

# *The Field Experience Journal*

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## From the Editor

Dear Readers of *The Field Experience Journal*:

Our first article for this edition comes from Auburn University's Victoria Cardullo, Megan Burton and L. Octavia Tripp. Their submission, "Professional Identities of Teacher Candidates Collaborating and Developing in an Alternative Placement", shares the challenges for teacher educators to assist teacher candidates in developing attitude, self-efficacy, and teaching skills.

"Culturally Relevant Summer Field Experiences for Undergraduate Teacher Education Majors" by Megan Adams and Sanjuana Rodriguez of Kennesaw State University describes a study investigating teacher efficacy before, during, and after a summer field experience.

Our final article from Chad Cunningham of Auburn University is "Maximizing Field Experience as Experience: Improving Pre-Service Teacher Training through Intentional Partnership & Authentic Collaboration". In this submission, the author compares and contrasts traditional models of teacher preparation field experiences to a year-long internship model.

Finally, my thanks to those who have contributed their manuscripts for our consideration and to our reviewers for their time and expertise.

Kim L. Creasy

**Professional Identities of Teacher Candidates**  
**Collaborating and Developing in an Alternative Placement**

*Victoria Cardullo, Megan Burton, and L. Octavia Tripp*

*Auburn University*

**Developing Teacher Identity**

The transition process from full-time student to a full member in the professional community of educators is complex. While making this transition teacher candidates need to acquire a sophisticated understanding of pedagogical practices and the development of professional knowledge (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). During this process, they often create and recreate images of themselves as a member of the community. Gee positions the notion of professional identity to be a person's narrativization of what consist of his or her never fully formed or always potentially changing core identity as a teacher (2000). During teacher education candidates develop a series of attributes associated with the complex practice of teaching and the ethical aspect associated with the profession (Shulman, 1998). The development of the teacher's voice depends on the participant's experiences, and their ongoing consideration and reconsideration of events and experiences through reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995).

Professional identities are developed through the discourse between the individuals and the sociocultural environment in which they are embodied. Teacher education courses are designed to provide unique and practical tools through experiences of teaching in a professional setting. Even though teacher candidates are given all the means of preparation, they are still concerned about whether they are prepared enough to teach and feel confident enough to be in

the classroom. The challenge for educators responsible for methods courses is to help candidates develop the attitude, self-efficacy, and teaching skills that prepare them to teach (Howitt, 2006).

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Bromme and Strasser (1991) stress professional identities are grounded in one's professional knowledge of pedagogy, curriculum, and the interactions between theory and practice. Gee defined identity as "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person,' in a given context..." (2000, p. 99). A common element in the literature (Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011) is that personal and contextual factors interact in a reciprocal way to shape one's identity. The work of teacher candidates is complex as they encounter content and begin to work with veteran teachers. Therefore, understanding how teacher candidates' identities develop in an alternate field placement will assist teacher preparation programs to better prepare candidates for the rigors of teaching.

### **Methodology**

This qualitative case study sought to examine teacher candidates 1) use of a variety of resources, instructional strategies in planning, teaching, and implementing inquiry-based hands-on lessons; 2) professional noticings involving identification, utilization, and connection of essential elements occurring in the classroom to advance instruction; and 3) the relationship between teacher candidate's metacognitive digital strategies and the level of instructional scaffolding to support learning. Using Miles et al., recommendations for confirmability, dependability, internal validity, and external validity, we established protocols, for data collection and used multiple sources for triangulation. In our data we provided descriptive narrative" to permit adequate comparisons with other samples" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 314).

## **Participants**

Participants were 24 undergraduate elementary education majors enrolled in a capstone program at a university in the southeast. The research took place during an intensive summer semester in which students were enrolled in methods courses as they participated in an alternative field placement. The alternative summer field placement was a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) camp for rising 3, 4, & 5 graders. Over sixty percent of the population received scholarships based on financial need and teacher recommendation. Students came from six different school districts adjacent to the university. The population of the camp was approximately 60% African American, 20% Asian, 15% Caucasian, and 5% other nationality representations. The camp took place directly after completion of a semester of coursework completed by teacher candidates. the camp lasted for three weeks in the morning with afternoon daily debriefings and follow up on curriculum needs. Using a simple random sampling technique three participants were selected using a lottery method for selection to develop case stories. All participants are 21 years old and female living in the southeast currently in their first methods course during the summer.

## **Data Sources**

Several data sources were collection occurred over the course of the summer during method courses and summer alternative field placement. Throughout the semester students participated in multiple surveys (MARS, Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; i-MARS, Author; Teaching Efficacy Survey). In addition to the above-mentioned surveys candidates developed lesson plans for the three weeks of summer STEM camp for reading, math, and science were observed, each lesson lasted 30-60 minutes depending on the context of the lesson and the integration of additional subjects. All teacher candidates participated in daily observations, they

were frequently observed using an observational protocol by either their peers or their professors. There were debriefing sessions after each lesson was taught, daily reflections, interviews, and documented professional noticings. These data sources were used to develop an in-depth understanding of professional identities. Prior to this field placement, the three candidates (Bree, Gene, & Kelly- all names are pseudonyms) had no prior experience in a field placement setting.

### **Data Analysis**

This research study used comparative analysis to illustrate or describe how an event associated with the development of the teacher candidate's professional identities emerged. Data was evaluated holistically. Data for each case was collected by researchers from the methods classes. Much of the data was collected in a natural setting or context as many of the data sources were requirements for their course work. As researchers, we were able to study and analyze events, behaviors and the development of professional identities in a laboratory setting.

Once data was coded and verified, the research team met to discuss findings of commonalities across participants and subject areas. We then discussed the use of a variety of resources, instructional strategies in planning, teaching, and implementing inquiry-based hands-on lessons, their professional noticings involving identification, utilization, and connection of essential elements occurring in the classroom to advance instruction and the relationship between teacher candidate's metacognitive digital strategies and the level of instructional scaffolding to support learning. We utilized participants speech, reflections, and other artifacts to identify how they developed their professional identities during STEM camp.

### **Findings**

In this section we describe how teacher candidates' professional identities impacted their

development of lesson instruction during the summer STEM camp. We developed a case story for each individual using the lens of the methods course, assignments related to each course were evaluated individually and the collectively using a comparative analysis to provide a descriptive narrative as candidates moved from candidate to novice teacher in an alternate field placement.

### **Literature and Technology**

To explore the relationship between teacher candidate's metacognitive digital strategies and the level of instructional scaffolding to support learning two surveys were used to identify candidates' metacognitive behaviors. The i-MARSI (author) designed to measure metacognitive awareness and perceived use of digital strategies a highly reliable tool (.93 reliability) and the Metacognitive Awareness Reading Strategy Inventory (MARSI) used to measure adolescent readers' metacognitive awareness' and perceived usage of reading strategies a highly reliable tool (.89 reliability) (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). We then positioned the research to look at strategies adopted by the teacher candidates and the actual implementation of the strategies to support learning during the STEM camp.

#### **i-MARSI**

Review of the i-MARSI scores indicated that Bree increased her self-awareness of metacognitive strategies (pre-3.4 and post-4.3). Overall, she has self-identified self-monitoring strategies as a high level of usage and awareness when reading digital text. This increase in score could be attributed to a better awareness of digital strategies when planning lesson during STEM camp. On the other hand, Gene's scores indicated a low level of strategies used when reading digital text. The decrease in score (pre-3.4 and post-2.2) could be attributed to a better awareness of her personal use of digital strategies. Gene perceived a higher usage than what she actually employed in her pre-scores. After teaching throughout the STEM camp and reflecting on her

actual usage of digital metacognitive strategies many of her self-reported strategies decreased. In addition, Kelly reflected on the self-reported scores as well and noted a decrease in her self-reported strategies. Kelly self-reported pre-4.5 and post-3.2 which indicated an overall decrease in her self-reported scores (see Table 1).

Table 1.

*i-MARSI Pre and Post Scores*

Student	Pre	Pre	Pre	Post	Post	Post
	DSMS	SMMS	Overall	DSMS	SMMS	Overall
Bree	3.2	3.6	3.4	4.0	4.6	4.3
Gene	3.6	3.2	3.4	2.9	1.6	2.2
Kelly	4.2	4.9	4.5	3.1	3.3	3.2

Key to averages: 3.5 or higher = High; 2.5 – 3.4 = Medium; 2.4 or lower = Low

**MARSI**

After reviewing the MARSI Bree displayed an overall score of a 3.5 which means she readily relies on both problem-solving strategies as well as support strategies when text becomes difficult, she often rereads for accuracy, uses embedded references, and or adjusts her reading to make sense of the text. Problem-solving (3.8) and support strategies (3.8) align with her Self-Monitoring Metacognitive Strategies (4.6) from the iMARSI.

Gene displayed an overall score of a 3.1 which means she has a medium overall score. She relies mainly on problem-solving strategies when meaning breaks down. She is weakest in support strategies. Her medium level of strategy usage as indicated on the MARSI (3.1) coincide with results from the iMARSI (2.2).



Kelly displayed an overall score of a 3.6 which means she has a high overall score of reading strategies. Kelly relies mainly on global and problem-solving strategies with support strategies in the lowest range (2.2). For global she decides what to read and what to ignore, she often will skim the text to look for key reading characteristics such as length of the text, or embedded features such as maps and charts. Her high level of strategy usage as indicated on the MARSIs coincide with results from the iMARSIs Kelly is a strategic reader (see Table 2).

