social studies classroom, because the students are learning about other cultures. How can we teach students about other cultures, and why would we teach students about other cultures, if we are also going to imply that every other culture is inferior to White culture?

The interactions between my mentor and me are more positive than before. I think this has a lot to do with the fact that although she does not agree with me, I have facts and research supporting my beliefs. As educators, we should not only respect each other’s learning theories and philosophies of education that guide our instruction, but also push one another to be self-reflective and critical thinkers. While my story may make my mentor seem like an unfavorable person that is not at all my intent. I am simply recalling the story as it happened that day. My mentor is actually a very amiable, knowledgeable woman, and I assume positive intentions for everything that she has done. I do not think that anything she said or did was meant to offend or belittle anyone, but it did seem that she did not value the primary dialects of the students at Douglas. That is why I think that it is so important to honor primary discourse in the classroom so that we show that we are pro-diversity and let our students know that no one race is better than the other. That is not to say I will ignore the fact that students do need to learn Standard American English. Let’s face it; you have fewer opportunities in life if you cannot speak the language of power. However, I plan on promoting Standard American English while also

appreciating my students’ home dialects so that they do not lose touch or want to lose touch with their culture. After all, there is no “standard” race in America; this is a very diverse country that we live in! Incorporating cultural activities will not only promote cultural diversity in the classroom, but it will also build community so that we are one big, happy family: African American, Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic, etc. together as one.

Implications

We decided to collaborate on the implications and conclusion sections so we could offer a joint reflection on the entire experience. First, we summarize and extend the implications of this work for teachers and teacher educators who teach in diverse contexts. Both of us wanted to include the quote from McWhorter (2000) Author A had shared at the end of her presentation to the class. McWhorter acknowledges that schools should focus on aiding students in developing the standard dialect of English, yet clarifies that “the job of the school is to add a new layer to a child’s speech repertoire, not to undo the one they already have” (p. 15). In order to be culturally responsive and “culturally sustaining” classroom teachers (Paris, 2012), teachers need to promote diversity in their classrooms, and that includes language diversity (Gallagher-Geurtsen, 2007). Referring to research on language diversity in schools, Miller (2003) offers this critique: “We appear to support language shift, from primary language to English, but in reality we promote language loss, that is the loss of primary language” (p. 37). Importantly, we believe that teachers should not only help students connect their primary language to the language of power, what Miller refers to as “language shift,” but that teachers should encourage students to use their primary language as a resource in discussion and writing. In Author A’s research about writing assessment, she has pushed for teachers and policymakers to allow students to write in other languages and dialects, both during instruction and for assessment purposes.

To help teachers create linguistically sustaining curricula, teacher educators need to ensure that when student teachers encounter mentors or veteran teachers with teaching philosophies that conflict with their own, all

people involved respect each other's viewpoints and evaluate beliefs based on outcomes, specifically, whether students are learning. Just as important, are students engaged and do they feel valued and respected—particularly in the ways they choose to communicate and express themselves? Tying back to Gee (2012), two additional critical questions educators need to ask themselves are 1) What are my beliefs about language? and 2) Are my beliefs causing any unintended harm? We argue that the first step for both teachers and teacher educators is exploring social linguistic theory, much as Author A did as a researcher and then Author B did as a student in her class, a process that is ongoing as new research emerges. We believe that professional development for linguistic diversity is essential for pre-service and in-service teachers, a point made by Gay and Howard (2010) in their case for multicultural teacher education.

Illustrating this commitment to exploring social linguistic theory, as we were working on this article, Author A continued reading research on linguistic diversity and encountered the idea of code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2013; Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2014), an idea she explained earlier and now integrates into her research and teaching. Instead of thinking about speaking or writing in one language or another, code-meshing allows speakers and writers to weave multiple languages together into one utterance or composition. In a way, code-meshing is an extension of code-switching; however, in code-meshing, students can choose to speak in SAE, but also infuse phrases from another language and dialect to enrich their overall speech, much like Smitherman (1972) has been doing in her research and writing for the last four decades. However, as compelling as this idea is to us, we need to see how the middle school students with whom we each work respond to this idea and take it up in ways we may not anticipate. In other words, our interest is in translating theory into practice in culturally and contextually responsive ways. One resource that will guide the next step in our own collaboration is Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, and Lovejoy's (2014) text that includes examples of code-meshing activities and lessons at multiple grade levels.

Conclusion

Why does this story matter? Because in our increasingly diverse public schools, students are still being told that the way they speak is wrong. They are not encouraged to use their home dialects and languages as a tool in writing, discussing, or thinking. Especially with African-American Vernacular English, many students are taught, and many adults thus believe, that AAVE is an ignorant way to speak. Author A had another pre-service teacher last year say to the whole class, "I know I don't talk right," and the student was surprised when Author A replied, "There's nothing wrong with the way you speak." The student responded, "I've been told my whole life I don't speak right! And I can hear it; I talk funny." "You speak fine," Author A said. "Some people just can't hear you."

For teachers who have held the view that there is only one right way to speak or write in schools, it can often be hard to shift away from the belief that language is correct or incorrect and shift to the belief that language is always correct, but may not be appropriate for the context. Even in writing this paper, Author B found herself using the term "correct" to describe Standard American English. She does not want to take away from the importance of Standard American English; however, she also does not wish to take away from the importance of a student's primary discourse either. We believe that teaching code-switching and code-meshing are effective methods for honoring primary discourse and ensuring that students have the linguistic tools for success in a world that does not always see the value in primary discourse. Teacher educators and classroom teachers can both benefit from exploring their own beliefs about language and how these beliefs affect practice, as well as seeking to learn more about dialect diversity and ways to respect home language while supporting the acquisition of Standard American English.

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Teaching Students to Analyze and Challenge Social Studies Text

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Teachers across the content areas are responsible for exposing their students to rigorous text and incorporating literacy into their instruction. This is true for teachers of . . . social studies.” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010a, p. 43)

“A critical reading stance is the opposite of reading for information so students can repeat it, which they are required to do in many United States primary and secondary schools, and perhaps even universities.” (Cruz, Personal Communication, 2016)

Introduction

There are two compelling reasons for teachers to promote students’ analytic engagements with social studies text. The first reason is the text itself. As teachers know, social studies textbooks, like all expository texts, are neither impartial nor infallible (Romanowski, 2016). Research shows authors choose specific language to create impressions in the minds of students. Therefore, textbooks are infused with subjectivity. Moreover, authors’ claims are often based on assumptions that contain inaccuracies, half-truths, and biased language (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Goodlad, 1984; Loewen, 2007, 2009; Padgett, 2012; Sleeter & Grant 1991).

Textbooks are at the core of the social studies curriculum, and social studies classes rely “on textbooks more than any other curriculum area” (Williams & Bennett, 2016, p. 124; Padgett, 2012; Sleeter, 2005). At the same time, as Cruz notes in her review of social studies materials, “printed text has a level of legitimacy and authority perceived as virtually mistake proof” (2002, p. 337). This perceived legitimacy of authority leads students, and

often new and inexperienced teachers, to unquestioningly accept the veracity of what they read (Cruz, 2016, personal communication). In turn, studies show language and information in social studies textbooks help shape students’ perceptions of the world (Fournier & Wineburg, 1997).

A second rationale for teachers to promote students’ critical evaluation of social studies textbooks resides in social justice equity issues in United States schools and in our nation. Educational research clearly demonstrates the connection between students’ abilities to question information in their textbooks and their overall reading competence, which often shows a relationship to their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or English proficiency (Jenkins, 2012; Ravitch, 2016). Specifically, students who are good readers can concentrate on appraising rhetoric in their textbooks and in other texts, such as propaganda posters, movies, photographs, television, videos, video games, advertisements, song lyrics, magazines, newspapers, and television advertisements. Hence, students who are critical readers are on the path to becoming informed citizens – a principle goal of the National Council for the Social Studies (2010). Conversely, students who are less able readers must concentrate on lower order reading skills, such as word identification and fluency. As a result, they have difficulty directing the attention necessary to conduct a critical analysis of an author’s message, yet “the civic mission of social studies demands the inclusion of all students [and closing the instructional gap] by addressing cultural, linguistic, and learning diversity that includes similarities and differences based on race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual

orientation, exceptional learning needs, and other educationally and personally significant characteristics of learners” (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). Viewed through a Foucauldian poststructuralist lens, exemplary critical readers hold positions of power (Foucault, 1982). Conversely, students who have difficulty evaluating the quality of an author’s argument cannot question an author’s authority, and thus are marginalized (Spivak, 1988).

