

A PROMISING PRACTICE: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN TEACHER  
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# A PROMISING PRACTICE: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN TEACHER EDUCATION

## **Abstract**

It is difficult to imagine any classroom teacher who is not concerned with helping students develop skills to recognize and address their feelings, solve conflicts appropriately, help their peers, and contribute in positive ways to the world in which they live to some degree (Elias et al., 1997; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015). Research shows that the most appropriate place to help teachers begin to develop these skills in their students, all which fall under the umbrella of social emotional learning, is in teacher education programs (Patti, 2006; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015).

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand what happens when a research-based approach to teaching social emotional learning is implemented during an Introduction to Education course. I developed this curriculum as a result of being tasked with redesigning our Introduction to Education course to better align it with principles of social emotional learning and our College of Education mission and vision. Key data collection methods included field notes, document analysis, individual interviews, and my own researcher journal.

The portfolio that follows seeks to make the findings of my research on social emotional learning in teacher education practical via three components: (1) an article written for publication in a scholarly journal; (2) an article written for publication in a practitioner journal; and (3) curriculum for a revised Introduction to Education course.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

*“I have no doubt that the survival of the human race depends at least as much on the cultivation of social and emotional intelligence as it does on the development of technical skills and knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2015, p. xi).”*

It is difficult to imagine any classroom teacher who is not concerned with helping students develop the skills to recognize and address their feelings, solve conflicts appropriately, help their peers, and contribute in positive ways to the world in which they live (Elias et al., 1997; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015). These skills, all social emotional competencies, along with a healthy, nurturing relationship between teacher and student, are among those that many consider to be the “missing piece” of education (Elias et al., 1997; Shriver & Buffett, 2015), allowing students to thrive in increasingly competitive educational settings. Social emotional learning increases motivation to learn and academic performance, and decreases problem behaviors (Shriver & Buffet, 2015). Ignoring social emotional development, however, discourages students from learning, and often frustrates the teachers working with them (Shriver & Buffet, 2015).

Students face a number of issues that social emotional learning programs would help them cope with. For example, students can use social emotional learning to respond effectively to the contexts and cultures in which they live (Hecht & Shin, 2015; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015). In recent years, these contexts have changed at a rapid pace. Technology and media have exposed children to information and images that they did not have access to as easily in the past. There are increased economic pressures and, as a result,

there are more families with two working parents, leaving many children with decreased parental supervision and attention. Additionally, trends that describe student engagement are lower than for previous generations. Klem and Connell (2004) estimate that approximately 50% of high school students in the United States are chronically disengaged in school, which is one indicator of poor social emotional competence. When students' social emotional skill is lower than their academic performance, they frequently end up distracting and disrupting their classmates (Benson, 2006). While often adept in twenty-first century skills such as using social media and other technologies, researchers have found children are less capable of naturally integrating social emotional learning into their daily lives (Bridgeland, Bruce, Hariharan, 2013). Students "are also more emotionally and behaviorally troubled, more depressed, more stressed, and less ready to learn in depth" now than they were in the past (Novick, Kress, & Elias, 2002, p.1).

With the issues facing students today, the need for social emotional learning skills is greater than ever. However, they often lack skills that they need in order to cope with the social and emotional challenges they face. Schools can play a key role in providing tools to help students develop their social emotional skills alongside of their intellectual growth (Novick, Kress, & Elias, 2002). Yet, these skills are often not taught in school. In an effort to address this "missing piece," the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core social emotional competencies. These competencies are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. As students master these tightly interrelated competencies, they learn to identify and appropriately manage their emotions and support their classmates as needed.

Although it is of critical importance for classroom teachers to integrate social emotional learning into their classrooms in a variety of ways, including explicit teaching and modeling

(Patti, 2006), many teachers have not been trained to do so (Jennings & Frank, 2015). Not only do few teacher education programs make this a priority, very little, if any, in-service training in social emotional learning is offered to most teachers (Jennings & Frank, 2015). In a review of the nine most commonly used social emotional learning programs that CASEL Select rated as high quality, Jennings and Frank (2015) noted that training experiences range from optional, online, self-directed instruction to a required one-year commitment to professional development. This is notable because many schools rely on commercially produced social emotional learning (SEL) programs for students to provide training to teachers rather than creating school-wide professional development plans to help teachers develop the skills needed to promote SEL. A lack of ongoing, high quality in-service training on the topic and increasingly challenging demands on teachers suggest the importance of starting this process during teacher education programs. This can help teacher candidates develop the understandings and skills they need to help children gain social emotional competency before entering the teaching profession. (Patti, 2006; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015).

Research shows that when teacher education programs find ways to teach candidates about social emotional learning, there is a positive impact on classroom behaviors once they become teachers, and they feel more comfortable and confident in their first years of teaching (Alvarez, 2007; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015). Teacher candidates can be taught about social emotional learning and development when courses in child development have clear links to classroom practice, rather than teaching just theory alone (Hamre & Pianta, 2006; NCATE, 2010; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015). Social emotional pedagogies, such as positive teacher talk and collaborative student work, should also be modeled and taught in a variety of courses throughout the teacher

preparation sequence. Making explicit links between theory and practice, which encourage applications of knowledge to the realities of the classroom, helps candidates feel competent and comfortable when they become novice teachers (Jennings & Frank, 2015).