Table 2.

MARSIs Scores

Student	Global Strategies	Problem Solving	Support Strategies	Overall
Bree	3.0	3.8	3.8	3.5
Gene	3.0	4.3	2.2	3.1
Kelly	3.9	4.5	2.6	3.6

Key to averages: 3.5 or higher = High; 2.5 – 3.4 = Medium; 2.4 or lower = Low

In addition to the above surveys' students indicated their top five anxieties for using technology as a learning tool.

Bree stated that her top anxieties for using technology for learning are finding a balance, she often felt "it is easier for me to make a lesson without technology" and she proclaimed it would be "difficult to monitor" students as they interacted with various websites. Bree stated, "I would rather not mess with it [technology]" acknowledging this is not a good mindset but "it [technology] evolves so quickly" (Anxiety survey). "I know how to work technology in general, but I have not had hands-on experiences specifically in the classroom" (reflection). Bree brings a strong concern to light as many education programs provide opportunities for candidates to explore technology in their methods courses, yet it is important to realize this experience is not

the same as when they are in field placement. They often struggle to implement technology in a classroom as Bree stated: "I am still nervous about monitoring and making sure students are on task" as well as "getting them [students] hooked on it as a tool vs. as a toy" (reflection). Bree acknowledged the fact that she has "grown up with technology. However, I think I am more concerned with my mentality" adding "I don't feel qualified when it comes to effectively using technology to make an awesome lesson" (reflection). "I know how to work general technology, but I have not been hands-on enough specifically in the classroom" (reflection).

Gene stressed over "inappropriate content" as students viewed websites and searched for information. She felt the "hassle" wasn't worth the effort as she often felt "she did not know enough about the apps" or when the appropriate time "to use it [device and/or apps]" would be during lesson development (Anxiety survey). Gene stated many times in her reflections that "I don't know all of the possible apps/ resources I can use." She also felt "technology should be used in moderation" stating, "I think using technology creates just as many problems as it does solving them" (reflection). Gene often felt "less in control" when using technology in her lessons and stated she felt more comfortable with paper and pencil" (reflection). Gene felt she had the skills to problem solve "I could figure it out for myself but not enough to teach" (reflection). Gene felt "technology should be used in moderation" (reflection). She often felt "less in control when using technology" in her lessons and "worried about using it" for learning.

Kelly was often apprehensive of "its [technology] dependability" and worried about "students breaking or cracking the device." She stated in her weekly journal "I feel ill-prepared because I base my knowledge on how my teachers used it with me. I have not seen many successful examples, so I am hesitant" to use technology in her lesson development. She stated "reading online is challenging" and worried about "student engagement and loss of attention"

because students “would not know how to use the functions [of the device]” (Anxiety survey). “I think technology should be used occasionally in the classroom. I think that teachers overuse them [devices] because they are forced to” (reflection). Kelly also discussed her personal preference of device stating, “I prefer PC to MAC but many school systems opt for MAC” and “switching between the two can be confusing” (weekly reflection). Kelly stated that if she had to “explore an app, it doesn't take me long to figure it out” but she hate[s] the technical portions (like fixing/ troubleshooting)” and postulated the need “to determine the purpose for websites and apps” before developing a lesson (reflection).

In general, when teacher candidates are asked to use technology to facilitate learning, some degree of change is required along any or all of the following dimensions: (a) beliefs, attitudes, or pedagogical ideologies; (b) content knowledge; (c) pedagogical knowledge of instructional practices, student’s funds of knowledge, strategies, methods, or approaches; and (d) novel or altered instructional resources to meet the student’s zone of proximal development, technology, or materials. As Bromme and Strasser (1991) stress professional identities are grounded in one’s professional knowledge of pedagogy, curriculum, and the interactions between theory and practice and little is known about the metacognitive strategies’ students use to read and comprehend digital text while using mobile devices.

### **Mathematics**

Professional noticing involves identifying, utilizing, and connecting essential elements occurring in the classroom to advance instruction. Professional noticing is central to the effectiveness of mathematics teachers. (Jacobs, Lamb, & Philipp, 2010; Mason, 2002; Sherin, Jacobs, & Philipp, 2011). Findings below reflect the themes that emerged from analyzing data

from planning, teaching, observation, and reflection to develop awareness of the professional noticings and perception about teaching and learning for each candidate.

Bree stated “when I first heard the term productive struggle it didn’t make any sense to me. I thought the word “struggle” in itself is a teacher’s role to minimize” (observational debriefing). She stated “when given a chance to work through it on their own, they realized how much they knew and what they could do” she articulated the need for the “teacher [to] watch from afar to ensure they weren’t left without tools to solve it [the problem] (reflection). She stated “I used to think teaching was standing up front and making it easy for the kids to understand [content] (reflection). She understood that it is her “job to get students to do the work of learning” and “teaching is different than [she] thought” (reflection).

During a teaching lesson, Bree saw a student using an efficient measurement method that was different from the one she modeled. Bree utilized this as an opportunity to have students analyze and share thinking about various strategies that could be used for measurement and simultaneously validating student learning strategies. Bree was able to identify specific issues in observations and her work and provide specific suggestions stating, “multitasking is difficult” (observation debriefing). Bree was able to notice scaffolding and the need for productive struggle when observing students and teachers. This was her big take away in her reflections. However, her lesson plans and teaching didn’t develop to this level. She did a great deal of funneling students to her thinking/ strategies, rather than focusing on the overarching content.

Bree’s reflections at beginning lacked content in her abilities stating “I worry about being wrong or missing something a student needs” but grew in confidence in reflections “sometimes less is more, letting them talk is important” Her observational notes, plans, and teaching seemed very confident as she reflected that “ multitasking is difficult and remembering to look for what

they know, not just right or wrong is tough to do without time to process” can be challenging (journal reflection).

Bree’s perception of teaching changed she used to “think teaching was standing up front and making it easy for the kids to understand” she now understands that it is her “job to get students to do the work of learning” clarifying teaching is “different than” she initially thought.

Gene recognized the complexity in mathematics and acknowledged “that students can show assets, even when they get an answer wrong” (reflection). When one student found a faster way to do volume than adding up cubes, by recognizing that multiplication would work, she reflected and stated, “this was neat because she was able to recognize that there was a simpler way to do the operation.” She often reflected on unexpected success for students stating, “this surprised me because I was not prepared for a student to have this kind of content knowledge” (reflection).

During her peer observations of her team teachers, she stated "I didn’t see much peer communication. A lot of teacher talking, they [students] need to talk to each other” awareness of discourse was a strength for Gene as she often asked students to explain what they heard from a peer (observation). However, her lesson plans didn’t demonstrate this strength. She planned and listed a lot of questions, but also listed specific closed responses she expected. This demonstrated a funneled disposition not a focused one for learning. Many of her questions listed in her lesson plans lacked higher order thinking and or connections to the content. When this was shared with her after the experience, she acknowledged that she needed to work on being more purposeful in drawing out student thinking, rather than having students repeat information she shared. She admitted this was difficult to do. Overall Gene began to build her confidence and preparedness with a focus on student learning stating, “sometimes I need to let things go, to let the learning

happen” noting “students need to be active and the noise level was productive as they were engaged in learning” (reflection).

Kelly had a strong understanding of her content. This understanding of content gave her confidence to push students to make content connections across their work products. For example, several times she was seen walking over to students asking them to compare their responses to peers. These comparisons often brought out meaningful connections, such as the idea that areas can be the same, but perimeters can vary (observation). She often pushed for deeper learning stating, “I really have to know my stuff. It’s not just knowing the answer; it is looking for [student] confusion” (journal reflection). “Scaffolding is more than just assisting through questioning... [I must] be intentional with problems presented to students” (journal). Kelly reflected her journal “I learned that students need assurance that at least part of their reasoning is valid.”

During her peer observations, Kelly often took notes on management for teacher candidates and shared behaviors of students when observed, but lacked connections and recommendations, stating things like “CM is solid.” She often saw a connection between clear goals and learning, engagement, and management postulating “I didn’t do a good job of establishing math goals, they [students] saw the math as extra and so they wanted me to just tell them so they could get to the robots (lesson reflection). In a reflection, she stated: “students were more active, but they were fine.” It was interesting that she perceived active as misbehaving, even though she did not correct the misbehavior because she perceived her lesson as successful because “they were engaged” (reflective debriefing). After reviewing her feedback from an observer, she stated “one of my polishers for this week centered on keeping my students’ attention after a call/response type of situation.” It was noted in her first lesson plan submission

she lacked details (less responsive) her second lesson plan submission listed specific questions, transitions, and management (more responsive). She stated “I wasn’t clear in directions and questions weren’t scaffolded, so they shut down. I need to start with where they are” (reflection).

Kelly reflected on her lessons and stated “I now know the importance of listening to what students have to say and repeating what they say in a way that clarifies their response. If students’ answers are completely wrong, I [can] ask them how they reached their conclusions and try to pinpoint where they made errors” (debriefing after observation). She also stated “it is also important for them [students] to realize that everyone makes mistakes (reflection). In a final journal posting Kelly self-reflected stating “I need more time and practice because there is so much going on that I don't know.”