Reading Critically to Become More Informed and Effective Citizens: A Primary Goal of the National Council for the Social Studies

Congruent with the urgent need to foster students’ abilities to critically engage with text, a recent poll reveals American voters are concerned the United States does not prepare young people with the literacy skills they need to compete across geographical boundaries (P21 Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2016). This opinion is corroborated by findings in a recent survey of higher education faculty. The majority of respondents believed their first-year college students lacked the ability to evaluate evidence and/or support for an author’s claims and could not distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment, which are all dimensions of critical reading (ACT, 2016).

This lack of preparation to read critically partially emanates “from a model of teaching . . . in which students far too often have to memorize answers that have been coded as ‘facts’ for one-time testing” (Berkeley Graduate Division, 2016). Students who have learned to read text just to find the right answers have no understanding of what it means to question what they read (Bowling Green State University Center for Teaching and Learning, 2016). Yet, escalating information emanating from an ever-expanding, fast-paced world demands that students not only know how to scrutinize text, they must also carefully consider information from many sources, including analyzing global contemporary social and environmental concerns and historical issues (Senechal, 2010). The reality is that if students are to become more informed and effective citizens, which is a primary goal of the National Council for the Social Studies, they must be able to meet the demands and conventions necessary to analyze layers of meaning, rhetoric, and complex ideas in

all sorts of informational text (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010b; National Council for the Social Studies). The following section details some of the rhetoric displayed in social studies texts that poses challenges for students.

Specific Problems with Social Studies Textbooks

Biased Positioning and Exclusions of Minorities

Although social studies textbooks continue to improve, many contain authors’ biased positioning or omission of minority groups (Cruz, 1994). For example, Romanowski (1996) found US history textbooks implied Japanese Americans were a threat to the United States during World War II, although there was never any proof of their disloyalty (Japanese American Relocation Digital Archive, 2005). Rubin (1994) observed errors in textbooks regarding the representation of present-day Middle Eastern social and political realities. In addition, Cruz (1994) detected that secondary-level social studies textbooks portray Latinos in stereotypical ways. Wolf (1992) noted African Americans depicted in a time period after slavery were portrayed as “frightened, confused, and helpless, perpetuating the stereotypes that blacks are inferior and simple” (p. 293).

More recently, a review of five well-known secondary school social studies texts incorrectly suggests the ultimate goal of African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement was to achieve economic growth rather than attain equality and justice (Romanowski, 2016). Women, too, have been misrepresented. For example, a study of representation of women in United States textbooks both in number and manner found women were treated inequitably and stereotypically in relationship to their male counterparts and were also “viewed through a patriarchal lens” (Williams & Bennett, 2016, p. 124). And, in a 2012 dissertation that explored how American Indians were represented in five Florida textbooks, Padgett learned while overt racism had declined from previous years, information about “American Indians was simplified to support the United States national myth” (p. 1). Other research shows that American Indians have been afforded only a small space in textbooks and were often portrayed as obstacles to white settlers (Teachinghistory.org, 2016). A recent firsthand account also illuminates

an omission of minorities. A teacher in a doctoral class described her African American students' negative opinions of exclusions of minorities in their text. "There is only one Black person in this book," one boy said. Another responded, "You don't want to see white people every time you open this book. We want to see Black people making progress" (Nkrumah, 2016).

Language Tricks, Faulty Logic, Omissions, Inconsistencies, and Hidden Messages

Authors contribute to social studies text challenges in other ways that Brookfield (2012) refers to as "language tricks." They may directly address readers (e.g., "you") to deliberately entice readers into agreeing with what the text says by "reflecting back the readers' own image" (Temple, 2011). Authors may also use faulty logic, present unsupported conclusions and contradictions, and include inconsistencies and errors in reasoning (i.e., their argument or claim is not based on sound facts or data) (Queen's University, 2016). There is also a possibility that authors may present factually accurate information and at the same time subtly and intentionally convey their personal values and judgments by omitting important realities, or expressing distortions, outdated facts, or half-truths (Lenski, Wham, & Johns, 1999). A case in point is a McGraw-Hill 2015 ninth grade geography textbook. In a now-rectified section titled "Patterns of Immigration," a speech bubble pointing to a U.S. map read, "The Atlantic Slave Trade between the 1500s and 1800s brought millions of workers from Africa to the southern United States to work on agricultural plantations." An African American mother noted, "calling slaves 'workers' and their move to the United States 'immigration' suggests not only that [her] African American ancestors arrived on the continent willingly but they were also compensated for their labor" (Wang, 2015).

In another case, scholars reviewing textbooks based on the "Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills" guidelines discovered a number of historical misrepresentations, among them several in McGraw-Hill's proposed textbooks. These issues included declaring that a "Muslim garb hinders women's rights, palliating the inequalities African Americans faced under Jim Crow, and representing slavery as only a secondary cause of

the Civil War" (Brown, 2015).

Other concerns are that authors may deliberately select particular words and phrases, such as figurative, discriminatory, or inflammatory language designed to evoke readers' emotions and feelings, such as sympathy, anger, or resentment toward a topic. They may also affect readers imaginatively by making sweeping generalizations. Furthermore, authors can affect readers intellectually by covertly conveying ideas, impressions, and suggestions to the reader (Collins Learning, 2015).

To foster students' analytic skills to detect controversial content, scholars note it is important for teachers to offer specific lessons in critical analysis (DeVoogd, 2005). To assist teachers in their critical analysis instruction, in the following section we present a lesson in which we model reading critically and purposefully annotating text.

Modeling of a Comprehensive Critical Reading Lesson

Teacher modeling is a highly efficient way to help students grasp the basic elements of text analysis. In fact Brookfield (2012) observes that teacher modeling "can set a tone for openness that significantly influences students' readiness to delve in to their own assumptions" (p. 61). By modeling, teachers give students confidence and demonstrate "what they can and should do when they read text analytically" (Horning, 2007). In this section we present an initial critical reading social studies lesson we offered to fifth grade students. Some lesson ideas have been suggested by and modified from Deal & Rareshare (2013), Fisher & Frey (2015), Moss & Loh-Hagan (2016), and Tomasek (2009). The students who participated in the lesson attended an after-school tutoring program one afternoon a week at a local public school. Their ages ranged from 11-14.

To initiate this comprehensive critical reading lesson, we selected a short text related to a social studies topic students were currently studying in their after school tutoring sessions. Because learning to read critically, like most learning, is developmental and incremental, we chose a less complex text for this initial modeling session. See Figure 1 for an annotated excerpt of this text. We planned to move on to more complex text when the students developed a greater understanding of the critical reading process.

Figure 1. Annotated Text Excerpt

8/9/45: Excerpt from public statement by President Truman. This was the second time he had publicly given reasons for using the atomic bomb on Japan:

"The world will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of civilians. But that attack is only a warning of things to come. If Japan does not surrender, bombs will have to be dropped on her war industries and, unfortunately, thousands of civilian lives will be lost.

"Having found the bomb we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

"We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan's power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us." (Public Papers of the Presidents, Harry S. Truman, 1945, pg. 212).

Retrieved from <http://www.doug-long.com/hst.htm>

Handwritten annotations:

- I thought Hiroshima was a city, not a base.
- Nagasaki was bombed too.
- thousands of civilians lost their lives in Hiroshima.
- claim
- evidence
- USA
- we + us = collective (USA)

To prepare for the lesson, we previewed the text to pinpoint any unusual vocabulary, author bias, sweeping generalizations, or language designed to evoke readers' emotions. We also identified the author's main argument (e.g., "Dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima was necessary and the only way to end the war with Japan"), supporting statements (e.g., "President Truman was told that if the US invaded Japan, mass casualties would occur") (Appleby, Brinkley, Broussard, McPherson, & Ritchie, 2010), and conclusions (e.g., "In order to prevent mass casualties, the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Japan to end the war"). In addition, we

had a variety of pertinent sources handy (e.g., *Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources* website and the *National Archives* website) to encourage students to corroborate across sources to form a historical interpretation and to check the validity of an author's argument and supporting evidence (Wineburg, 1991a, 1991b).

Next, Stephanie (second author) displayed the text on an overhead projector for students, and I (first author) modeled my thinking as I read aloud and portrayed a critical reading stance. Students listened and observed as I skimmed the text.

I said, "By the title and the subheadings I know this passage is about World War II. I need

to think like a detective and figure out what assumptions or beliefs I have about World War II and how my assumptions shape my views as I read. You've been studying World War II. What do you know about that topic?" Students responded and Stephanie jotted down their ideas (e.g., bomb, fighting, atomic bomb, Japan). At that point I helped students look up more information about World War II and the atomic bomb.