### **Problem of Practice**

The mission and vision of the College of Education (COE) where I work is strongly aligned with research that points to teacher education programs as being the appropriate place to teach candidates about social emotional learning (Jennings & Frank, 2015; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015). For example, one of the core goals of the Teacher Education program is to help candidates learn how to develop classrooms that are “learning communities” using the principles of social emotional learning. The College of Education website states that, “Learning communities are central to the educational process in a democratic and socially just society. Learning communities must value academic achievement, personal responsibility, social responsibility, and social justice.” An underlying program belief is that helping teacher candidates learn how to create positive social emotional environments in all school contexts will foster greater academic achievement for their future students. The COE faculty believes so strongly in these principles that the first two required courses in the Teacher Education program for all candidates, regardless of their concentration, are Teaching in Learning Communities I (TLC I), and Teaching in Learning Communities II (TLC II). The crux of the problem is that it is an *unspoken assumption* that learning communities are the medium for teaching about SEL, so this connection is rarely made.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this unstated focus and course emphasis, we know little about what candidates understand about social emotional learning as a result of these first courses, particularly TLC I. I have taught candidates in TLC I in previous semesters, and both

taught and spoken informally to candidates who were in advanced stages of the program whom I did not teach, and I have noticed that candidates do not seem to grow in their understandings of social emotional competencies. I suspect that there are many possible reasons for this. However, at the heart of the discrepancy between the College of Education's stated goals and candidate understanding may begin with what is actually taught in TLC I. As this course is currently designed, it lacks both a theoretical framework for social emotional learning and a research-based perspective on the subject. Instead, it offers teacher candidates information about a series of stages for creating a classroom community (1- beginning, 2- establishing expectations, 3- identifying and resolving conflict, 4- supporting and resolving production, and 5- disbanding the community), without helping candidates understand what social emotional learning is, why it is important, or how the activities for creating a classroom community promote SEL. An additional stumbling block occurs when candidates leave the College of Education building to complete field placements and other school-based learning activities. They often find themselves in schools that do not use the same terminology regarding SEL as that which they have encountered in class and, therefore, do not seem able to transfer their learning to the classroom. For example, they may hear terms such as "responsive teacher talk" and "conflict resolution strategies" and have no idea that they should be connecting these terms to what they have learned in TLC I about the five stages of a learning community. Candidates are left not knowing where to go for more information about SEL, or how to begin to integrate the new terms and concepts they are hearing in real-world classroom settings with what they have been introduced to in class.

As a faculty member in the Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education, and a course instructor for TLC I, I am part of a small team that has been tasked with redesigning our

Elementary Education program. The program is being redesigned as part of an overall restructuring that is taking place in our College. TLC I is a course that needs particular focus as a part of this redesign due to its important placement as the first in our course sequence and the strong connection it is meant to have to our College mission, vision, and goals. Aligning TLC I with a research-based curriculum in social emotional learning will impact candidates as they continue through our course sequence because of its foundational role in our program. In an effort to improve the potential of this course to enact the core values of the COE, in the fall 2015 semester I designed and piloted a syllabus that explicitly and purposefully taught SEL skills to TLC I candidates as a first step in the overall redesign effort.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to develop a research-based approach to teaching social emotional learning in a teacher education entry level course and then study candidates' perspectives on their learning experiences and learning outcomes as a result of completing this class.

The following question guided my research:

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What understandings of social emotional learning do Rowan University teacher candidates report after participating in a research-based redesign of the Teaching in Learning Communities I course?
  - a) What course activities seem to contribute to this learning?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The course design I developed is based on the theoretical framework of Andragogy. Andragogy, as we know it today, is constructed from a long line of thinking about how to best

help adults learn, beginning as far back as 1833 when the term was first coined by Alexander Kapp as he described Plato's work (Knowles, 1998). However, more modern roots of andragogy can be traced back to the work of Eduard C. Lindeman, who wrote in 1926 that conventional education needs to be inverted in order to meet the needs of adults; adult education needs to start with the learner rather than the teacher and the content. He emphasized the importance of experiences, learner-centered activities, relevant problems being posed in classes, informal learning opportunities, and a teacher who is humble and learning alongside his or her students (Knowles, 1998).

Andragogy refers to "the art and science of helping adults learn," and sits in contrast to the concept of pedagogy (Knowles, 1998, p. 61). While pedagogy, the "art and science of teaching children," is the organizing set of beliefs in traditional education, some believe that it has not been substantively revised since it evolved in the twelfth century (Knowles, 1998, p. 61). Education, on the whole, has remained stagnant, operating within one model, including higher education. Andragogy, however, challenges traditional beliefs, encouraging adult educators to think in new ways about their teaching. To begin to understand andragogy the concept of "adult" needs to be defined.