All three teacher candidates demonstrated growth over the course of the three weeks in specific areas, but each in different areas of their noticing. Throughout the data, Bree grew in her understanding of productive struggle and focusing, versus funneling instruction. Gene grew in the area of discourse, specifically in reflecting and identifying ways to support it, although she still struggled with providing those opportunities for inquiry-based discourse in her own planning. Kelly entered with a strong sense of content-based efficacy but struggled in management. While she utilized content knowledge to support student’s exploration and connections of powerful ideas, often these moments were diminished, because of issues of management. Through the experience, her planning improved, which helped in this area.

In addition to growth in their focus areas, all seemed to reflect and communicate the need for implementing research-based practices in the mathematics classroom to a greater degree than they actually demonstrated in their own practice. They were able to identify elements in observations and reflect after lessons on things they should have done, more than making the in

the moment professional noticings that are key to effective instruction. This matches the research that suggests teacher candidates are aware of effective practice, before they are capable of implementing it in their planning or in the moment to moment decisions required when teaching mathematics (Mason, 2002). However, deeper awareness of the development of teacher candidates in these roles, can inform teacher educators about ways to more effectively make these connections across roles.

### **Science**

During the science methods class and STEM camp, candidates used a variety of resources to develop inquiry-based hands-on lessons. They implemented strategic instructional strategies in planning, teaching, and the implementation of inquiry-based hands-on lessons. Throughout the science methods course, the teacher candidates were given strategies to use in the science classroom to support the management of the class during their teaching of science. This cohort had not taken the classroom management course and seem to be concerned about being able to manage the classroom during science teaching. As one of their personal goal statements, the teacher candidates identified their concern for classroom management along with the desire to become a better professional educator (personal goal statement). One of their major apprehensions were not being able to develop engaging science lessons. After field placement reflections noted a change in their position as a professional educator.

Bree felt the experience of summer STEM camp was a useful experience in which she had the ability to explore content and plan lessons that had intentional integration. Bree identified the need to be a team player and voiced some concern about planning a science lesson. She noted in her reflection “this was the most useful experience I have had working with students” (reflective journal). She was surprised at the need to “develop patience with the



students” and noted it was enjoyable to “build relationships with students” (reflective journal). Overall, she stated, "the field experience was very useful in developing learning and teaching skills” (journal reflection).

Gene felt the summer STEM camp merged learning and real-world experiences as noted in her comment “[camp] felt useful in real life experience" (journal reflection). She stated overwhelmingly that “she was able to manage her classroom, implement rules, and personal organization.” She felt that it was “useful in learning” because the experience bridged “what she was taught in my methods” (journal reflection). She also felt it was enjoyable “building relationships with students” although she wished she had more time for planning. She was really “surprised at how smart students were and how much they taught me” (journal reflection).

Kelly spent a lot of time preparing for lessons researching science topics; she felt this was important to be "prepared." She often worked closely with her peer teaching partner as they planned and integrated content for daily lessons. She too was surprised that "students had more knowledge than she previously thought” and she “found it surprising that students had so many questions” (journal reflection). Kelly found it “Very useful to spend time observing students learning styles” so she could be “flexible with [her] teaching skills” (journal reflection). Overall Kelly “enjoyed teaching” and valued this experience.

The STEM summer science camp was an important learning experience for Bree, Gene and Kelly. Most important the three found the field experience gave them opportunities to think critically and use their methods coursework simultaneously to develop skills for teaching science to elementary learners. The learning was viewed as a construction and negotiation of meaning (2007). The learning was inextricably linked to the contexts in which it takes place. This field

experience was necessary for the learning to take place which could not be accomplished alone within the methods course.

In conclusion, they all agreed that they continually find better ways to teach science, they knew the steps necessary to teach science and they acknowledged that they had a better handle on managing their classes doing a science teaching lesson. Furthermore, the alternative model involved teacher candidates resolving problems of practice as colleagues. As Mosley et al. (2004) stated the teacher candidates need a supportive environment in which they could work together to enact change in their practice through authentic experiences in questioning, behavior management and the daily logistics of teaching. As one teacher candidates commented, “I learned a great deal about what can be used in my classroom and to the degree to which my experiences will move me forward in my classroom practice.”

**Dr. Victoria Cardullo** has been an educator for over 22 year. Her research has focused on digital literacies and the metacognitive dispositions associated with teaching and learning with digital devices.

**Dr. Megan Burton** has been in education for 25 years. Her research has focused on teacher identity and change in professional identity, mathematics and collaborative teaching.

**Dr. L. Octavia Tripp** has been in education for 20 years. Her research has focused on teaching underrepresented minority elementary and middle school girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

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**Culturally Relevant Summer Field Experiences for  
Undergraduate Teacher Education Majors**

*Megan Adams and Sanjuana Rodriguez*

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**Abstract**

In order to better prepare teacher candidates to meet the needs of all learners, diverse field experiences are critical (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2003; Delpit, 2012; Hollis & Guzman, 2005; Sleeter 2001; Sleeter, 2008). This article describes a study investigating teacher efficacy before, during, and after a summer field experience. The teacher candidates worked for four weeks in a university-based literacy center with readers performing below grade level in reading who received free/reduced lunch. The findings of the study indicate that teacher candidates became more culturally relevant, developed as active listeners, began questioning their own deficit beliefs, and learned the importance of building relationships with students. The teacher candidates' sense of efficacy increased in 20 out of 24 categories. This study highlights the importance of summer field experiences allowing teacher candidates rich learning opportunities, particularly in addressing gaps in their knowledge base prior to the clinical experience.

**Keywords:** teacher education curriculum, field experiences, marginalized learners, increasing teacher efficacy

**Disclosure and Data Availability:** There was no funding for this research, nor has any financial gain occurred because of the research. All data is available via Dedoose – please request access from the corresponding author.

Elementary teachers must be prepared to teach a diverse range of learners and be prepared to teach students whose experiences do not reflect their own. Teacher candidates often enter teacher education programs with deficit perspectives about diversity. These may include deficit-based belief systems or discomfort working with children from other cultures (Delpit, 2012; Haddix, 2008). These perspectives can leave them feeling unprepared to meet the needs of all learners as they enter the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Delpit, 2012). Field experiences are an opportunity for candidates to learn asset-based approaches and culturally relevant pedagogy while under the supervision of experts in these areas and prior to entering the job market (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Delpit, 2012; Hollis & Guzman, 2005; Sleeter 2001; Sleeter, 2008)).

In a comprehensive overview of research studies focused on field experiences for teacher candidates, Cochran-Smith et. al (2015) conclude that field experiences focused on diversity “assumed that replacing teacher candidates’ deficit views about diversity with affirming or asset-oriented views was an essential step in the process of learning to teach” (p. 114). Candidates must spend time in schools that are different from the schools and communities they grew up in. Cochran-Smith et. al (2015) also conclude that studies provided theoretical evidence that teacher candidates “must develop critical awareness of the privilege they derive from their membership in racially, ethnically, and linguistically dominant groups” (p.115). Additionally, candidates must use their time in the field experience to gain confidence in addressing the needs of all learners. In order to address all of the components of a quality field experience incorporating diversity, creating a field experience where teacher candidates improved their sense of efficacy in meeting the literacy needs of all learners while teaching culturally and linguistically diverse group of students.

## Conceptual Framework

This field experience allowed candidates to work with children from culturally and economically marginalized communities who are performing below grade level in reading. Candidates enter the experience with deficit thinking and language about cultures other than their own. Thus, the framework for this study is a combination of Paris' (2012) culturally sustaining pedagogy and foundational tenants from Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy (1995a; 1995b; Sleeter, 2001). As Paris (2012) points out, it is critical in teacher education to consider the "shifting and changing practices of students and their communities" (p. 94). Yet, candidates in the researchers' context enter programs unaware of the deficit beliefs they carry into schools. As Guillory (2012) experienced, our candidates refuse to interrogate their own beliefs and are often more resistant following the work. This study, therefore, acknowledges its inability to produce what Guillory (2012) calls "capital T-transformations" (p. 163) in our teacher candidates. This field experience does insist that the three key components Ladson-Billings (1995a; 1995b) lists for teaching to be culturally relevant are present: 1) students must experience academic success in that classroom; 2) students must "develop or maintain" cultural competence; and 3) "students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order" (p. 160).

**Context of study.** This study took place in a suburban university's literacy center. The summer literacy program was provided at no cost to children from grades 2-6 who were performing below grade level in reading. The summer program lasted for three weeks, from Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. The America Reads program funded tutors, all education majors, to work directly with the children in the program. Additionally, a class on Elementary Education Assessment Methods in literacy partnered with the program; each child

worked with a teacher candidate from the course on developing reading skills as determined by reading assessments and interventions. The instructor for the course also focused on asset based pedagogies and the importance of getting to know students was also stressed in the course.

**Description of problem.** Teaching candidates often describe fear of working with struggling readers, fear of working with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and fear of working with students who are "other" (Delpit, 2012; Sleeter, 2001). Those candidates use deficit approaches to work with children who are culturally and economically marginalized. This study has two foci: the first focus is an investigation of the cultural relevance of the teacher candidates and the second focus is the increase in efficacy of the teacher candidates after recognizing (some of) their deficit beliefs and working with economically and culturally marginalized children for four weeks.