I continued reading aloud, sweeping my hand across the text and stopping at crucial places in the text, such as the author's arguments and supporting statements. As I underlined the argument in the text, I said, "Students, here's how I found the author's argument, or claim. I looked for the point the arguer (author) was trying to make and answered the question 'So what's the point?' Remember, the claim is the conclusion that the arguer is trying to make" (Hillocks, 2010). "Let's look at this excerpt from a public statement from President Truman. He says,

Having found the bomb we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbor, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretense of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans. We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan's power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us. (DougLong.com)

As I underlined the text, I said, "In this excerpt, I see that President Truman's claim for dropping the bomb is, 'We have used it in order to shorten the agony of war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.' This is the point that he is making in this excerpt. I'm going to place a star by the author's claim, or purpose for writing this text, and I'll connect his claim with arrows to his supporting evidence. This will help us revisit the argument-claim connections to rethink their appropriateness and soundness."

During this process I shared my own struggles with the text (e.g., "I don't know what *hypocenter* means. So, I have to look it up right now on my computer thesaurus. *Hypocenter*

means the point of origin of an earthquake or a subsurface nuclear explosion. The term *hypocenter* is also used as a synonym for ground zero, the surface point directly beneath a nuclear airburst"). As I modeled, I continued annotating the text (i.e., circling unknown or confusing words, formulating questions I had about the author's statements, placing question marks, etc.). Taking the part of a critical reader, I also asked more questions aloud, such as, "What evidences from the text challenges my initial assumptions – what I believe is true? Whose voice or what groups of people are left out of this text? Who is marginalized? What information (if any) is incorrect? In what ways does the author show his biases?" Following each question I asked, "Can anyone help me answer this question I have as a critical reader?" See Tomasek (2009) for additional questions teachers might ask in a critical reading lesson.

As I moved further through the text I underlined main points, highlighted key words and phrases that I said confused me, wrote margin notes restating the author's main ideas, and wrote additional questions the students and I generated from the text, our discussions, and by activating our background knowledge. I also provided a risk-free environment to encourage students to share their own ideas and questions about the text and to talk with peers about confusions they might have about the processes of critical reading. To close the lesson, I asked students to record the date in their Critical Reading Notebook and then write what they learned about critically reading a social studies text like a detective. I also asked students to work with a partner and share what they learned from the lesson, such as, "I learned how to draw arrows from the author's main argument to her supporting evidence" or "I learned to skim the text prior to reading critically so I could get an overview of what the text was about." Then I distributed individual copies of a Critical Reading Guide to students so they could begin to analyze the next section of the text independently. We share this Critical Reading Guide, developed by the authors with ideas suggested by Allen (1997), Behrens & Rosen (2005), Govier (1992), Kurland (2000), and Queen's University (2016) and invite teachers to alter the Guide to fit their students' instructional needs:

Critical Reading Guide

Text Title: _____

Prior to Reading

1. Begin by skimming the text, including the title, sub headings graphs, charts, photographs, and other visual information. Reread the subheadings and jot them down in your Critical Reading Notebook. The subheadings provide information about the text.
2. What is the topic discussed in this text?
3. What background knowledge do you have about the topic discussed in the text? If you do not know much about the topic discussed in the text, take time to find information on the topic from other sources. What did you find out? Write this information in your Critical Reading Notebook.
4. What assumptions (i.e., ideas you think might be true) do you have about the topic discussed in the text? How might your assumptions influence your abilities to read this chapter critically?

During Reading

5. Do you believe or disbelieve what you are reading and why or why not?
6. What new vocabulary terms have you discovered? Take time to write these vocabulary terms in complete sentences in your Critical Reading Notebook.
7. What is the author's argument or purpose?
8. What evidence does the author supply for his argument or purpose?
9. Does the author provide sufficient and appropriate evidence for her argument or purpose? Give a reason for your opinion.
10. What other evidence might help the author's argument?
11. What are the author's conclusions?
12. Are the conclusions appropriate or inappropriate? Why or why not?
13. What biases (if any) does the author have?
14. What groups of people (if any) are missing from this text, or what information is missing?

15. Explain your thinking about why these groups of people or information are missing from the text.
16. What emotional words to influence your thinking does the author use?
17. What sweeping generalizations did the author use?
18. What questions or confusions do you have about critically analyzing this text?
19. Describe how critical readers think and what critical readers do as they read like a detective.
20. What do you need to learn about critically analyzing social studies texts?

Summary

As DeVoogd (2005) argues, "If schools only teach the social studies content typically found in standard textbooks, they are leaving students vulnerable to manipulation by texts, movies, or media that may seek to control popular opinion for their own purposes. Schools need to prepare students not just to learn information, but to learn strategies that will help them understand the perspectives behind the way the information is presented and what other perspectives may exist" (p. 5). Responding to DeVoogd's point of view, in this article we shared specific information about social studies text problems and portrayed a critical reading lesson designed to prepare students to read analytically. We supplied an excerpt of an annotated text we used in the lesson and a Critical Reading Guide that teachers may reproduce to help their students analyze social studies text independently.

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Understanding One's Racial and Cultural Identity: A Precursor to Becoming a Culturally Responsive Teacher

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As we educate pre-service teachers for changing demographics within our schools in the 21st century, it is paramount for them to fully understand themselves from a cultural and racial perspective. Banks (2006) suggests that we must first understand ourselves from the perspective of who we are and where we came from before we can begin to understand others. According to Banks (2006), Bennet (2003), and Brown (2005), knowing, valuing, and sharing the subconscious and conscious cultures of self is a precursor to cross-cultural competence.

Banks (2006) argues that students of color make up one-third of the population of the nation's schools. Further projections show that by the year 2020, about 48- 50 percent of the student population will be students of color (Banks, 2006; Nieto & Bodie, 2012). Likewise, the rise of students whose first language is not English has also been challenging for educators. In some cases, more than 100 different languages have been documented, which indicates that many are culturally different from their teachers. Research suggests that with the changing demographics in schools, teacher education programs must prepare teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to be more culturally responsive in the classroom, enabling them to meet the challenges of a changing school population (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Nieto & Bodie, 2012).

On the other hand, Bennett (1993), Brown (2005), and Gollnick and Chinn (2009) suggest that in order to raise the cross-cultural cognizance and sensitivity to diversity of pre-service teachers,

opportunities should be provided for them to examine and reflectively clarify and share the race, class, ethnicity, and religious foundations of their own cultural frames of reference. Likewise, Banks (2006) and Sleeter (1995) advocate for diversity training with self-examination exercises which will require them to examine their own cultural identities before exploring the culture of others. Banks also advocates for programs that will help students to explore and clarify their cultural identity so that they can recognize and respond sensitively to the complex cultural identities and characteristics found in the classroom.

Self-reflection, therefore, is a critical step in developing cultural identity as a teacher. Identities begin to develop when we are willing to critically examine ourselves and our culture in the face of others. In doing so, we will be able to perceive our own culture and ourselves more completely. Therefore, for pre-service teachers to be fully prepared for the changing demographics in our schools and be culturally competent educators, they must first examine themselves from a cultural and racial perspective. They should examine themselves and reflect on their personas to find out what factors played into who they are today, and from a cultural perspective examine the prejudices, biases, and misconceptions they might have about individuals who may be different from themselves.

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Teaching

As Gay (2010) points out, culturally responsive teaching calls for educators to engage

in more comprehensive instruction that utilizes the cultural background of their students as a tool for engagement. It emphasizes the idea of teaching to and through personal and cultural strengths validating and affirming what students bring to the classroom. Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly.

On the other hand, Ladson-Billings (2009) defined culturally relevant pedagogy as one that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. According to Ladson-Billings (1995a; 1995b), culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three premises which include academic success for students, the development and maintenance of cultural competence for students, and the development of a critical consciousness through which the status quo is challenged.

Gay (2010) also argues that our current education system is based on the Eurocentric model, which forces other minorities to conform to the system. Therefore, in order for teachers to engage in culturally responsive teaching and learning, they must first understand the system and try to create learning environments where students' cultures are valued, respected, and incorporated into the teaching and learning process.