There are at least four ways to define an adult:

1. Biologically;
2. Legally – the age at which one can vote, drive, get married without consent, etc.;
3. Socially – the age at which one begins to perform socially accepted acts of adulthood, like working, parenting, getting married, etc.; and

4. Psychologically – when we develop a self-concept for our own lives, when we are self-directed. (Knowles, 1998, p. 64)

Knowles (1998) asserts that, with regard to learning, the psychological definition is the most important. He also asserts, however, that the process of becoming self-directed and creating a self-concept starts early in life. It's important for schools to foster a sense of independence to help children mature.

Andragogy posits six assumptions about adult learners that help foster this sense of independence. They are as follows:

1. **The need to know:** Adults want to know why they need to learn something before they begin to learn it. To begin, facilitators can help students understand why something is important. More effective, however, is providing students with real or simulated experiences so that they are able to find the gaps in what they know and what they need to know.
2. **Learners' self-concept:** Adults have a concept of being responsible for their own lives and decisions. Due to this self-concept, they tend to resist situations that they see as being imposed on them, which is a problem in adult education. It is important to create learning contexts that value and make space for learners' perspectives, values, and judgements about their learning, so that they play a role in designing and evaluating learning
3. **Role of the learners' experiences:** Adults come to educational activities with greater volumes and different qualities of experiences than children. This means that the richest resource in any adult education class is the learners themselves. Learners' experiences should be a resource for both teaching and learning. The

emphasis in adult learning should be on experiential techniques, including group discussions, simulation exercises, problem-solving activities, case method, laboratory method, and peer-helping activities. There are two negatives to learner experiences, however, that need to be overcome in adult education. These are bias and mental habits that have developed as a result of experience. Adult educators need to help students try to overcome these biases and habits of mind in order to create new ways of thinking.

4. **Readiness to learn:** Adults become ready to learn things they need to know and be able to do in order to be successful in real-life situations. One powerful way for adult educators to do this is to consider tasks associated with moving from one developmental stage to the next. Readiness can be induced through exposure to simulations, models of performance excellence, and other techniques.
5. **Orientation to learning:** Adults are life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered in their approach to learning. They are motivated to learn in order to perform tasks or solve problems that they deal with in their life situations. Additionally, they learn best when presented with information in the context of real-life situations.
6. **Motivation:** Adults are responsive to some external motivators, like better jobs and promotions, but the more salient motivators are internal, such as increased self-esteem, higher quality of life, and increased job satisfaction (Knowles, 1998, p. 64 – 68).

Andragogy might have been conceived of for adults, but Knowles contends that it can be used across the lifespan (1998, p. 69). Andragogical concepts can be put to use in all

classrooms by providing students with a climate in which they feel respected, trusted, and cared about; by exposing them to the need to know before instructing them; by giving them choice in their learning; and by involving them in evaluating their learning (Knowles, 1998, p. 70). These are closely aligned to the core competencies of social emotional learning, and my own course goals, which is why andragogy is a good fit for my course design.

### **Research Methods**

This study used an instrumental case study approach to provide a rich description of a research-based course about social emotional learning with teacher candidates during their first teacher education course. The case in this study is the class itself, one section of TLC I that I designed based on research and a conceptual framework and taught in the fall semester of 2015. The case, in this instance, included the students, curriculum, and the learning outcomes of this section of TLC I. An instrumental case study is defined as a way to provide insight and to facilitate understanding of a particular issue (Denizen & Lincoln, 2000; Stake, 2005). This design is useful to explore the themes that emerged in the course as they related to effective practices for teaching social emotional learning in higher education.

. A case study is defined as the exploration and description of a ‘bounded system’ of a particular situation over a period of time (Creswell, 1998). Inherent in the case study design is the expectation and the opportunity to access multiple sources of data (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010). These can help the researcher develop a detailed description of the case. Analysis of the case can generate findings relative to the research questions. (Creswell, 1998). In order to develop a rich body of information relevant to addressing the research question, data regarding the course design and outcomes were collected through document analysis and researcher journal entries. Data regarding candidate learning

and growth were collected through the analysis of candidate work, class observational notes, and individual interviews.

### **Setting and Description of TLC I Intervention**

This study was conducted at Rowan University, a large public University in Glassboro, New Jersey. Students at Rowan come from 33 states and 19 countries; twenty-six percent of students at Rowan are minorities. The College of Education has approximately 2,800 undergraduate students and 1,100 graduate students with 66 full-time faculty members. It is the sixth biggest college of education on the East Coast.