### **Review of Literature**

There is an urgent need to prepare teacher candidates to work with diverse populations. There are approximately 3.1 million teachers in American public elementary and secondary schools. Of those teachers, 82 percent are White, while teachers of color comprise only 17 percent of the teaching profession (NCES, 2014). This cultural mismatch in teachers and students has the potential to impact student achievement and success (Au, 1993). There is concern that schools continue to contribute to the marginalization and deficit beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students (Sleeter, 2012/2017; Zoch, 2017). In order to allow teacher candidates space to question their own bias and learn in a safe space about addressing the needs of all learners, meeting deficit beliefs through explicit instruction and unique field experiences is critical (Sleeter, 2001).

Teachers are also comprised primarily of people from middle-class backgrounds (Howard, 2003). In the United States, the gap between the wealthiest and poorest is continually growing (Hodgkinson, 2002; Hodgkinson, 2008). For teacher education, it is critical to note the difference between the cultural and economic conditions marginalizing children in schools and society. Thus, the term “opportunity gap” as opposed to “achievement gap”. Structures in place keep children from economically and culturally marginalized populations from having equal opportunity. Georgia’s Hope Scholarship is specifically cited in the literature as an example of opportunity being redistributed as opposed to income due to the lack of representation by the poorest Georgian children in the program (Hodgkinson, 2002). Both economic and cultural marginalization have been directly tied to readers performing below grade level.

**Struggling readers.** In 2015, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, approximately 30% of U.S. students were performing below the basic level in reading (NAEP, 2017). Reading proficiently by third grade, and continuing to do so beyond, is critical beyond success in reading intensive courses (Allington, 2011; Alvermann & Hinchman, 2012). In 2011, a longitudinal study funded by the Annie E. Casey foundation (2017) found that proficient readers in sixth grade are four times more likely to graduate high school on time; 23% of readers who perform below the basic level “drop out or fail to finish high school on time, compared to 9% of children with basic reading skills and 4% of proficient readers” (Hernandez, p. 3); children “who were poor for at least a year and were not reading proficiently in third grade” had failed to complete high school at a rate of 26% (six times the rate for proficient readers) (p. 4). In order for readers to read fluently and comprehend their reading, a complex process of language knowledge and knowledge of sentence structure working fluidly with knowledge of context and text structure (Kintsch, 1998; Kintsch, 2005). Readers must be



able to use their background knowledge to make sense of what they are reading, alongside understanding the structure of the sentence and the meaning of at least a majority of the words in the sentence. Readers performing below grade level in reading, particularly beyond third grade, appear to be missing multiple pieces of the process (Kintsch, 2005).

**Teacher efficacy.** Bandura (1977) distinguished between “outcome expectancy” and “efficacy expectations” (p. 193). Outcome expectancy is the belief that an action will produce an effect; efficacy expectation is the belief that one can “perform the necessary activities” to “produce certain outcomes” (p. 193). This is critical in teacher education. A teacher candidate must believe that his/her action will produce the desired results with students. Teacher efficacy scales most often focus on two domains: behavior and learning (Oh, 2011). The connection between a teacher’s action and the reaction of the student is fundamental to making the transition from teacher candidate to teacher. While investigating how field experiences impact teacher candidates’ senses of efficacy is not new (Caires, Almeida, & Martins, 2010; Capel, 1997; Chan, 2008; Flores, 2006; Oh, 2011), understanding how to choose targeted field experiences designed to fill gaps in the knowledge of each teacher candidate is novel (Caires, Almeida, & Martins, 2010; Name removed to protect review process, 2016). Developing teacher efficacy can thus be tied to field experiences as well as teaching experiences (Anderson & Betts, 2001; Oh, 2011; Poulou, 2007).

Teacher candidates and novice teachers often experience shock when they discover the gaps in their preparation program and the realities of teaching on their own (Caires, Almeida, & Martins, 2010; Flores, 2006). The disconnect between the goals of a preparation program and the realities of the needs of the classroom are noted throughout literature on efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Poulou, 2007; Sleeter, 2001; Sleeter, 2012). Thus,

while culturally relevant teaching focuses on teachers using the strengths of all students to improve performance, teachers' and teacher candidates' senses of efficacy are not necessarily directly correlated to training in culturally relevant pedagogy (Izadinia, 2011; Sleeter, 2012). However, teachers' sense of efficacy has been described in the literature as connected to their performance in the classroom and strongly influenced by their own experiences (Bedel, 2016; Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004; Yi-Hsiang, 2014). Therefore, connecting culturally relevant field experiences - providing teacher candidates' the opportunity to grow their practice with a variety of students in a variety of settings - may impact their sense of efficacy upon encountering a student from a background different than their own in their teaching careers (Bedel, 2016; Izadinia, 2011; Sleeter, 2017).

**Teacher preparation.** Teacher preparation programs, in large part, still operate under White, middle class curriculum. Almost all programs now include one or two courses focused on issues of diversity while the rest of program course do not have an explicit emphasis on issues of race or culture (King & Butler, 2015). The research confirms that one or two courses focused on culturally relevant pedagogy are not enough to shift pre-service teachers' beliefs about working with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Sleeter, 2017). Furthermore, these courses not typically designed to address the systematic oppression and racism reflected in U.S. schools. In his study of teacher education syllabi that focused on multicultural education, Gorski (2009) found that the syllabi did not addresses systemic inequalities. Instead, these syllabi stressed ideas such as celebration of differences. Paris (2012) suggests that to move away from that tradition, questioning the traditional norms of schooling and advancing a shift in preparation and educational policies is needed. To become culturally sustaining, teacher educators must first

accept their role as advocates for all children; they must also be taught how to address the needs of all children.

**Field experiences.** Another component of teacher education programs that needs to be considered is the field experience that teacher candidates complete. Field experiences have not been a priority in teacher education programs (Moulding, Stewart, & Dunmeyer, 2014; Wiggins, Follo, & Eberly, 2007). While teacher education relies heavily on experience-based learning, the field experience is often an afterthought, not pushing candidates to explore a variety of teaching contexts (Ritchie, 2012; Sleeter, 2017). Further, these field experiences are often observational in nature and traditionally have students reflect on a wide array of issues (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Whipp & Geronime, 2017). These decisions about field experiences fail to take into consideration the retention of new teachers should they remain in those schools in their early careers, a critical topic in education today (Sydnor, 2017; Whipp & Geronime, 2017).

Although more research is still necessary in findings ways to prepare teacher candidates to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students, some recent studies describe the importance of field experiences in preparing teachers to work with diverse students (Onore & Gildin, 2010; Waddell, 2011). Addressing the needs of all learners while learning content may not be easy, but a shift in beliefs will allow teacher candidates to challenge deficit beliefs and narratives (Ritchie, 2012; Sleeter, 2017). Further, a variety of field experiences with a range of responsibilities is critical for developing the expertise of teacher candidates (Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015). New models of assessing teacher education, including edTPA, are designed with the goal to measure how prepared teachers are before they graduate. However, those programs often fall short of helping teachers choose the teaching landscape in which to begin their careers (Sydnor, 2017). While assessments like these require teacher candidates to reflect more upon

their teaching choices during student teaching, they do not demand a range of settings for teacher candidates to practice their craft (Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; Madeloni & Gorlewski, 2013). This is in direct conflict with the tools needed to develop self-efficacy early in teaching (Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; Oh, 2011).

### **Methodology**

This type of case study requires a bounded system – a microcosm where the researchers and the participants interact and construct an iterative cycle of data surrounding the research questions: the researcher sets up the study, the participants act, the researcher observes/questions the actions, adjustments are made, etc. (Stake, 1995). The bounded system for this case study is the summer literacy program. Within that program, there are several facets; teacher candidates are acting as literacy tutors; an elementary education assessment course is partnered with the program; 2-6 grade children are participating in the program; two researchers are engaging with the program. As opposed to investigating the shifts in beliefs or identity of the students acting as tutors or the 2-6 grade children, this phase of the study focuses only on the field experience component. The research questions dictated that the researchers begin by describing the setting to the teacher candidates. Following, class sessions were devoted to beginning with understanding how, why, and when to use reading assessments. Following the work with the children, candidates would de-brief, and instruction was altered in order to meet the needs of the candidates and best foster senses of efficacy. Increasing the senses of efficacy for teacher candidates will allow them to enter the field best able to meet the needs of all children (Delpit, 2012; Sleeter, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

**Research questions.** This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How did working with students from culturally and economically marginalized communities who were performing below grade level in reading impact teacher candidates' sense of efficacy?
- 2) What shifts in beliefs and attitudes were evident after working with students during field experience?

**Data collection.** The case study follows Stake's (1995) model; it is action occurring within a bounded system to investigate change. In this case, the change being investigated is the teaching candidates' sense of efficacy. In order to investigate the shifts in senses of efficacy, the researchers used a pre and post efficacy survey, focus group questions, interviews, and observations as data points. Additionally, the researchers kept journals of any shifts in instruction noted by the instructor of the course and notes of any interactions with the candidates themselves; candidates often asked questions of any literacy expert in the area when a question arose. All of the data was entered into Dedoose (2018); this is a qualitative data program allowing multiple researchers to analyze and comment upon various forms of data. Journals, transcripts, videos of interviews and focus groups, and observation notes were all entered into Dedoose and coded by both researchers as themes were constructed.