Cultural Identity

According to Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001), identity may be defined as a negotiation between how one sees oneself and how one is seen by others. Phinney (1993) posits three stages of ethnic identity. The first is Unexamined Ethnic Identity, which suggests a lack of exploration of culture and cultural differences. There are no cultural thoughts, and cultural ideas provided by parents, society, and media that are readily accepted. The second stage is Ethnic Identity

Search, which is a questioning and exploration of culture in order to learn more about it. There is also a willingness to examine one's own culture with comparisons to other cultures. Finally, there is Ethnic Identity Achievement. At this stage, individuals have a clear sense of their identity and are able to navigate through a complex world which can be very interconnected and intercultural. Cultural Identity, therefore, is about how individuals or groups see and define themselves and how others may identify them. This is formed through socialization and the influence of social institutions and media. Tatum (1997) argues that the concept of identity can be very complex and is influenced by the family, history, and social and political factors. According to Gollnick and Chin (2002) and Sheets and Hollins (1999), cultural identity may change throughout life in response to economic, political, educational, or social experiences. Having an awareness of self-concept and cultural identity provides the foundation for how students define themselves. The readiness of teachers to recognize their own cultural identities and how these shape attitudes toward learning is an important first step in recognizing and respecting learners' cultural identities (Freire, 1998).

Banks (2006) suggests a typology that attempts to outline the basic stages of the development of cultural identity among individuals. Stage 1 is Cultural Psychological Captivity, when the individual internalizes the negative societal beliefs about his or her culture that are institutionalized within society, has low self-esteem, has cultural self-rejection, and is ashamed of his or her cultural group and identity. Stage 2 is Cultural Encapsulation, when the individual is ethnocentric and practices cultural separation, participates within his or her own setting, and believes that his or her own cultural group is superior to other groups. Stage 3 is Cultural Identity Clarification, in which the individual accepts himself or herself and has clarified attitudes toward his or her own culture, responds more positively to other cultures, and is able to understand the positive and negative aspects of his or her culture. Stage 4 is Biculturalism, when the individual has the attitudes, skills, and commitment needed to participate within his or her own cultural group as

well as within another cultural group. Stage 5 is Multiculturalism and Reflective Nationalism, in which the individual has reflective, cultural, and national identifications; has the skills, attitudes, and commitment needed to function within a range of ethnic and cultural groups within his or her nation; has a strong commitment to the nation or state and its values such as human dignity and justice; and views the USA as multicultural and multilingual country. Finally, Stage 6, which is Globalism and Global Competency, indicates that the individual has reflective and positive cultural, national, and global identifications as well as the knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to function within his or her nation and the world.

Exploring one's cultural and ethnic identity is essential to self-understanding, autonomy, and interdependence. Pre-service teachers should be cognizant of the fact that having a good understanding of themselves is a prerequisite for understanding others, especially those students who may be different from themselves.

The purpose of this article is to (1) describe self-reflective strategies that were used in a cultural diversity course in the teacher education program at a Midwestern university, (2) show how these strategies were used to help pre-service teachers self-reflect on their personas from a cultural perspective, and (3) explain how they help pre-service teachers re-examine certain aspects of their racial and cultural identity and raised their level of self-awareness.

Students

The majority of students consisted of white female undergraduates and graduates specializing in Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Middle Childhood Education, Montessori Education, and other disciplines outside of education. All students were taking the first required course in cultural diversity. This course consisted of predominantly white students who attended private Catholic schools and who in most cases had very little experience with diversity in their communities or schools. The intention was to help them become more culturally sensitive and aware in order to develop new knowledge, skills, and dispositions about ways of thinking pertaining to issues of diversity.

Course Description

"Cultural Diversity in Educational Settings" is one of the courses designed to meet the diversity requirements set by the state. All students majoring in Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Middle Childhood Education, and Montessori Education are required to take this course to meet the requirements for graduation. In this course, students engage in self-reflection exercises from a racial and cultural perspective, which helps them better understand their cultural identities before they try to understand their effects on the education process. They also explore areas pertaining to race, class, ethnicity, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, religion, stereotyping racism, and discrimination, and their impact on the process of schooling.

Process

At the beginning of the diversity course, students were asked to critically self-reflect on their experiences by examining their world with respect to diversity through an exercise called My World. In this exercise, students examined their lived experiences and how those may impact their teaching of diverse learners. Then they were required to reflect on their own racial and cultural identities as well as the diversity of their world by designing a cultural puzzle as related to Banks's Stages of Cultural Identity. Two strategies were highlighted. The first involved developing a cultural puzzle that included the various forces that have helped them to become who they are today, and the second was to examine Banks's Stages of Cultural Identity and decide the stage(s) with which they might identify.

Cultural Puzzle

The cultural puzzle, based on the work of Brown (2005), is a self-reflecting activity that encourages students to examine their cultural and racial identity by designing a cultural puzzle highlighting the cultural forces that have made them who they are today. In self-reflecting, each student designed a puzzle depicting how they became the person they are today; they examined how, what, and by whom their current personas were shaped. Information was gathered by conducting family interviews that included members of their generation (siblings, cousins, extended family), at least two from the

previous generation (parents, aunts and uncles, primary care givers), and at least two generations prior (grandparents, extended family). If students were quite knowledgeable of their cultural and racial identity, they were not required to do family interviews.

In designing their puzzles, students were asked to be as creative as possible during the process. Puzzles came in all shapes and formats including real puzzles with pieces, collages, and pictures of themselves with descriptors around them. However, to further elaborate on this, students were given Brown's (2005) vision of her cultural puzzle and asked to compare them with their puzzles. Brown's puzzle consists of cross-cultures, dialect, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, family, religion, urban influences, and abilities. Students then discussed the comparisons and any significant aspects of their puzzles as well as Brown's vision.

After comparing and contrasting their puzzles, pre-service teachers were required to rank the various categories that they had included in their puzzles from 1-10, with 10 being the most important and 1 being the least important. They selected the two most important categories and wrote a brief paper discussing why these two selections had played the most significant role in shaping their racial and cultural identities. Using the Stages of Cultural Identity, pre-service teachers examined their identities and their world to ascertain some perspective of the stage(s) with which they might identify. They then wrote a short paragraph explaining how and why they might identify with the selected stage. Finally, they were required to present the major aspects of their puzzles to their classmates.

Observations

Examining the designed puzzles and presentations, it was discovered that many commonalities emerged among students. Very evident were family and religion. However, in comparison to Brown's (2005) vision, pre-service teachers in general identified primarily with family and religion, and in fewer cases gender. Students seemed not to identify with most of Brown's vision.

Therefore, from the cultural puzzles, students' presentations, written papers, discussions, and

observations, it became very evident that families and religion were the most common in shaping most of the pre-service teachers' racial and cultural identities. Some students had interesting comments:

- One student suggested that family was the most significant because her family molded her values, beliefs, and outlook on life. Her parents promoted the value of love, family, kindness, and education and helped her to become the person she is today.
- Another student commented that her parents taught her everything she knew and they are always a reminder to be a good, respectful person.
- A third student said her family has given her opportunities to succeed, unconditional support, and has taught her the value of family because they are the people who will always be there for you.
- Finally, with respect to religion, one student stated that growing up as a Catholic was the basis for the morals and values that were instilled in her from childhood, and everything she was involved in centered around her faith because it is the center of life.

With reference to identifying with Banks's Stages of Cultural Identity, preservice teachers tend to identify primarily with Cultural Identity Clarification and Globalism and with Global Competency. Some comments from students with reference to Cultural Identity Clarification were as follows:

- I definitely have ideas, beliefs, and value my own culture, but I am always open-minded towards other cultures and races other than my own.
- I identify with this stage the most. I feel that I am accepting to other cultures and find them very interesting.
- I feel like I am in this stage because I accept the culture I am associated with and have positive influences on other cultures.
- I relate to this stage because I do accept myself as an individual, and I have much respect for all cultures. I can view a story from multiple perspectives since I am not close-minded.
- I would consider myself in stage 3 because I have a well informed and clear attitude about

my own culture. I try to ignore stereotypes and accept everyone no matter what their culture is. My attitude is not that my culture is better, but each culture is valuable and contributes its own unique characteristics.

Discussion

Having students self-reflect on their racial and cultural identities can be very helpful in getting them to have a better understanding of who they are and where they stand with issues of diversity in society and schools. From observations and discussions, students seemed to have a general understanding of who they are, but lacked an understanding of the deeper underpinnings of the forces that might help to shape their lives. For example, in the puzzles students listed some things that were significant to their personal histories (cars, clothes, shoes, animals, etc.). They did not seem to have a good understanding of how developed identity helps to determine behavior.