Of the seventeen sections of TLC I, the one that I taught had a very different syllabus from all of the others. The other sixteen sections use the same syllabus and assignments, but each instructor creates his or her own PowerPoints and teaches the class differently. I received permission to select my own required course texts and assessments, develop my own final exam, and pilot the use of an abridged version of Education Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), a nationally normed assessment that evaluates teacher candidates. The catalog description for the course, which guided my own thinking and planning, is as follows:

This course introduces teacher candidates to the elements of successful, caring learning communities and builds a foundation for *Teaching in Learning Communities II* and further educational work. Candidates study, observe, and participate in various elementary school learning communities and collaborative teaching-learning environments as they examine the interplay between planning, instruction, assessment, culture, diversity, and management within a learning community environment. (TLC I syllabus of record)

My understanding of this description and multiple discussions of the intended purpose of this course with the Elementary Education Coordinator, indicated that the purpose of TLC I is to introduce candidates to the principles of social emotional learning in order to create safe, inclusive, and collaborative classroom spaces. In an effort to more explicitly (and more effectively) teach candidates how to develop social emotional learning practices, I realigned my course syllabus with research-based practices for teaching social emotional learning to pre-service teachers. I chose course texts that are current, have a focus on diversity, and are aligned with principles of social emotional learning. I designed learning activities for on-campus classes that were intended to model SEL best practices, including learning from case descriptions, a focus on culturally relevant pedagogies, and collaborative group work. Assignments for candidates included reflective journals, focused field observations, edTPA, and advocacy book clubs. Rather than the multiple choice final exam that students in the other sections of TLC I take, candidates in the section I taught took an exam that asked them to analyze a classroom case description with regard to the social emotional competencies being enacted.

. In addition to course work, learning about SEL was supported by a 21-hour practicum experience at Johnstone Elementary School, the PDS where I serve as a Professor in Residence (PIR). Candidates were grouped in pairs or triads and placed in general education kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms. While there, they were asked to observe classroom practices, routines, and procedures, work with individual students and small groups, and teach one lesson. Candidates were assigned to focus on the social emotional learning that took place during that time, as well as other times throughout the day. It is important to note that neither my research question nor my data collection focused on the field component of this course, but time at

Johnstone did presumably supported and extended what candidates were learning about SEL during their classroom time with me.

As I considered research-based course revision with regard to SEL, I wanted to ensure that I planned learning activities and assessments that were aligned with the CASEL core competencies for SEL and the assumptions of andragogy. This alignment is outlined in the chart below.

Table 1

*Learning Activity Alignment*

<b>CASEL Core Competency for SEL</b>	<b>Assumption of Andragogy</b>	<b>Learning Activity</b>
Self-awareness	Need to know, Learners' self-concept, Learners' experience, Readiness to learn, Orientation to learning, Motivation	Case studies, reflective journal, field experience, self-assessment
Self-management	Learners' experience, Orientation to learning, Motivation	Collaborative group work, reflective journals
Social awareness	Learners' experience, Orientation to learning	Equity book clubs, reflective journal, case studies
Relationship skills	Learners' experience, Orientation to learning	Collaborative group work
Responsible decision making	Learners' experience, Orientation to learning, Motivation	Collaborative group work, field experience

Looking beyond these learning activities, I explicitly taught, through direct instruction, the skills and strategies that candidates needed to know in order to successfully implement the SEL core competencies in classrooms. I also asked candidates to practice these skills through a variety of classroom activities. While I taught all of the competencies, I relied on the Responsive Classroom curriculum as a vehicle for putting these competencies into practice due to the fact that candidates were exposed to this approach in their field placement. These are outlined in the chart below:

Table 2

*Instructional Practices*

<b>SEL Core Competency</b>	<b>Field Instructional Practice (Off campus experience)</b>	<b>On-Campus Instructional Practice</b>
Self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, social awareness	Morning Meeting	Modeling, role playing, simulations
Self-management, self-awareness	Routines and Procedures	Modeling, role-playing
Self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, social awareness	Conflict Resolution	Modeling, role-playing, simulations
Self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision making	Cool Down Strategies	Modeling, simulations

Relationship skills, social awareness	Responsive Teacher Talk	Modeling, role-playing, simulations
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### Sample

There were 23 students enrolled in my section of TLC I, and all comprised the convenience sample for this study. Traditional four-year students enroll in TLC I during the fall of their sophomore year, but many others are junior year transfer students from community colleges. TLC I is the first course in the Rowan University College of Education sequence, and mandatory for all Education majors. Although the TLC I field placement component is in an elementary school, students from all education majors are combined in this course because the focus is on social emotional learning rather than a particular content area or student age group. The premise is that, regardless of major within the field of education, all candidates need to learn about this key topic. What this means in a practical sense is that I had a range of early childhood (3), elementary education (5), secondary education (9), and physical education (6) majors in my class, and all were placed in an elementary school for this field experience. This is not something I have control over in my course design, and acknowledge that it is a challenge to meet the needs of these diverse future teachers.

While I treated all student work as data, I only interviewed approximately 20% of my class (six students). These candidates were a smaller, purposeful sample, made up equally of males and females and representing a range of majors within the field of education. They were selected with the goal of maximizing diversity within the sample. In order to select these students, I asked for volunteers. Approximately half of the class volunteered to be interviewed,

and the candidates ultimately selected represented the diverse education concentrations, as well as both men and women. Of those who volunteered, the candidates chosen were the only ones met my goal of a maximally diverse sample.