### **Analysis**

**Qualitative analysis.** Multiple themes were constructed based upon the feedback of the teacher candidates. The most overarching theme was becoming more culturally relevant. Candidates described this in multiple ways: questioning deficit beliefs, developing as reflexive practitioners, becoming a better tutor through active listening, developing relationships with the students. The themes will be unpacked in detail in the discussion section; the findings here provide an overview of those themes repeated most frequently in the qualitative data. In every interview and across both focus groups, candidates described situations where they jumped to a

conclusion about a student before getting to know him/her. One candidate describes a student who was often lethargic. She questioned why he was so tired, and he let her know he was fasting. She had assumed that "he was up late", or "parents were not enforcing a bedtime" – she admits she made an assumption and realized. She realized that the child was fasting when she began to talk to him about why he was tired. The teacher candidate noted how impressive it was that a child was fasting for his beliefs and realized, through conversations with him, that he was making an individual choice to fast. Another theme, becoming reflexive practitioners, is closely tied.

Several candidates noted the bond formed between themselves and the children. One noted that he had not realized how much he meant to the child until she brought him a bracelet. The friendship bracelet, she said, was to help him feel better (he missed a day of tutoring due to illness). He realized that being reflexive meant thinking about how his own actions impacted the children he teaches. Active listening and agents of care were both threads woven across the narratives of the candidates as well. As they spoke in focus groups and interviews, candidates noted that when they "really listened" they were able to better connect with and understand the children. Candidates noted that they understood "who the kid is" and that "knowing where they are coming from is so important in getting to know them". These themes indicate the value the candidates began placing on what culturally relevant teaching suggests; teachers must get to know each child as an individual before deciding how best to educate the child.

**Survey analysis.** For this study, we used the survey given to teacher candidates to inform our understanding of the qualitative data. The survey was one developed by Oh (2011) and is a scale to measure teacher efficacy. Efficacy surveys are often utilized to determine gains in confidence in working with K-12 grade students in varied ways (Oh, 2011). The survey analysis

indicated that candidates increased their senses of efficacy across 20 out of 24 categories. Teacher candidates reported having higher efficacy beliefs following the field experience in all areas except: motivating students; having students follow classroom rules; reaching a student who is failing; and calming a student who is disruptive. It is interesting to note that candidates' efficacy in addressing behavior and motivation went down after the field experience, while the areas where growth in efficacy was most notably increased had to do with assessing students and using a variety of methods. The survey findings were meant to supplement the findings of the interviews, focus groups, and observations; there was alignment across the study that teacher candidates' sense of efficacy in improving the literacy of all children increased after the field experience. Our findings illustrate that while coursework prepares candidates for the mechanics of teaching, reaching all students and motivating them while monitoring behavior is a gap in our teacher preparation program(s). Appendixes A, B, and C provide the efficacy scale, the pre survey results, and the post survey results.

### **Discussion**

Candidates learned through this field experience that getting to know each child was critical to success. While there are many examples of deficit language and thinking and what Guillory (2012) terms "cultural drive by" approaches (p. 154), this beginning or little transformation (Guillory, 2012) provides a starting point for candidates to consider their deficit thinking about their students. Across all data points, teacher candidates indicated that understanding the point of view of the student was the key take-away from the field experience. In the focus group, several candidates describe learning to be better listeners in order to question their own biases. These themes are discussed more fully in the following sections.

**Questioning deficit beliefs.** One candidate described general nervousness at having little in common with a Muslim student she was tutoring. “My student was bilingual and um, he was Muslim, and we had like not a lot of common interests. I was nervous about how I was gonna bond with him. I didn’t know, he was like very interested in wars and guns and I don’t know a lot about guns or anything like that. So, I was nervous about their being a barrier between us because we are very different.” She says she tried to educate herself to make it “about him, not about me” (focus group, 06/03/2016). Her quotes consistently indicate a reliance on her deficit beliefs. While she has begun questioning her beliefs, she certainly does not describe providing a space for her student to "develop or maintain" cultural competence while they work together (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160). This is more of what Guillory describes as "cultural drive-by" (p. 154); the candidate has only allowed her student to describe what makes his context different from her own.

**Becoming culturally relevant.** One student used an asset-based approach to build upon the reading strengths of her student. While she indicated that the student was weak in writing, she knew that her strong reading skills might allow for writing improvement. Therefore, she chose an activity to combine reading and writing. "The way, for the passage, I had her read, we actually just read a book that was on like a first-grade level. And then, I had her write a letter in response to the book we read. . . So, I used graphic organizers to help her organize her opinion, and then I had her write the letter. She did very well on the letter” (interview, 06/05/2016). The candidate understood that using the reading strength of the student and providing one to one writing instruction would allow the student to become more confident in writing. The experience did not indicate culturally sustaining pedagogical development in the teacher candidate – there is no questioning the systemic inequalities that may have led to the child's performance below



grade level in reading or writing – yet there is a beginning point indicating an effort to provide opportunities for the student to "experience academic success" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160).

**Learning active listening.** One candidate notes that she was “surprised that even in the summer, my student wanted to do school work” (focus group, 06/03/2016). While the candidates saw the work as something children might be resistant to, after listening carefully to the comments of their students, they found that they were actually excited to get additional help and work with college students in the summer months. The deficit beliefs the candidates held upon entering the field experience were acknowledged during the focus groups and interviews – the shifts in their beliefs were a starting point that may be built upon throughout their teacher education program. The interviews confirmed what we heard in the focus group. Phrases like "getting to know my student", "learning to hear what she was really saying", and "paying attention to what he wanted to read or do for activities" illustrated active listening and shifting to a student-centered approach (focus group, 06/03/2016).

**Importance of building relationships.** One teacher candidate noted that she saw the greatest responsiveness from her student when she spent more time questioning her about what she wanted. “I mainly used a lot of conversation. My student responded really well when we talked one on one” (interview, 07/03/2016). She described working with art materials and interactive technological programs in order to promote engagement. Another says, “my student loves bingo. So, I incorporated some educational bingo in my activities. So, yeah, I tried to incorporate things she liked in the lessons” (interview, 07/03/2016). An additional student noted that he spent time getting to know the student so he "could make . . . lesson plans of . . . interest" and "really tried to get to know him" (interview, 07/03/2016). By intentionally choosing things that made the children happier, they were also elevating their instruction to increase student engagement. These

moments allowed the candidates to learn from their students. Talbert-Johnson (2006) asserts that it is important for teacher candidates to possess pedagogical knowledge, but to also understand the role that more intangible concepts, such as care, can have on teaching. Choosing activities that were important to the students showed the children that tutors were listening and cared about their preferences.

**Survey findings.** The pre and post survey were administered to all students in the course. The course partnered with the summer program was an undergraduate elementary education course on literacy assessment. As their field experience, candidates could choose to work with children in the summer camp program. Those who did completed both the pre and post survey. The survey is broken into categories: efficacy for instructional strategies, efficacy for classroom management, and efficacy for student engagement (Oh, 2011). Across the categories, candidates overwhelmingly increased in all but one category in instructional strategies, and increased efficacy in all categories in student engagement. Candidates described similar confidence during the focus groups and interviews. They felt competent that they could choose activities that would be engaging and that would result in learning. It is also important to note those categories where candidates' efficacy decreased during the field experience.

**Decrease in instructional strategies efficacy.** Only one falls into the category of “instructional strategies”, number 4. The prompt is “How well can you implement alternative strategies for your reading and writing lessons” (Oh, 2011, p. 237). During our focus groups and interviews, candidates repeatedly describe feeling unsure about how to engage students who were reluctant readers or writers. There was concern that this was a summer program and not “traditional” school; there was concern that students would not respond favorably if they didn’t enjoy the activity. Writing was a concern repeated in the data. One candidate describes a student

who just would not write the first session. During later sessions, the child would write, but it was with reluctance. The candidates clearly expressed more confidence in promoting reading. This is worth future study; are we teaching candidates how to incorporate reading and writing simultaneously in the elementary grades?

**Decrease in classroom management efficacy.** Three out of four instances of decreased efficacy occur during classroom management. The prompts are “How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire reading and writing lesson”, “How well can you respond to defiant students in reading and writing lessons”, and “To what extent can you make your expectation clear about student behavior during your reading and writing lesson” (Oh, 2011, p. 237). Table 1 shows the four questions where a decrease occurred.

Table 1: Instances of decreased efficacy

Question	Pre-Results	Post Results
4	6.85	6.64
13	7.46	6.91
14	6.54	6.09
15	6.31	6.18

In all these questions, candidates are asked about their confidence in their ability to intervene with a disruptive student. Language like “problem students” and “defiant” are indicated in the survey; these terms also surfaced in the focus group and interviews. The student who refused to write early in the program is an example that stands out. The candidate felt completely lost; she describes feeling helpless and unable to get the student interested in the material. This sense of frustration makes sense. Candidates came into the field experience with either no experience in a classroom or with very little, supervised exposure in much younger grades. They felt confident

(as shown on the pre survey responses to questions 13-15) addressing a couple of defiant students who did not want to work. They felt sure they could set expectations that would be followed. The reality is somewhat different. It takes understanding the complexities behind motivation and engagement to fully understand why a child might refuse to work. In addressing the needs of struggling readers in particular, the literature suggests understanding shame as a factor. In this case, young teacher candidates are encouraging children who have not succeeded in school to take on new tasks that may be challenging. The nuances of addressing reluctance to participate was apparently lost on the candidates; the field experience caused them to lose confidence in their abilities.