Observations from the stages of cultural identity suggest that pre-service teachers identified with the stages that showed that they are confident with who they are as a person and their ability to make contributions to the nation as well as from a global perspective. This observation is of interest since Banks (2005) suggests that individuals are likely to experience stage 3 when they have attained a certain level of economic success and have had positive experience with members of other cultural groups. Most pre-service teachers in this situation had not reached certain levels of economic success, and from earlier observations it was discovered that the majority of the pre-service teachers lack diversity experience.

Meece (1997) advocates that having a good understanding of their own ethnic and cultural identities will help white teachers to have a better understanding of minorities, especially pertaining to stereotypes and misconceptions. With the changing demographics in our nation's schools, teacher educators in preparation programs must be willing to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to self-reflect on their identities in order to gain a better understanding of who they are as a person and in society before embarking on the journey of trying to understand other people's children.

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University–School Partnerships: Voices from the Field

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Introduction

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) requires universities' educator preparation programs to develop effective university–school partnerships that positively impact student learning (CAEP, 2013). In response to the charge by CAEP, this researcher conducted a qualitative descriptive study to examine university–school partnerships. There is agreement that university–school partnerships are vital to addressing the ongoing needs of universities and schools. When universities and schools collaborate, a positive learning environment is created that mutually benefits P-12 students, teacher candidates, and veteran teachers. Collaboratively, the two institutions are more effective than if each worked in a silo. Additionally, amid the current economic crisis and cutbacks in public funding, partnerships between universities and public schools could be the only way the nation's school system will be able to educate and train future generations.

A complete redesign of the nation's education system, from pre-kindergarten through college, will not happen without increased university–school partnerships, which “can create, protect, and document new educational designs” (Darling-Hammond, 2008, p. 1). As more institutions of higher education begin to develop and maintain systemic partnerships, there will truly be simultaneous reformation of universities and schools, creating a seamless web for each and every child. Creating and maintaining productive schools are not just school districts', administrators', and/or teachers' concern, but a societal concern. When schools are working effectively and graduating students who are prepared to enter college or the workforce, the

greater community benefits. Flourishing university–school partnerships position schools to better address the diverse needs of the student body.

“Universities and schools are collaborators in what is arguably the most critical goal in the United States—the education of its children. Historically, however, they have not actually collaborated” (Teitel, 2008, p. 1). University–school partnerships of various designs have existed for over 100 years. However, an indisputable fact is that partnerships are difficult to initiate and develop, and the relationship between partners is often characterized by attempts of one side to dominate or reform the other (Kranyik & Gillette, n.d.).

This research focuses on the organizational structures needed for a partnership continuum among universities and schools. The three themes of structure, communication, and commitment emerged from the data. Structure of the partnership, commitment of the stakeholders, and communication between stakeholders are discussed.

Participants

In all, 12 persons representing six university–school partnerships throughout the continental United States and Puerto Rico participated. Participants were selected based on their having worked at the university or the school district at the onset of the partnership and being the main person responsible for coordinating the partnership efforts for his/her respective institution. Persons from the universities who participated in the interviews are referred to as coordinators. These participants may have had various job titles; however, their responsibilities related to the partnership were the same at their respective

universities. Persons from the public schools participating in the interviews are referred to as facilitators. Official job titles may have differed depending on the district, and the facilitator may have worked directly at a school site or been a central office employee; however, their responsibilities related to the partnership were the same. A facilitator was responsible for working with a coordinator and acting as a liaison between the district and the university. The facilitator was the person charged with leading the partnership initiatives at the P-12 school sites.

Structure

The first emergent theme specific to the university–school partnership was how the partnership was structured. Organizational structure refers to the way an organization arranges people and jobs so its work can be performed and its goals can be met (Helms, 2006). According to Bolman and Deal (2008), six assumptions undergird the structural frame:

- 1) Organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives.
- 2) Organizations increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialization and appropriate division of labor.
- 3) Suitable forms of coordination and control ensure diverse efforts of individuals and units mesh.
- 4) Organizations work best when rationality prevails over personal preference and extraneous pressures.
- 5) Structures must be designed to fit an organization's current circumstances (including its goals, technology, workforce, and environment).
- 6) Problems arise and performance suffers from structural deficiencies and can be remedied through analysis and restructuring. (p. 47)

During the interviews, the six coordinators spoke at length about the importance of establishing a structure and coordinating goals and responsibilities prior to implementing the partnership. All of the coordinators stated the initial structure of the program played a major role in the success, or lack thereof, in the partnership continuum. "A structure's

workability ultimately depends on its fit with the organization's environment" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 89). Nine of the 12 respondents describing their partnership as successful had one thing in common: prior to the initiation of the partnership they aligned the work of the partnership with their existing goals and workload. The response from one coordinator reflected many of the stories heard:

Before we approached the school district about the partnership, the School of Education faculty met to align policies and practices of current initiatives. Once faculty believed embarking on this new adventure would not change their current workload, there was buy-in. When the faculty were on board, the idea was presented to the university administration. The administrators were informed the School of Education was committed to participating in the endeavor. All details were discussed, such as costs and impact on faculty workload. The dean explored the impact of the partnership on existing resources and was comfortable the partnership could be successful with existing resources. The administrators gave their blessing to go forward. Prior to approaching the school district, the School of Education faculty believed it was important to get the buy-in from other academic units. The School of Education faculty wanted the endeavor to be a true university–school partnership and not just a partnership with the School of Education. The university community had the opportunity to hear the proposed idea and discussed various ways respective schools and departments could become involved. The partnership was housed in the School of Education, but others had a voice in how the partnership developed.

"The structural perspective argues for putting people in the right roles and relationship, but finding a satisfactory system of roles and relationships is an ongoing struggle. Properly designed, these formal arrangements can accommodate both collective goals and individual differences" (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 73). The majority of the participants, 10 of 12, noted the importance of the process of aligning the facilitator's current workload with their partnership responsibility. One facilitator captured the sentiment of others, "It wasn't anything extra.

It was not a canned program that could not fit into the existing environment. I think that was part of the reason we were effective.”

All of the participants believed the strength of the partnership was determined by the initial preparation to establish the framework. When preplanning was an intricate part of the foundational structure, persons responded with a higher rate of sustainability. As one group began to prepare for the partnership, a grant was secured which afforded the opportunity to select a planning committee, determine goals and objectives, review current practices, conduct needs assessments, identify training needs, develop a statement of work, establish an evaluation system, identify supplementary funding sources, and develop an application packet for selecting partnering schools. Even when the financial resources were not available, other groups echoed many of the aforementioned practices. All of the partnerships developed a structure prior to implementation. One coordinator’s comment captured the practices of the six partnerships researched: “We spent the first year researching what the university–school partnership was and how it would be set up. We established guidelines and looked at the fit for us, we explored other existing partnerships, and we developed a model that would fit our institution and school system.”

Understanding effective practices and researching various organizational structure models helped to define how institutions worked together. Coordinators and facilitators alike believed when the work was shared among all stakeholders, with everyone having a role, the benefits were greater. Toward this end, a coordinator noted, “The School of Social Work provided counseling services for children and parents. They also told the participants about other available resources in the community related to health care and mental health care. Not only did the School of Social Work point them in the right direction, but they assisted the families with applying for the appropriate resources and benefits.”

The relevance of structure became more evident as stories were told. Persons continuously voiced structure as a necessity in beginning the initiation of the process. Prior to creating a

structure, stakeholders questioned who would own the partnership, report the findings, do the most work, identify the key players, and benefit the most, the school or the university? When the appropriate structure was developed, the questions were fewer and stakeholder apprehension decreased. A facilitator noted, “When a structure was organized and everyone understood their role, it was no longer us and them, but we.” The “we” began telling their story, doing their work, collaborating among themselves, and working toward the greater good of the students. Structure is likened to a skeletal system that serves the purpose of support and protection for the body. The partnership structure serves the purpose of support and protection for the university–school partnerships.

Commitment

The second emerging theme was stakeholder commitment. A thought continuously reinforced in the interviews was that commitment is the key ingredient to a university–school partnership. Each of the 12 respondents believed buy-in, or commitment to the process, was vital for success. Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), discuss three major components of organizational commitment as being “a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership” (p. 605). “Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target” (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301).

All of the participants suggested that when there was a strong commitment to the partnership, there were positive outcomes. On the other hand, when the commitment waned, the strength of the partnership diminished. The respondents’ stories about partnership commitment can be summed up in two subthemes: Good Times and Not-So-Good Times. The Good Times reflect a period in the partnership when all of the stakeholders were actively involved and excited about the opportunities for both of the institutions. During the Good Times morale was high, commitment was evident, and progress was being made. The Not-So-Good Times reflect a period in the partnership when people began feeling overwhelmed and disengaged from the process. During this stage

there were multiple personnel changes, job descriptions varied, and new initiatives bloomed, which detracted from the work. The university–school partnership became a second thought and not perceived as vital to the stakeholders.