### **Data Collection**

The primary instrument in qualitative research is the researcher herself (Creswell, 1998). This has its advantages and disadvantages. A primary advantage to the researcher is the opportunity to enhance understanding through immediate verbal and nonverbal communication with participants that enables the potential to clarify, explore, summarize, and check the accuracy of responses (Merriam, 2009). A drawback, however, is that the researcher's biases may impact the design of data collection as well as the interpretation of data (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2008). Case study research, therefore, employs multiple methods of data collection in order to support the development of rich description that is less susceptible to researcher bias. This provides the opportunity to triangulate as way to increase the trustworthiness of findings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). In particular, this case used researcher journals, document analysis, observational notes, and individual interviews in order to develop a rich description of the course itself and candidate learning.

**Researcher Journal.** Because this was a study of a practitioner researcher implemented innovation, it was important to capture the thought process of the researcher (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2009). I, therefore, kept a researcher journal throughout both the planning and implementation phases. Once the course began, I recorded notes at the end of each course day. I documented discussions related to SEL, student reported or observed challenges, questions, confusions, and epiphanies. Additionally, reflections about changes to the course and ideas for

improvement were recorded. As I was also with candidates in the field, I kept notes on interactions and observations there as well, with the intention of documenting ways to more explicitly link the on-campus classes with the field experiences. I documented my observations about student learning regarding SEL, as well as any challenges and contextual barriers that I noticed. All journal notes were transcribed into a Google document on my password-protected computer.

**Documents.** I analyzed both documents related to the planning and execution of the course, as well as student work. These data offered insights into what candidates learned, how they changed over time, and what changes needed to be made to the course in the future.

**Course Documents.** Documents related to the planning and execution of the course were collected and kept in a file on my password-protected computer. These documents included the course syllabus, key course assignments, and course rubrics. Notes were added to the documents to reflect any changes made, as well as any ideas about future changes that should be made based on observational notes and candidate comments.

**Student Work.** Most student work completed to fulfill course requirements was treated as data. This included the key assignments that were designed to show evidence of student learning about social emotional learning. These assignments included reflective dialogue journals (my responses to students were also saved as data), book club work, and field assignments. Student mid-semester evaluations were also treated as data, as were formal “one minute writes” completed at the end of each class session. Additionally, final exams were also mined as a way to look for cumulative growth over the semester.

**Observational Notes.** I observed TLC I candidates in the context of participant-observer. As I taught TLC I, I facilitated the class discussions as well as observed the work of

my candidates. Since I initiated and facilitated conversations about social emotional competencies during class meetings and I wanted to capture complete conversations on this topic among the candidates, it was necessary to audio record each session. Field notes were written as quickly as possible after each class meeting and again when listening to recordings of the classes to highlight any thoughts I had that may not be evident in audio recordings. At the completion of each class I immediately wrote a detailed description of the pertinent aspects of the class. Audio recordings were sent to Rev.com for transcription and then used to help deepen descriptions where my memory failed. Small groups, however, were not recorded. I observed small groups and took notes on their meetings, but do not have the level of detail that transcribed audio-recordings would provide.

**Individual Interviews.** One interview was conducted with each candidate selected as a part of my smaller sample (described above). This interview took place immediately after the conclusion of the fall 2015 semester (once grades had been submitted) to provide more information about what the candidates had learned about social emotional competencies, and what aspects of the course they believe most contributed to those understandings. The interviews were audio recorded and lasted approximately one hour. They were held in my office at Rowan University. I used a semi-structured protocol to facilitate the discussion. The semi-structured protocol allowed me to probe and obtain a depth to the responses that a strictly structured protocol would not provide. The semi-structured protocol also allowed a more comfortable conversational interaction, hopefully putting the participants at ease and allowing them to be expansive in their responses. At the end of each interview, I immediately wrote a detailed description of the session and Rev.com transcribed the audio recordings. I then corrected the transcript by listening to the audio with the text.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative research is distinguished by inductive as opposed to purely deductive mining of data (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 1998). Analysis calls for consolidating and reducing data retrieved from what participants say and do in conjunction with what the researcher sees (Merriam, 2009). I used interpretational analysis to begin to make meaning of the data. Interpretational analysis closely examines and groups chunks of data to describe and explain the phenomenon studied while beginning to identify specific constructs and patterns that build meaning from the data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010).

Once data was transcribed and organized by date, I read and reread them several times to gain a general sense of what was collected and as a way to begin to develop codes. All data were coded, and then codes were grouped together in order to find themes. Most codes emerged inductively; however, several deductive codes were derived from the literature to compare the participants' responses and experiences with concepts associated with the core concepts of social emotional learning. Codes were then grouped to help me write analytic memos to identify and develop themes and findings. These analytic memos included coded excerpts of data to support themes and establish patterns. Themes and patterns derived from analytic memos were used to develop generalizations in order that others may learn from the case (Creswell, 1998). Added to these generalizations was a detailed description of aspects of the case including the setting and its participants as well as comparisons with published literature about teacher candidates, teacher education, and a developing understanding of social emotional learning (Creswell, 1998).