**Increase in instructional strategy efficacy.** While candidates' sense of efficacy increased in 20 out of 24 areas, there were 6 prompts to which candidates' efficacy increased by over .5 points. These instances drew the researchers' attention as moments when candidates learned a great deal during the program. Those prompts were 5, 7, 8, 18, 19, and 23. It is significant to note that in classroom management, there were no instances of candidates' efficacy increasing so dramatically. There were 3 each from instructional strategies and engagement. Table 2 illustrates those increases.

Table 2: Instances of increased efficacy

Question	Pre-Results	Post Results
5	6.69	7.64
7	6	6.91
8	6.77	7.45
18	6.46	7.82
19	6	6.91
23	6.38	7.64

These instances will be discussed in relation to each other and the category they represent. Numbers 5, 7, and 8 all represent efficacy for instructional strategies. Number 5 states “how well can you respond to difficult questions about your reading and writing lessons from students” (Oh, 2011, p. 237). This experience allowed candidates to build confidence in planning, executing, and assessing a reading lesson. It is logical, then, that this skill grew and allowed for increased efficacy after the field experience. Numbers 7 and 8 state, respectively, “to what extent can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught about reading and writing” and “how well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students in reading and writing lessons” (p. 237). While gauging comprehension was mentioned in the focus group as a concern of several candidates, after designing an appropriate lesson and using both formative and summative assessments, candidates appear to feel more confident. The surprise is number 8. Which candidates worked with “very capable” students, and how was that defined? Did they take this to mean that they designed assessments that were appropriate for the level of their reader(s)? This requires further study and clarification in the future.

**Increase in engagement efficacy.** Numbers 18, 19, and 23 all represent student engagement. Numbers 18 and 19 both address motivation. They state, respectively “how much can you do to help your students value learning about reading and writing” and “how much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in their reading and writing schoolwork” (p. 237). As described from the qualitative data, these were areas candidates felt particularly confident about. This was a three-week summer camp; the expectation was that children would not want to engage much during the summer. Thus, when candidates had success engaging their students, they felt much more confident in how to do so during “traditional” school. Number 23 is a bit of an anomaly. It states, “how much can you do to foster student creativity in reading and

writing” (p. 237). In the interviews and focus groups, we heard about science inquiries, engaging students in technology, and finding “fun” ways to work on writing. We did not see a lot of creativity in the reading or writing candidates were asking, or the projects did not indicate high levels of artistic requirements. However, we again believe this may be a language issue. Did candidates define “creativity” more broadly than the researchers? Did allowing students choice in topics equate to creativity for the candidates? We are not sure how to judge what caused this increase in efficacy. This requires future study and clarification.

### **Significance**

As noted, field experiences requiring candidates to work with students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are not the norm (Sleeter, 2017; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Incorporating community outreach in the form of a summer program with an intentional field experience design for teacher candidates allows new research opportunities. An important question is how working with children from economically marginalized communities who are performing below grade level in reading impacts teacher candidates. Future iterations of this study need to also investigate the impact on the tutors (hired through America Reads) and the 2-6<sup>th</sup> grade children. The program allowed the children to grow as readers; it is important to determine if their identities as readers are changing due to this program. Moving into year 3 of this study we wanted to change several things:

1. Recruit students who are recommended by their teachers for the program based upon the need for summer tutoring;
2. Create a social justice curriculum framework to allow the 2-6 students and the tutors to create positive identities as readers and activists during the program; and

3. Adjust data collection so that similar data is collected from all teacher candidates involved in the program.

Enacting these changes will allow the researchers to develop more substantive conclusions in the third iteration of this study. In year two, the primary findings listed above allowed for refinement of the program and conclusions about the need for intentional placements with diversity and marginalized communities in mind. The candidates' growth allows them to enter the field with stronger feelings of preparedness and as more marketable teacher candidates. In future studies, we also want to investigate their impact once in the classroom; there are few studies on whether these more culturally relevant candidates remain culturally relevant once in the field (Sleeter, 2001).

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# Appendix A

## Efficacy Survey

<b>Teacher Beliefs</b>		<b>How much can you do?</b>								
<p>Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.</p>		Nothing	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
1.	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2.	How much can you do to help your students think critically?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5.	To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7.	How well can you respond to difficult questions from your <u>students</u> ?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8.	How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10.	How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11.	To what extent can you craft good questions for <u>your students</u> ?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12.	How much can you do to foster student creativity?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
13.	How much can you do to get children to follow <u>classroom rules</u> ?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
14.	How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
15.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
16.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
17.	How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
18.	How much can you use a variety of <u>assessment strategies</u> ?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
19.	How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
20.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation <u>or</u> example when <u>students are</u> confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
21.	How well can you respond to defiant students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
22.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
23.	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
24.	How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

## Appendix B

### Pre-Survey Results

7	6	8	7	7	7	5	7	8	5	5	6	5	6.38461538
5	7	7	8	6	6	5	5	9	5	6	9	7	6.53846154
7	7	6	8	4	9	7	7	7	3	7	5	7	6.46153846
5	5	9	9	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6.84615385
6	7	9	9	5	6	8	6	8	4	7	4	8	6.69230769
8	6	9	9	7	6	7	7	9	6	8	3	9	7.23076923
7	8	6	8	6	6	6	6	6	4	6	4	5	6
7	9	6	9	6	6	7	5	8	5	6	3	6	6.38461538
7	6	6	8	7	5	7	7	8	5	7	8	7	6.76923077
6	7	7	8	6	7	6	8	9	4	8	6	5	6.69230769
7	8	8	9	7	6	6	7	8	5	6	9	6	7.07692308
5	9	7	9	8	8	7	7	8	5	7	9	7	7.38461538
8	8	8	8	7	9	8	7	8	6	8	6	6	6.746153846
7	5	7	8	6	7	6	7	9	6	7	3	7	6.53846154
6	4	8	8	5	7	6	7	8	6	6	4	7	6.30769231
6	8	6	9	5	9	7	6	8	2	6	5	5	6.30769231
7	6	7	9	6	8	6	8	7	3	6	6	6	6.53846154
5	7	7	8	6	8	6	8	8	3	7	4	7	6.46153846
7	4	8	7	5	6	7	5	7	3	8	7	4	6
7	7	7	9	6	5	7	6	8	4	7	8	5	6.61538462
6	5	6	8	5	5	6	7	8	3	6	3	6	5.69230769
8	4	7	8	7	5	6	8	8	5	5	5	7	6.38461538
7	6	7	8	6	6	7	6	8	3	7	6	6	6.38461538
8	8	6	8	7	7	8	4	8	3	7	9	7	6.92307692

## Appendix C

### Post Survey Results

7	7	8	7	5	6	8	7	6	6	7	6.72727273
7	8	7	7	9	6	7	8	7	8	7	7.36363636
8	7	8	6	4	6	7	6	6	8	8	6.72727273
7	7	8	8	3	4	9	6	7	7	7	6.63636364
9	7	9	7	7	6	7	7	9	8	8	7.63636364
7	8	9	7	8	8	9	8	6	8	8	7.81818182
6	7	7	6	8	5	7	8	6	8	8	6.90909091
6	7	8	7	6	7	8	8	9	9	7	7.45454545
7	8	8	6	8	7	8	7	5	8	8	7.27272727
8	8	8	8	4	7	7	7	6	7	6	6.90909091
6	7	8	8	9	8	7	8	5	8	6	7.27272727
9	8	8	8	9	8	7	7	7	8	6	7.72727273
8	8	7	6	6	6	6	7	6	8	8	6.90909091
5	7	8	7	2	4	6	7	7	7	7	6.09090909
5	8	7	6	7	4	6	6	6	6	7	6.18181818
7	8	7	6	4	5	6	7	7	8	7	6.54545455
8	8	7	8	2	7	9	8	9	7	7	7.27272727
8	8	9	8	8	7	8	7	9	7	7	7.81818182
7	8	7	7	6	5	7	8	5	8	8	6.90909091
7	8	7	7	9	7	7	7	7	8	6	7.27272727
8	7	7	7	1	6	8	8	6	7	7	6.54545455
7	8	7	8	4	6	7	8	5	7	7	6.72727273
7	8	9	8	8	7	7	8	7	8	7	7.63636364
7	7	7	8	9	7	7	8	8	7	7	7.45454545

# **Maximizing Field Experience as Experience: Improving Pre-Service Teacher Training through Intentional Partnership & Authentic Collaboration**

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## **Introduction**

Easily considered an untraditional student, at 35 years old, married man and father of four children (all under the age of four) I decided now was a good time for a career shift...into the field of education, no doubt. Having been otherwise driven and determined to change the world, this seemed the most realistic course that experience dictated. Dante echoed in my ear—a story of midlife crisis, a story about direction. Little did I know how relevant he would be in the coming journey whose experiences were transcendent, and, sometimes hellish. This is the story of a journey—a field experience—whose impact has shaped and informed me for the better as a professional and a person.

In pursuit of my alternative master's degree in secondary social studies education, I pursued graduate research assistant options, which I was fortunate to receive from a group of reading education and ESOL faculty within the greater curriculum and teaching department. This situated me at a crossroads of academic experience that was atypical for a traditional student in the same program. Per my degree coursework requirements, I was required to fulfill a number of observation hours in the classroom at various schools, in addition to various lesson planning activities and teaching activities. Simultaneously, however, I found myself employed among point-people in formulating a professional development school (PDS) alongside college faculty at a local school district. Part of this initial partnership asked us to demonstrate the merit

of PDS to the school district. Accordingly, after a professional development training, the university faculty polled the in-service teachers and administration about an area that the university could help impact in the coming academic year. Reading and literacy was the overarching concern. So began a small-scale, focused, intentional partnership between the university (including me) and a series of eighth grade reading intervention classes that were targeted for us to work alongside.