The Good Times

The Good Times were when all of the stakeholders were committed to the process and persons were working collaboratively for the good of the partnership. Several stories were told about the level of stakeholder commitment. A coordinator noted, “The commitment ranged from university faculty, school practitioners, and the community.” She noted the success of the partnership was dependent on full participation and support. She further explained, “The partnership had to truly encompass everyone at the school and university.” The theme of commitment resonated in every conversation. “The energy level was high. Faculty from every discipline and the teachers all wanted to assist with the partnership. We were all concerned with doing what was best for the children in the schools,” noted a coordinator. In another partnership, the facilitator stated, “Faculty from every department wanted to play a role. Science and English faculty would ask about the partnership, wondering how they could help, how they could become more involved.” One coordinator reported,

The students started coming to the campus to engage in science activities; they were in the labs and conducting experiments with the university faculty and students. The university professors even created inexpensive and creative experiments using materials from home, so the teachers could do them in their classrooms. The professors understood the teachers did not have adequate science supplies. There was a lot of buy-in and high energy for four to five years.

Overwhelmingly, coordinators and facilitators believed there was true commitment in the initial phases by key constituents. Active involvement was viewed as evidence of commitment. Ten of the 12 respondents noted persons became actively involved in the process.

As heard from a coordinator:

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the partnership is the direct and active

participation of the School of Education. Some have said the longest educational distance in America is between universities and needy public school districts. But this partnership was different. Its focus was a school and university collaboration that will extend over the years. It was not just another funded project.

Expressed by a coordinator:

The chair of the art department established a traveling art show and we brought students to the university, he had never been that excited about an initiative in our department before.

A facilitator responded:

We involved the community, not just parents, but the whole community. We had a group who was very active with the community, giving full support to the partnership.

A facilitator expressed:

University classes were held on our campus and we would take classes of students to the university to work with the professors. This created an ownership of the partnership for everyone.

Stated by a facilitator:

Another big part of our partnership was having parent trainings on the university campus. Parents, who may have never been on a college campus, were intricately involved.

Reported by a facilitator:

The principals strongly supported the initiative. Everyone believed this was something that would benefit the needs of the students in the schools.

Noted by a coordinator:

We initially had 100% support from the Dean of the College of Education, the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and the Chancellor of the University.

During The Good Times, the level of commitment, the open lines of communication, and the active engagement was evident to all. But as the saying goes, good times don’t always last. All good things must come to an end.

Not-So-Good Times

According to Klein, Molloy, and Brisfield (2012), “Competing or other commitments can preclude the formation of an expected commitment and/or interfere with a commitment’s expected

outcome” (p. 143). Therefore, it is wise to note, if another idea or target becomes more relevant than the first commitment, the first commitment may suffer. In addition, if the person or people initially committed to the process are no longer there, then the commitment is no longer there. Commitment can be perceived, in these cases, as person-dependent. If those persons are not present or involved, the commitment is absent or weak.

New initiatives, mandates, and personnel changes can alter the landscape of how organizations utilize their time, human resources, and financial resources. The institutions involved in the university–school partnerships were not strangers to this phenomenon. In the beginning, the partnership was a priority to all stakeholders. Even when additional money was not available, persons found a way to repurpose existing financial resources to ensure adequate funds were available for program components. As noted by a facilitator:

We worked during the summer to delineate funds in various budget lines; we knew this was the best thing for us to do for our students. I was looking forward to beginning the school year to implement the ideas. We had a summer retreat to plan all of the details. Both parties (university and school) knew what their respective budget portion would be and their responsibilities. Fast forward a few months into the school year, and the principal had to retire due to health concerns. The new principal, although receptive to our plan, did not see it as a priority. He was not well versed in the model and had other ideas of the direction he wanted the school to pursue. He did not stop the partnership, but he did not go out of his way to support it. When it was time for our annual faculty retreat, fewer resources (human and financial) were designated for the university–school partnership. I believe he wanted it to be perceived as he was the only change agent in the school and he was afraid the university would get all the credit.

Stories like these were not uncommon. As the partnerships ended, the stakeholders attributed the blame to the decline in commitment. These stories were expressed in the following quotes from various coordinators and facilitators from four of the six partnerships.

One facilitator noted:

We had so many new mandates coming down from the state, it is not that we did not want to continue with the partnership, but our time became so busy with inservices and meetings we did not have the time to commit to making the partnership work.

A coordinator responded:

The president at the university changed in the midstream of the partnership. I believe the new president took the college in a different direction; he thought the faculty should be spending more time working on scholarly ventures. Faculty outside the School of Education did not view the partnership work as scholarship; it was only seen as service. Therefore, the faculty had to design their work differently if they were interested in seeking tenure and/or promotion. They did not want to give up on the work with the schools, but self-preservation won.

Expressed by a facilitator:

When the coordinator left there was no one at the university who really ran with the idea like she did. The coordinator was essential to making sure we were on track, but her successor had other priorities and truthfully did not have the skill sets to work with the administration, teachers, parents, and students. This began the demise of the partnership.

A facilitator reported:

I believe we all just gave up; we were tired and there were too many demands on our time, energy, and resources. Yes, we saw the benefits of the partnership, but it was taking too much to make it all work. Sometimes, working alone is easier than partnering.

A coordinator said:

I am not sure what happened, I guess there was a new flavor of the week. Not to sound cynical, but in education, things are always changing. Even when things are going well, changes happen. I understand change is inevitable, but it is hard to continuously commit yourself to something when you are not sure how long the “new flavor” will stick around.

Although the partnerships ended, respondents noted that aspects of the structure were institutionalized within their respective organizations.

Communication

The third theme to emerge from the data was communication between stakeholders. According to Arsith and Draganescu (2011), one of the most important activities of an organization is communication. Communication is the dominant process by which employees carry out exchanges of information, create relationships, and build meanings and organizational culture.

“Communication enhances the organizational capacity” (Berger, 2009, p. 2). The two statements below are representative of the comments reported by 100% of the respondents. As stated by a coordinator, “There must be open communication between all stakeholders in order for the partnership to work.” A facilitator noted, “Communication must be on a level playing field, meaning everyone should have equal say.” The structure of the partnerships was designed so persons believed they had established true communication between schools and universities. Pattern and authenticity of communication are vital to the partnership, as clearly articulated by all respondents. Sentiments stated by a coordinator were echoed by all of the other coordinators: “Authentic dialogue between the university and the school sites was occurring. Prior to the implementation of the university–school partnership, each institution was in its own silo.”

Communication helps individuals and groups coordinate activities to achieve goals and is vital in the process of socialization, decision-making, problem solving, and management changes (Arsith & Draganescu, 2011). The following example from one partnership exemplifies how stakeholders communicated to mutually benefit the P-12 students and the college students:

The university faculty had a presence in our school. Weekly, they would conduct their reading and math courses in our building and work with our first through fifth grade students. This occurred during the normally scheduled university class time. We [the school personnel] had to learn to trust the university faculty and their candidates in our school. The university faculty also had to communicate about the specific details with the teachers. All parties had to develop communication and trust. The arrangement

was a good thing for our students, but it was a process for everyone involved. Other non-education majors began volunteering in the school. This required even more communicating and trust building. The partnership became so widespread; faculty and students from the schools of education, business, and architecture were involved in the process.

The partnerships were not only on the schools’ campuses, but changes started occurring on the universities’ campuses. Students became an intricate part of the universities’ landscapes. In four of the six partnerships, P-12 students had classes on or trips to the universities’ campuses. A coordinator explained the process at her institution:

Every Friday the teachers would take students to the university for physical education classes and other extracurricular or content extension activities. There was a lot of coordinating of schedules, people, and locations during this time. We had to maintain open lines of communication to ensure everything went smoothly. We wanted to ensure the students were not an intrusion on the college’s campus; therefore, open lines of communication were a must during this time.

Stories of ongoing communication were reported from all of the respondents. Stakeholders believed the partnership would be successful as long as the lines of communication remained open and everyone had an equal say. This example given by a facilitator reinforces the importance of open lines of communication.

The teachers constantly coordinated with the university faculty to arrange times for the college students to assist with tutoring and teach model lessons. They developed a strong relationship and had to ensure they communicated their plans, ideas, frustrations, and benefits on a regular basis. The group really became an extension of the others’ team. The communication plan was so effective, problems related to planning were minimum, basically nonexistent. The teachers were grateful for all the support, and the faculty were excited to have an environment in which the teacher candidates could apply their theoretical knowledge.