**Researcher Role**

My role as a Rowan University faculty member afforded me the opportunity to be in close contact with all of the participants in this study. It placed teacher candidates in my course,

thus providing me with a study sample, and gave me the chance to work as a Professor in Residence at Johnstone which provided me with opportunities to observe these students in classroom contexts. Despite these clear and positive affordances regarding familiarity and access, there are difficulties associated with my role. For example, participants in my study were prone to want to please me, their professor. This could have prevented them from expressing their actual thoughts. To help counter this, I only looked at student work that was within the regular scope of course assignments and I only looked at it as data once final grades were submitted. Further, participation in the interviews was voluntary, and did not impact grades or candidate outcomes in the course in any way. In order to help mitigate any pressure students might feel as they were interviewed, questions were very open-ended, and only occurred once final grades were submitted. The fact, however, that I was interviewing volunteers does mean that it was a self-selecting group of candidates, more likely to feel positively about the course and their experience. This is a limitation of the study, and should be noted as such.

**Trustworthiness**

Qualitative case study research requires extensive verification (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). To that end, I utilized four verification procedures to increase the integrity of this study: prolonged engagement in the “field”, triangulation, rich and thick description, and peer review (Creswell, 1998).

Prolonged engagement and observation occurred because data collection traversed the entire fourteen weeks of the semester. However, engagement extended beyond the 14 weeks because it began as soon as I started planning the redesign and taking notes on my process; this was months before the semester began. My syllabus and course materials went through many drafts, and each was documented, along with my thinking, in order to create a paper trail of why

and how I created the course I ultimately shared with students. My own reflections and class observations, along with individual interviews and analysis of student work provided a significant quantity of data from which to develop rich description that can support the development, deep understanding, and evidence to defend key themes and findings.

Triangulation uses multiple modes of data collection to corroborate the key themes and findings. This means that what I saw in the observations, what I heard in the interviews, and what I read in student work could be used to corroborate analysis and findings when taken as a whole. Finally, I underwent rigorous peer review of my work. My dissertation group and dissertation chair read my work regularly in order to check my thinking, ensure that my emerging and final data analysis were consistently and comprehensively linked to the data, and that I was not simply jumping to the conclusions that I wanted to make.

### **Portfolio Description**

After conducting a research study as described, my data analysis contributed to the creation of the portfolio that follows. It is made up of three products that are practical for me professionally but also demand skills similar to those of writing a traditional dissertation. Each product is intended to disseminate my findings to a different audience (researchers, practitioners, and colleagues), and captures a slightly different “slice” of my findings. These products are a manuscript appropriate for submission to a research journal, a manuscript appropriate for submission to a practitioner journal, and revised course materials that can be shared with colleagues. Each will be explained in further detail below.

### **Research Journal Article**

This article focused on the ways in which book clubs, an activity implemented in my course where students worked in small groups to learn about individuals other than themselves,

supported social emotional learning, particularly in the domains of relationship building, social awareness, and responsible decision making. Specifically, this article will address the research question “What learning do candidates report when social emotional competencies are taught through book clubs in a teacher education course?”

Although this Ed.D. dissertation was not designed to address gaps in the knowledge base, there is not a great deal of research about how to teach social emotional learning effectively to teacher candidates in higher education. Therefore, this article makes a contribution to an under-researched topic by focusing on an instructional activity designed to support understanding of SEL with this population. It assumes that they can use what they have experienced as learners to impact their work in their own future classrooms.

Findings show that Advocacy Book Clubs helped candidates experience social emotional competencies first-hand. They learned, particularly, about relationship building, social awareness, and responsible decision making through this activity.

### **Practitioner Journal Article**

This article provides a detailed description of classroom activities that I used in an effort to promote SEL in teacher education, namely different types of talk and collaboration. I focus, in particular, on how I structured class discussion and student collaboration to foster transformational learning with regard to SEL. This article is posed as a promising practice aimed at other teacher educators interested in promoting SEL with their candidates. While there is some existing research on using classroom talk to foster learning in higher education, little of it focuses on teacher education specifically. This practitioner piece is directly aimed at improving practice by describing the key elements of the course that draw on talk to support understanding of SEL. I use descriptions of my course drawn from my researcher journal and audiotaped

segments of small group and whole class discussion, as well as portions of candidate interviews and dialogue journals to illustrate my own reflections on these aspects of the course.

### **Curriculum Design and Related Materials**

The third element in my portfolio is a revised curriculum design and materials based on analysis of my findings. Materials include the syllabus, PowerPoints, an adapted version of edTPA (Education Teacher Performance Assessment), and case studies about diversity, used as a way to help candidates consider multiple points of view. The products of this revision process will be used to teach (and study) this course again.

Completing this curriculum design was important because improving instruction and better meeting learning goals for the course was one of the key goals of my dissertation. In creating this design and gathering the materials, I will be able to help fill in the last “piece of the puzzle” by sharing what I have learned from my dissertation research with other instructors and making my course stronger for the next time I teach it.