### **Approaches to the Journey**

Teacher educators have two broad methods to providing classroom experience for teacher candidates—the traditional practicum or a yearlong internship. Each of these offers a different opportunity for the pre-service teacher to be immersed in the classroom and are often the result of the university’s broader commitment to clinical preparation (Burns, Yendol-Hoppey, & Jacobs, 2015; Levine, 2002). Practicums are typically 15-week capstone classroom immersion programs for teacher candidates. Placements are determined by informal partnerships with school districts and their availability. Pre-service teachers are paired with a mentor teacher which functions like an apprenticeship model. The candidate works closely with the teacher, observing and operating in a passive role and gradually increasing toward active roles and ultimately charge of the class (Klieger & Oster-Levinz, 2015). Colleges opt for this model as it aligns with a clinical vision characterized as ‘clinical accompanied preparation.’ This approach stresses the importance of the university coursework apart from its immediate integration into the classroom. Proponents of this option regard the teaching of methodologies key to preparing students to effectively teach in the classroom and, therefore, see a necessary front-loading of the candidate’s education in pedagogical knowledge before attempting to place them in a classroom (Burns et al., 2015; Summers & Weir, 2012).

An alternative approach to this the practicum is a yearlong internship or residency for the pre-service teacher that lasts up to 35 weeks. These types of residencies differ from practicum by enabling the teacher candidate more opportunities within the immersion. Like the apprenticeship model of the practicum, the pre-service teacher is “at the elbow of an experienced practitioner” (Burns et al., 2015) where they observe and participate in the classroom. However, the yearlong models often coincide within education programs that have a more intentional, formal partnership with schools. The greater intentionality lends itself to offering the teacher candidate a wider experience within the school than simply a single classroom, subject, and teacher. These intentional partnerships seek to “foster and structure dialogue among education professionals invested in a single internship site...the primary focus is developing intersection spaces where such different interests and investment come into view” (Hamel & Ryken, 2010). Characterized as ‘clinical centered preparation,’ these programs seek to design “systematic and intentional experiences that place the focus of teaching and learning on children in authentic work space” (Burns et al., 2015) and absorb the intern into the immersion program less as a teacher candidate and more like a “junior faculty member” (Levine, 2002). The result is that pre-service teachers collaborate more with their mentor teachers, other faculty, administration, and often a wider array of students, thus creating a model of field experience that is more diverse, authentic, and meaningful (Klieger & Oster-Levinz, 2015).

### **Intentional Partnership Impact on Pre-Service Teacher**

My actual degree program required the traditional 15-week practicum and could be described as a clinical accompanied preparation program. Understandably, the secondary social studies department sought to systematically rollout a unique and important teaching methodology that has gained the program repute and notoriety. Steeping the students in methods



fosters a student keenly able to develop creative lesson plans with a deep awareness of the overall goal and purpose of social studies education. This coursework is invaluable to solidifying the teacher candidate as a content area specialist and a goal-oriented professional. Compared to a yearlong internship approach, this program prioritizes creating confidence in content and method *before* classroom and clinical experiences.

Simultaneously (and fortunately) for me, I was practically living the life of an intern while working as a GRA. Within the local school district even before my first academic course began in my program of study, I experienced a wildly different path from my peers by sheer accident. I was taking part in lesson planning, course vision, reading intervention classes, special education small groups, and professional meetings with in-service teachers, administrators, and faculty. The result of being dually nurtured in both the degree program's deliberate and gradual clinical accompanied preparation approach and the demands of the GRA position that mimicked a clinical centered preparation program, I was afforded a unique opportunity. However, some of the practical personal growth afforded by the intentional partnership and yearlong clinical experience as a GRA is worth noting.

Below I have offered reflections as a pre-service teacher on my time spent in field experience through my GRA position that mimicked a yearlong internship opportunity. These reflections are in italics. Following each reflection is a brief demonstration confirmed by research that my own personal experience as a pre-service teacher in an intentional partnership is not an isolated incident.

**Confidence.** *I was afforded some of the more diverse and difficult teaching opportunities of my degree program within the intentional partnership. Navigating students with disabilities, diverse learners, substantial differentiation, and ethical considerations, my experience here*

*informed much of coursework learning—especially in survey of exceptionality courses and reading education coursework. The experience gave me not only a foretaste of what to expect, but multiple servings from which I was afforded the opportunity to work alongside professionals, co-teach, fail, and succeed. My time in this reading intervention class week-after-week was one of the most formative experiences of my professional education...*

The most often cited critique of pre-service teacher education is a lack of clinical experiences that acclimate the candidate to the breadth of experiences they will likely encounter in the first years of teaching in any institution (Levine, 2002). “Reality shock” and “praxis shock” are terms coined to capture the feelings some first-year teachers feel as their new work experience does not reflect their prior university clinical experience ((Fresko & Nasser-Abu Alhija, 2015). While first-year teachers enter their professional lives confident with their content knowledge, they feel less prepared in classroom management, special education and diverse learner situations, as well as standardized assessment considerations (Castle, Fox, & Souder, 2006; Grudnoff & Tuck, 2003; Shroyer & Yahnke, 2012). Confidence is key for teacher candidates who are about to begin their first years. It is also key to retention within the field and success for the student and teacher in the first years on the job (Reynolds, Ross, & Rakow, 2002).

PDS schools, which embrace clinical centered preparation, have been successful in instilling high levels of confidence in their graduates, empowering them to focus on “craft knowledge” (practical classroom skills; Grudnoff & Tuck, 2003) while still in the confines of pre-service years. Research has shown that graduates of these programs are not only more confident in their content knowledge, but also their ability to use different methods, teach children of different intellectual abilities, and communicate effectively with parents, school

officials and community members about students' needs (Castle et al., 2006). Such heightened confidence no doubt spawns from the inclusion of the candidates in faculty meetings, professional development opportunities, school improvement, parent teacher conferences, student IEP meetings, and the delivery and scoring of state assessments (Shroyer & Yahnke, 2012).

**Professional Identity & Ability.** *I have had little doubt of my ability to teach social studies. My degree program and education from my field's faculty has left little reservation about method, approach, and goals. As a content teacher, little has been left undone. However, almost immediately from day one of school we were warned, all content area teachers are reading teachers...whatever that means. Trying to teach what that means in a vacuum or on-campus was of little avail—just as a survey on exceptionality and learning disabilities. But, being in a classroom, in the context as a teacher helping students who struggle to read, my holistic professional identity was further refined and forged. In the reading intervention classroom, we teach students gradual release of responsibility. It strikes me that we, as budding professionals, are no different in how we learn. We need this gradual release of responsibility. This field experience was my opportunity to work alongside professionals in an authentic context, learn from them, collaborate with them, and grow in my own sense of exactly what it is to be a teacher—not just content, not just reading—but wholly impacting students by meeting them where they are and learning to coax them forward. This field experience was my own gradual release into the responsibility of teaching and becoming a professional.*

Going hand-in-hand with confidence is the teacher candidate's own growth in their professional identity and ability. "Confidence and enthusiasm [come as the candidate is empowered] to impart the knowledge they have acquired at the university" in an effective way

(Summers & Weir, 2012). As internships call on pre-service teachers to take on new roles and new work, teacher candidates are integrated into the classroom, but also the overall instructional team (Levine, 2002). The effect is that the teacher candidate has the opportunity, time and again, to work with professionals, to test their own budding identity and grow into the capacity of teacher as leader. At this level they are enabled to operate in “professional learning communities to affect student learning, contribute to school improvement, inspire excellence in practice, and empowered to participate in educational improvement” (Carpenter & Sherretz, 2012).

These opportunities that longer field experiences and more entrenched relationships afford the teacher candidate are deeply connected to their integration within the professional community. Often intentional partnerships, especially PDS, have the goals of developing within the school a professional learning community that comprises the in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and college faculty (Field & Van Scoy, 2014; Harris & van Tassell, 2005). These communities have the goal of collectively reflecting more deeply on their craft, their instruction, and their situations within the field of education. This drives and compels improvement, innovation, and a sense of identity within the educators as ongoing learners and agents of change (Fresko & Nasser-Abu Alhija, 2015). By engaging teacher candidates as legitimate members of the community, through involvement in staff meetings, IEP meetings, professional development workshops, and parent-teacher conferences, the novices are not only welcomed, but emboldened to make greater contributions to the discussion occurring about the classroom and the school (Glazer & Hannafin, 2006; Shroyer & Yahnke, 2012).

Also key in the improvement of teacher candidates’ professional identity and ability is the opportunities that longer, more integrated field experiences give the student. Among them is the ability to be in the field while also taking coursework at the university. The result is that pre-

service teachers can experiment and try-out new methods and techniques as they are learned and fresh in their mind. Evidence suggests that teachers are more motivated to use differentiated techniques that they were able to attempt while in pre-service teaching (Summers & Weir, 2012).