Communication can help motivate employees, build trust, create a common identity, and increase personal involvement. It gives

people a way to express their feelings and share their hopes and ambitions in order to celebrate and remember the achievements (Arsith & Draganescu, 2011). In five of the six partnerships, the coordinators reported there was a positive correlation between the structure, level of commitment, and communication. When the structure was in place and commitment was high, communication increased. When the structure and commitment began to diminish, the lines of communication also began to wane. The key to positive outcomes was ensuring there was a structure in place, having stakeholders committed to the process, and keeping lines of communication open.

Conclusion

Collaborative partnerships established between schools and universities provide meaningful improvements and enhancements. A balance and integration of theoretical knowledge, with practical experiences from the classroom, would reform educator preparation and P-12 schools. Furthermore, as written in the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education State Policies (2014):

States should invest in initiatives that promote systemic approaches to improving the educator workforce. For example, states could invest in pilot programs, with clear guidelines and expectations, that support recruitment of a high-quality, diverse educator workforce; rigorous clinical experiences and internships for candidates; high-quality mentor and induction programs to support novice educators; and collaborative partnerships between educator preparation programs and local school districts. Although such work would be complex, it would result in a significant and sustained return on investment including increased student learning, increased persistence of educators in the workforce, reduced district expenses for training new educators, and stronger relationships between local schools and educator preparation programs. (p. 1)

In response to these clarion calls for university–school partnerships, the researcher embarked upon this study to investigate the nature of university–

school partnerships. This study explored the organizational structures required to initiate, implement, sustain, and institutionalize a university–school partnership.

Through the experiences of the six coordinators and six facilitators interviewed as part of this study and the analyses of the documents, several important aspects of the university–school partnership were explored. The results of the study indicated planning, commitment renewal, work alignment, and shared responsibility are vital components when initiating, implementing, sustaining, and/or institutionalizing a university–school partnership. It further detailed the benefits and barriers to the partnership continuum. The benefits outlined were (1) university faculty more cognizant of the trends and issues in P-12 schools and (2) improvements in P-12 schools. The only barrier to the process was personnel changes.

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What Schools Look For When Hiring New Teachers: An Examination of Dispositions Statements on Hiring Reference Forms

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Introduction

It is commonly recognized that knowledge of content in the field of teaching is a prerequisite to imparting that knowledge to others. Indeed, some would argue that having a solid foundation in their content knowledge, as evidenced by an undergraduate degree in the content field, is sufficient for novices to begin teaching and that formal training in pedagogy is unnecessary or even counterproductive. Most recognize, however, that formal and systematic teacher education is needed to support teacher candidates in learning how to ensure student learning. Shulman (1986) argues that pedagogical content knowledge brings together content knowledge and the practice of teaching, assuring that discussions of content are relevant to teaching and that discussions of teaching retain attention to content – a content-based form of professional knowledge. As Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) argue, pedagogical content knowledge is a form of knowledge that makes science teachers *teachers* rather than scientists. It is a knowledge that combines content, pedagogy, and learner characteristics.

Accreditation standards for teacher preparation programs, such as the standards for the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), typically call for assessment of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Moreover, each of the ten InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards (CCSSO, 2013), used widely to promote professional learning and practice,

include “Critical Dispositions” in addition to “Performances” and “Essential Knowledge.” However, widely-used, standardized assessments designed to determine readiness to teach focus primarily on beginning teachers’ competency in content knowledge and pedagogical skills, with little attention given to dispositions. Nevertheless, the attitudes, values, beliefs, and professional behaviors of novice teachers are essential to teachers’ success and retention. According to Audrey Heining-Boynton, “Teacher attitude has a great effect on students, and student success. . . . It’s an incredibly important component” (Hallam, 2009, p. 27). Moreover, Wasicsko’s (2002) research claims that dispositional characteristics of the classroom teacher significantly affect how well students learn:

Recently it has become clear that the quality of the education our children receive depends directly upon the quality of the teachers in our schools. Parents, teachers, educators, and researchers agree that effective teaching happens when the teachers thoroughly know their subjects, have significant teaching skills and possess the dispositions that foster growth and learning in students. (p.1)

The purpose of this study was to examine the dispositions deemed most important by Georgia Local Education Agencies (LEAs), as evidenced by the criteria included on the forms used to solicit information about prospective employees. While faculty in teacher preparation programs offer their professional knowledge and experience in teaching and assessing desirable

dispositions for pre-service teachers, this study focuses attention on the criteria that LEAs actually seek when hiring faculty. That is, the researchers of this study were deliberate with their intention to collaborate with school districts to capture the dispositions that are expected of teachers who are hired to teach in their schools.

Defining and Assessing Dispositions – A Slippery Slope

There are a number of reasons that dispositions receive less attention than content knowledge and pedagogical skills in both teacher education programs and in assessments of readiness to teach. Quite simply, it is difficult to assess dispositions because of their subjective nature. Although observable behaviors such as “punctual” or “follows policies and procedures” are relatively easy to assess if the assessor has access to information about the candidate’s typical and ongoing behaviors, dispositions also include a candidate’s values, attitudes, and beliefs, which are inherently personal, situational, and variable. In addition, the person(s) called upon to assess the candidates’ dispositions often have limited contact with the candidate in professional settings, making an assessment of dispositions merely a speculation about the person, or more troubling, the *absence* of negative reports about the candidate. It is, therefore, much easier to assess a candidate’s knowledge or skills objectively through standardized rubrics and examinations than to assess the candidate’s dispositions, which are inherently personal, variable, and subjective. One can only observe the outward behaviors and then attempt to extrapolate the underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs from the evidence made available at the time of the assessment.

Evidence of one’s dispositions is always situated in the circumstances of performance (Kenrick & Funder, 1988; Funder, 2001). That is, one’s attitudes, values, beliefs, and professional behaviors are inevitably influenced by the context in which the subject is placed. However, even though dispositions can only be assessed through evidence found in performance, a productive discourse of dispositions requires a working definition that identifies dispositions as distinct from knowledge and skills. For analysis of the

data for this study, the researchers followed the CAEP (2015) definition of dispositions: “the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities that affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth.”

Some items on the hiring reference forms were easily identifiable as dispositions. For example, “has a positive attitude” and “is cooperative with others” were quickly identified as dispositional. However, other criteria included on the forms were less clearly defined as dispositions and required a closer analysis to determine whether the statement related to dispositions or to knowledge or skills. Criteria that were primarily indicative of teacher’s knowledge or ability were excluded as dispositions. In some cases, the wording of the statement determined whether the criterion was classified as a disposition or was excluded from the data. For example, consider the following two statements: (1) The candidate knows how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. (2) The candidate believes that all students can learn and plans instruction based on his/her knowledge of students. In this case, the criteria for selecting a statement as a disposition or excluding it from the list was guided by the verbs. Although both statements are related to differentiating instruction, the emphasis in the first sentence is on what the candidate *knows*, while the emphasis in the second sentence is on what the candidate *believes*.

Further complicating a discussion of dispositions is that dispositions valued and accepted in one educational setting may not be valued in another. For example, in some school settings, teachers are expected to be innovative and creative in their development of curriculum materials and learning activities. They are encouraged to engage in critical thinking, make professional judgments, and contribute to an ongoing body of knowledge. In other school settings, however, teachers are expected to be compliant and cooperative rule-followers and to faithfully deliver a preselected and carefully prescribed curriculum without questioning authority. Therefore, a disposition of innovation and creativity may be valued in one school setting,

while a disposition of compliance and obedience is valued in another.

Methodology

The collection and analysis of data from school systems' hiring reference forms are embedded in a larger project involving several members of the Georgia Assessment Directors Association (GADA). The larger project is designed to place greater emphasis on the development of the critical dispositions needed for effective teaching. The portion of the project reported here is significant because it enhances an understanding of what is needed and expected of new teachers as they begin their careers in education.

The initial impetus for this study came as a result of an observation by one of the researchers who had been asked on many occasions to complete hiring reference forms for students graduating from the teacher preparation program. The researcher observed that far more questions on the forms were related to dispositions than to knowledge and skills. At the same time, the researcher, who was then chair of the unit's assessment committee, was involved in preparing the teacher preparation programs at her university for future accreditation reviews and was seeking a valid and reliable dispositions assessment instrument. In addition, she wanted to develop a document that would be useful for helping candidates understand the importance of professional behaviors and attitudes when working in school settings. The researcher reviewed a few reference forms from the ones she had been asked to complete and informally compared the criteria, which she found to be surprisingly consistent across the forms. This discovery led to the idea of gathering as many forms as possible and completing a larger comparison. Soon, a researcher from another university joined her to assist with the project, and together, they presented the idea at a state GADA meeting. They immediately gained support from other educators with similar interests.