## **Chapter Two: Research Article**

Learning social emotional competencies through book clubs in Introduction to Education

Jennifer Rich

### **Abstract**

Teacher candidates need to enter the teaching profession prepared to support needs of their students that go well beyond covering the curriculum. This study reports on the efficacy of book clubs as a way to teach social emotional competencies in teacher education. Analysis of candidate dialogue journals, projects, and interviews indicates that book clubs are particularly effective vehicles for teaching the core social emotional competencies of relationship building and social awareness, and responsible decision making.

Children face a wide range of challenges in school that go well beyond the academic. Research shows that between the ages of nine and sixteen, approximately 38% of children are diagnosed with at least one or more psychiatric disorders potentially indicating widespread stress, anxiety, and depression (Jaffee, Harrington, Cohen, & Moffitt, 2005). Beyond this, approximately 3.2 million students are bullied each year (Cohen & Canter, 2002), and suicide is the third leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of ten and 24 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Students who are coping with mental illness, bullying, thoughts of suicide, or are dealing with other life issues, including homelessness, divorce, a death in the family, drugs or alcohol, or gender identity issues, present profound challenges to teachers. They need preparation and support to meet the needs of their students that go well beyond how to cover the curriculum.

Dealing with these issues requires a high level of social emotional competency for students and teachers alike. Social emotional competencies include being able to recognize and address feelings, solve conflicts appropriately, help peers, and contribute in positive ways to the world (Elias et al., 1997; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015). More specifically, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core social emotional competencies. These competencies are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, n.d.). Social emotional competencies are important because they increase motivation to learn and academic performance and decrease problem behaviors (Shriver & Buffet, 2015). They also enable children to identify and manage their emotions and take up supportive roles with their classmates as needed. Ignoring social emotional development, however,

discourages students from learning and often frustrates the teachers working with them (Shriver & Buffet, 2015).

Schools can play a key role in providing tools to help students develop their social emotional skills alongside their intellectual growth (Novick, Kress, & Elias, 2002). Yet, teachers often fail to focus on them. This may be because they lack the skills to support and teach social emotional competencies. An important starting place for helping teachers develop skills in this area is in teacher education programs. When teacher education programs effectively teach candidates about social emotional learning, there is a positive impact on their students' classroom behaviors once they become teachers, and they report feeling more comfortable and confident in their first years of teaching. (Alvarez, 2007; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015). Although there is no one specific method or set of ideas for how best to develop teacher candidate skills' in this area, social emotional pedagogies, such as positive teacher talk and collaborative student work, should be modeled and taught in a variety of courses throughout the teacher preparation sequence. Making explicit links between theory and practice, which encourages applications of knowledge to the realities of the classroom, is also important because doing so helps candidates feel competent and comfortable when they become novice teachers (Jennings & Frank, 2015).

One approach to learning about social emotional competencies is by having relevant first-hand experiences such as practicing competencies through collaborative group work. However, it is difficult to create situations that closely approximate what teacher candidates (TCs) might one day face in their own classrooms or the emotions and confusion those situations evoke. Reading literature about a range of students facing a variety of significant social challenges is one way to help TCs imagine a wide variety of situations they may experience with students and

families, as well as develop appropriate responses to those situations as teachers (Gallagher, 2009; Rosenblatt, 1997). To that end, this article explores the opportunities for learning that TCs experienced as they participated in Advocacy Book Clubs, a class activity I developed in which small groups of candidates read, discussed, and planned a presentation on one middle grade or young adult book with a young protagonist experiencing significant difficulty because of being “different” in some way. The goals of this activity are to increase self-awareness, relationship building skills, social awareness, and begin to identify ways to advocate for students experiencing significant emotional difficulty. Advocacy, in this case, is linked to the social emotional competency of responsible decision making. This study was guided by the following research question: What learning do candidates report when social emotional competencies are taught through book clubs in a teacher education course? This study points toward the potential of Advocacy Book Clubs to help develop social emotional competencies among teacher candidates which will begin to prepare them to meet the non-academic needs of their future students.

### **Literature Review**

In this literature review I examine the research on the benefits of social emotional learning. First, I will define social emotional learning in terms of its benefits. Next, I describe the research on approaches to facilitating social emotional learning. Finally, I discuss what the existing research indicates about effective pedagogy in teacher education as a way to better understand the strength of potential approaches to integrating learning about social emotional competencies into pre-service coursework.

**Benefits of Social Emotional Learning**

Social emotional learning involves developing social emotional competencies through explicit instruction and student-centered learning approaches that help students develop communication and collaboration skills (Friedlander et al., 2014). Social emotional competencies, and the instruction of those competencies in schools, help children acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can enhance personal development, establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, and lead to effective work (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). These include the competencies to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2012).