**Collegiality.** *By the time I finished some of my first field experiences that were short-lived in my degree program I was just getting to really know my mentor teacher. The hit-and-miss, once or twice per week experiences are not without merit, but also do not deliver the same opportunity to know the teachers with which you work. I know the heart of the woman in whose classroom I co-teach in—I know what makes her tick, I know her passion, and have found not just a momentary mentor, but also a true friend. The same is true of the university faculty who co-teach alongside. Engaged in a common goal, each offering some facet of wisdom to the mix, we find ourselves less constrained to the artificial hierarchies and more as colleagues and co-workers. My time in the classroom is as much about time in the hallway and building, too. I feel a greater rapport with the other teachers in the building due to the time spent, the tasks undertaken, and the relationships forged with students. I am a part of that community—for better or for worse...*

The effect of teacher candidates growing in professional identity and ability is closely connected to their strengthened relational ties with fellow educators (Engvik, 2014). Much of the intentional partnership experience is about integrating pre-service teachers into the overall fold in the school environment. A necessary by-product of greater collaboration on curriculum matters and school improvement is stronger knowledge of one another as people that overflows into camaraderie. This reality can enable in-service teachers and faculty to engage with pre-service teachers in greater dialogue to learn their needs and assuage their fears, and it can also facilitate the pre-service teacher to find their voice and contribute more readily to professional

discussions and personal discussions. The greater the relationships, the greater the dialogue—and as education is an increasingly complex field to navigate with its ever-shifting demands on teachers, finding one’s voice and feeling comfortable and safe in using it is an important moment for pre-service teachers (Burns et al., 2015; Fresko & Nasser-Abu Alhija, 2015).

**Encountering Areas for Improvement.** *The reason our intentional partnership began was to address particular academic problems. Come to discover, with no surprise, they are usually not isolated. They don’t come in pairs, either—they come in droves. Systemic sets of problems lead to students being behind, more challenged, and giving up or being given up on. It is probably easier to send pre-service teachers to schools that have everything going for them—they likely make everyone more at ease and reflect much of the atmosphere of which our peers came from. But we did not become public educators to define the communities that we would serve—we were trained for the public and it is they we must serve. Yes, even in their dysfunction, dilemmas and plights. In encountering the real world we are best positioned to change that world and actually engage our own ideals...*

When teacher candidates find their own voice within the learning community, the teacher candidate will be able to honestly and frankly confront the more difficult realities found within the field of education. The sooner this occurs the more likely the candidate will show “a higher level of stewardship” and begin becoming part of the solution and reform effort (Levine, 2002; Rowe, Urban, & Middleton, 2016). Field experience ought be reflective of the gamut in which candidates may one day find themselves employed. The more reflective the field experience is of the real world, the more honest the education is for the pre-service teacher. Pre-service teachers can use this time for inquiry within meaningful and intentional field experience so that the first day on the job as an actual teacher is accompanied with a sober knowledge of what lies

ahead. As educational improvement becomes a goal of every educator, field experience serves students by situating them in real-world context and conversations where encountering problems may occur—as well as dialogue with in-service teachers and colleagues (Burns et al., 2015; Glazer & Hannafin, 2006; Hamel & Ryken, 2010).

**Systemic Familiarity.** *I remember laughing when they gave me my position as GRA...it will be my job to help start a professional development school (PDS). Do they know I don't even know what a PDS is?! Literally, never heard of one before! But the same ignorance of the breadth and depth of public education across contents, across grades, across the country eluded me, too. How little I knew about anything, except for the content knowledge and life experience I brought to the program. Frankly, the last time I was in an elementary school was decades ago...my greatest knowledge of what occurred there was from my own experience as an elementary school student in the 1980s. So, not only was it refreshing for the opportunity to be engaged in a building where the partnership called us to the high school, the junior high, and the elementary, but it also offered me opportunities to observe, engage, and collaborate with faculty, administrators, and students that I otherwise may never have encountered. Awareness of the whole system helps build perspective and better serve your grade level classroom. Additionally, the on-going, year-long nature let me see the first day of school and the last—the whole span of an academic year—with its peaks and valleys, energy and fatigue, education and testing, celebration and mourning, feast and famine...*

PDS and intentional learning communities have as objectives not only curriculum innovations, but also professional development, both of which are planned with systematic vision in mind (Carpenter & Sherretz, 2012; Field & Van Scoy, 2014; Harris & van Tassel, 2005). Naturally, much effort is expended within the internship in particular classrooms, at grade levels

or within content areas by the teacher candidate. However, because of the amount of time invested in a place and the encounters with other teachers and other students, these internships afford teacher candidates a greater ability to interact with the whole school system throughout an entire academic year. This is especially the case as the pre-service teacher may begin to ask questions about how students learn before coming to their current grade. These intentional communities would well empower the candidate to go find out (Glazer & Hannafin, 2006; Levine, 2002).

### **How Intentional Partnerships Make the Impact**

How the experience of a yearlong internship within an intentional partnership differs from a traditional practicum is important. Both clinical programs offer teacher candidates many of the same opportunities, but the overall sum of opportunities afforded a pre-service teacher within a clinical centered preparation program embedded in an intentional learning community are able to make the impact demonstrated above by surpassing other field experience models in the following ways: (1) involvement in planning and preparation; (2) classroom experience and management; (3) ownership and identification with school; (4) breadth of experiencing a school system and school year; (5) coursework-clinical interphase of research & practice; and, (6) increased supervision and feedback.

### **Action Points for University to Create Intentional Partnerships**

**Maximize field experience as experience.** Regardless of whether a degree program is clinical accompanied or clinical centered, the overwhelming evidence calls teacher educators to empower their students to participate in classrooms. Necessarily this requires an active role as opposed to a passive role. Too often it is customary for pre-service teachers to be treated as wallflowers and expected to function as such. This not only situates them at an immediate



disadvantage of having to be invited to participate, but also introduces them into a community as a bizarre member who simply watches and looks. Observation limits the novice educator in their engagement and must be re-thought. Great lessons are learned as each of us dive in—they are lessons of success and failure (both of which true field experience should foster).

**Empower pre-service teachers to be immersed and embrace awkward.** Educators in the first years of their work witness one of the highest levels of attrition from the profession. Were they unaware what they were getting into? Can clinical experiences better demonstrate to teacher candidates the actual profession they seek to be a part of? Certainly. And one of the best ways to start is to actually start them in the thick of things. Providing students in degree programs an immediate, albeit it limited taste, of immersed field experience is as sensible as it is humane. Many people like the thought of being educators—until they try. Then they discover that it is more than pontificating with summers free. It is real work—exhausting, emotionally tolling, and critically deliberate. It is a truism that all new encounters with people are awkward. There is no easing into it, no subtle way to avoid it. Meeting strangers, building respect, earning credit is an adventure teachers must embrace year after year. Thus, begin immediately.

**Encourage systemic cohort tasks.** In a further effort to place students more steadily into a classroom and school environment, teacher educator programs must begin to consider how to empower entire cohorts to collaborative, meaningful and authentic tasks. Too often even our service-learning programs become mere observation opportunities that isolate the teacher into a niche of existence. Teaming students up is a sure way to give them confidence on the front end, as well as charge them with large-scale tasks. Simultaneously, we need to encourage team in a classroom to interact with teams across the school. Place cohorts into engaging activities with other cohorts who are unaligned to their own grade levels and disciplines. It was G.K.

Chesterton (1950), who reminded us that every part of education has a connection with every other part—if it does not, “It is no education at all.” We must encourage students to see the connections by avoiding pigeonholes. This will give rise to seeing the whole system.

**Foster a residency mentality.** Indicting myself along with the community, teacher education programs must begin to adopt the mentality of residency. Traditionally, all professionals underwent an immersion and intense program of clinical preparation called ‘residency’ or ‘apprenticeship.’ While some may argue this is simple semantics or interchanging the synonym ‘internship’ for ‘residency,’ I would argue the contrary. They may loosely mean the same thing, but substantially they express differences. Interns need an authority figure, residents need a place. Interning is about duration; residency is about becoming a part. As the research has shown integration, intentional community has significant impact on developing educators, the crux of the impact emerges from the teacher candidate’s *residency* within the community and school. It seems when they become a part of the class and the school that we can expect greater things.

**Call on students to extend themselves by extending school.** Classrooms are one way clinical experience can occur. Indeed, they are the norm. However, intentional partnerships show that the learning community is ever creating new opportunities and innovative means to further reach and impact students. Pre-service teachers need to be a part of the ordinary—and the extraordinary. In doing so they will not only push the envelope of their own comfort but be forced to reconsider their own learning and thoughts as they are often taught to conform to academic years, school days and scopes and sequence. After-school programs, summer school, enrichment activities, and other community engagement activities are prime opportunities for students to think outside the box and grow outside themselves.

## Conclusion

Pre-service teachers need empowered. They need the opportunity (and prompting) to break away from comfort, to embrace awkward and be integrated deeply and richly into a school community. Reconsidering more authentic clinical experiences that afford them greater time and greater reach within their field experience is key. Simultaneously, teacher educators must consider how to integrate teacher candidates and cohorts into meaningful, collaborative tasks that draw the students into deeper experiences and spheres of the school that they otherwise may not encounter. The more nuanced and varied field experience can be the more realistic the opportunity can become. The more realistic the opportunity, the more aware the teacher candidate is of the profession that awaits. The more aware the novice teacher is of the profession they are entering, the more likely they will be to impact students, curriculums and school systems. Then, they will have fulfilled their professional task as a teacher and leader.

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