Twelve GADA members volunteered to help with distribution of the request for forms. The researchers obtained a list that included contact information for the human resources department of every LEA in the state and assigned each volunteer a portion of the departments to contact. For

consistency, a personalized form letter was sent by email to the director of human resources for each LEA. After several weeks, having received 25 usable forms, the two researchers began their analysis of the data.

The researchers created an Excel spreadsheet with rows for dispositional criteria and columns for each participating school system. Beginning with School System A, each disposition criterion was listed from the hiring reference form and a "1" was placed in the corresponding cell. With the next school system, similar criteria were considered. If a match for a criterion was noted, a "1" was placed in its corresponding cell. Using a numerical value to mark each item, the researchers facilitated calculations of totals on the criteria. When a criterion was encountered that had not been identified from previous forms, it was added to the list. The last column on the right listed totals for each criterion, which were used to calculate frequency of responses. Figure 1 is a simplified representation showing how the data were organized in the Excel chart.

Figure 1. Sample Frequency Chart for Dispositions

Disposition Criterion	School System A	School System B	School System C	School System D	TOTALS
Cooperative; collaborative	1	1		1	3
Punctual	1	1	1		3
Relates well to adults	1				1
Relates well to children	1		1	1	3
Uses good judgment		1			1

The researchers reviewed the items on each form independently, entering appropriate marks as they determined how each criterion should be counted. After completing each form independently, the researchers talked through their decisions together. In the vast majority of cases, the assignments were identical. In cases where there was disagreement, the researchers discussed the criterion and arrived at consensus for its designation. Criteria that were worded differently but were similar in content were collapsed into a single category. For example, the researchers decided that *cooperation* and *collaboration* were

similar constructs and could be grouped together. Other criteria, though similar in wording, were not collapsed. The researchers agreed that *relationships with adults* should be separate from *relationships with students*, as the first is more relevant outside the classroom, while the latter is more relevant to effectively working with students in the teaching environment.

When data from all the LEAs were entered, the criteria were ranked according to frequency. The following list shows the ranking of the identified dispositional criteria from the analysis of the hiring reference forms, with the frequency of the response in parentheses.

1. Cooperation/Collaboration (19)
2. Attitude – Enthusiastic/Professional/Positive/Flexible (18)
3. Relationships with Adults (17)
4. Communication – Professional/Effective (15)
5. Attendance/Punctuality (14)
6. Relationships with Students (14)
7. Initiative/Personal Motivation/Creativity/Resourcefulness (13)
8. Composure/Self-Control (e.g., accepts constructive criticism) (12)
9. Judgment – Professional (12)
10. Ethics/Character/Integrity (11)
11. Willingness to Assist/Accept Responsibilities (11)
12. Appearance and Dress – Professional (9)
13. Dependability/Reliability (8)
14. Organization/Time Management (7)
15. Willingness to Learn and/or Grow Professionally (6)
16. Supports School Mission/Visions; Loyal to Employer (6)
17. Commitment to/Enthusiasm for the Profession (5)
18. Understands/Follows Policies, Procedures, Rules (5)
19. Role Model for Others (5)
20. Tact (5)
21. Neatness/Accuracy/Timeliness with Work (4)
22. Confidentiality (3)
23. Expectations High for Students (3)
24. Problem Solving Ability (1)
25. Respect/Understanding (1)

The most frequently mentioned dispositional criterion was cooperation/collaboration, which was included on 76% of the forms. While not

directly related to student achievement, the prevalence of this criterion strongly indicates that schools do not expect new teachers to develop their professional practice in isolation. Rather, schools desire and need teachers who are willing to draw upon and contribute to the resources of other professionals and to work toward common goals in ways that are collegial and productive. The least frequently mentioned criteria, mentioned on only one form each, were problem-solving ability and respect/understanding. It should be noted that although the criteria were ranked in order of frequency, the researchers do not suggest a hierarchy of importance related to the rankings. That is, the highest ranked criteria are not necessarily more critical to teacher success than the least frequently mentioned, only that they appeared more frequently on the forms. In addition, the researchers recognize that there may be dispositional criteria not mentioned at all in the hiring reference forms that are also important for teacher success. The rankings do, however, suggest commonly held understandings about the criteria that are recognized by school systems as important for teacher success.

Following analysis of the data, the researchers presented their findings at the spring GADA meeting and solicited feedback from members at the meeting. The researchers first presented the data on the spreadsheet to the members and asked them to submit written comments. Significant among the responses were comments about what was missing, such as attitudes toward students with diverse backgrounds and cultures. Two members also expressed concern that the criterion of ethics was rated so low (#10) on the list.

GADA members were then asked to address the question: How can these data from the 25 school systems inform the development of an assessment of dispositions for pre-service teachers in Georgia? One response was, “These data can assist the development of professionalism/dispositions assessments by incorporating districts’ expectations into our own.” This statement indicates a belief that the perspectives of both the school systems and the teacher preparation programs should be included in any assessment used to measure candidates’ dispositions.

Discussion and Next Steps

The researchers for this study analyzed data from the hiring reference forms of 25 school systems in Georgia to develop an understanding of the dispositions deemed important for new teachers in their schools. Although the initial intent of the project was simply to identify dispositional criteria from the forms, the investigative process led to a more profound understanding of the complexities related to a study of dispositions, and ultimately, the analysis led to additional questions. Through discussions of the data, the researchers began to wrestle with questions such as:

- In what ways do the results of this study, which examines the dispositional criteria included on hiring reference forms for new teachers, compare to the ways teacher candidates are currently being taught and assessed in teacher preparation programs?
- Is it reasonable to expect that experiences in a program that lasts only 2-4 semesters prepare candidates adequately for the kind of dispositions needed for effective teaching?
- Is it possible for candidates who demonstrate clearly undesirable dispositions prior to program entry (e.g., at an entry interview) to change their dispositions as a result of program intervention, or should they just be prevented from entering the program?
- If dispositions can be taught, *how* should they be taught?
- In terms of time and resources, how much emphasis should be placed on the teaching of dispositions? For example, should teacher preparation programs include an entire course on professional dispositions, with similar emphasis as courses aimed at teaching knowledge and skills?
- How should dispositions be assessed?
- If dispositions cannot be measured directly, what evidence should be used to assess dispositions?
- Should the persons who assess candidates' dispositions have special training in analyzing evidence of dispositions?

This is a sample of the questions that must be addressed before it is possible to develop a theory

of dispositions that supports an adequate dispositions assessment.

This study revealed that hiring reference forms from LEAs include far more questions related to dispositional criteria than to knowledge and skills. The researchers speculate that this result occurred because the school systems assume that candidates who have successfully completed a teacher preparation program have demonstrated that they possess the necessary knowledge and skills ensured by the licensure exam, grade point average, national edTPA score, and other exit requirements. With the hiring reference forms, therefore, LEAs are seeking information about candidates that will help to determine whether the candidate will be the kind of person who will meet their expectations for characteristics that are less likely to be measured on standardized assessments.

Much work remains to be done related to the development of an assessment instrument that can adequately measure dispositions. Collecting data on the dispositional criteria included on LEAs' hiring reference forms was the first step in a larger project that includes these next steps:

- Examine data from current dispositions assessment instruments used in the state by teacher preparation programs.
- Develop a rubric that acknowledges and includes data from both the LEAs' hiring reference forms and the current dispositions instruments used by teacher preparation programs in the state.
- Align the dispositions assessment instrument with InTASC and CAEP standards.
- Pilot the assessment with candidates in selected teacher education programs.
- Validate the assessment, present the findings, and solicit a state endorsement of the assessment.
- Disseminate the dispositions assessment to those wishing to use it and make recommendations for its use in teacher preparation programs.

The researchers are committed to increasing awareness of the essential dispositions needed to ensure success for new teachers. Although teaching attitudes, values, and beliefs may be far more complex and challenging than teaching knowledge and skills, and *assessing* dispositions is even more difficult, it is, nonetheless,

important for those who prepare teachers to include dispositions education as a critical component of their programs.

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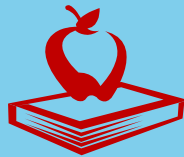
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