Students are more successful in school and in their day-to-day lives when they are self-aware, can manage their emotions, can take the perspectives of others and relate to them, and can make sound personal and social choices (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015). When SEL is taught in classrooms, students can successfully master these competencies as well as achieve other social emotional benefits. These include fostering a more positive attitude towards oneself and others; gaining an increased sense of self-efficacy, confidence, persistence, and commitment to school; developing more positive social relationships with peers and adults; reducing risk-taking behaviors and emotional distress; and improving test scores, grades, and attendance (Durlak et al., 2011; Farrington et al., 2012; Sklad et al., 2012; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015).

Multiple studies examining the impact of SEL programs have found positive outcomes (Brown, Jones, LaRusso, & Aber, 2010; Durlak et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; McCartney & Rosenthal, 2000; Washburn et al., 2011). Most research has been quasi-experimental, though

there have been several experimental studies. Durlak et al. (2011) conducted the largest meta-analysis of both quasi-experimental and experimental evaluations, and found positive results of SEL programs. This study analyzed 213 school-based SEL programs, all primary intervention programs, meaning they were the only programs being used in the schools, across six measures: social and emotional skills, attitudes towards self and others, positive social behaviors, conduct problems, emotional distress, and academic performance. There were improvements in all of these domains as a result of the intervention, and there was little difference in effectiveness based on student age or ethnicity. (Durlak et al., 2011).

There are several smaller, short-term studies, all taking place in single schools which support Durlak et al.'s (2011) findings (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2007; Jones et al., 2011; Kellam, Ling, Merisca, Brown, & Ialongo, 1998; Thomas, Bierman, & Powers, 2011). These show that high quality SEL programs, defined as programs that are systematic, sequential, integrate skills and strategies, and monitored in ongoing ways (CASEL, n.d.) can have an impact on an entire class when they are focused on helping just one student. This is especially important because classroom composition research says that one or more disruptive students can change the dynamic of an entire classroom, which means that one disruptive student impacted positively by SEL programs can influence the way an entire class functions (Kellam, Ling, Merisca, Brown, & Ialongo, 1998; Thomas, Bierman, & Powers, 2011).

### **Approaches to Social Emotional Learning**

When schools do teach social emotional competencies, they tend to depend upon commercially produced, “packaged” curricula. The five most commonly-used of these have some similarities (Rimm-Kaufmann & Hullmann, 2015). All five approaches offer curriculum guidelines for teachers, encouraging them to follow a sequenced set of lessons to help students

learn social emotional competencies. They also designate specific time during the school day for teaching SEL, typically during a class meeting in the morning or at the close of the school day (Rimm-Kaufmann & Hullmann, 2015). However, researchers propose that teachers and schools integrate research-based social emotional competencies throughout the school, to extend student learning (Aber, Brown, Jones, Berg, & Torrente, 2011; Embry & Biglan, 2008; Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

One way to accomplish this is by “moving from brands to essential ingredients” (Aber, Brown, Jones, Berg, & Torrente, 2011, p.218). “Brands,” in this analogy, are published, packaged curricula served up in designated parcels; “essential ingredients” are defined as direct, targeted instruction about specific social emotional competencies threaded throughout the school day. Researchers do not necessarily suggest moving away from packaged programs, but rather supplementing them throughout the day with essential ingredients (Aber, Brown, Jones, Berg, & Torrente, 2011; Embry & Biglan, 2008; Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

To embed SEL throughout the day, specific routines can be implemented that support SEL (Bailey et al., 2011; Jones & Bouffant, 2012). These might include using conflict resolution strategies, emotional regulation strategies, and games to increase or regain attention. These approaches reinforce the social emotional competencies of relationship building, self awareness, and self management. Researchers have suggested that SEL skills should also be taught alongside of academic skills through discussion and activities using high-quality literature, social studies lessons, and current events that emphasize perspective-taking, collaboration, and critical literacy skills (Bailey, Jones, & the Harvard SECURE Development Team, 2012; Jones & Bouffant, 2012). Additionally, cooperative learning activities can support SEL because it helps them learn to listen actively, work with others, and compromise; these are all skills that support

core social emotional competencies (Cooper & Farran, 1998; McClelland et al., 2000; Yen, Konold, & McDermott, 2004). In order to do this effectively, teachers must understand what the essential components of SEL are and how to teach them.

### **Starting Out Right: Social Emotional Learning in Teacher Education**

Integrating SEL throughout the school day is difficult for many teachers, however, because they lack training in this area (Jones & Bouffant, 2012). In order for SEL to become an integrated, regular part of the school day, teachers need ongoing training, but they also need to begin their careers with concepts and pedagogies that support SEL by knowing how to build a caring classroom environment, handle disruptive students, and interact positively with students. Teachers need to begin by developing their own social emotional competencies and learning about SEL in their teacher preparation programs. In order for teacher candidates to develop an understanding of social emotional competencies, however, it is necessary to consider what content knowledge and pedagogies support this learning.

**Creating Safe Spaces to Support SEL Integration.** There is little empirical research on what content knowledge needs to be included in teacher education programs in order to prepare future teachers to integrate SEL skills and strategies into their future classrooms, despite the strong call in the research literature to do so (Jennings & Frank, 2015; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015). Instead, there has been research that focuses on creating safe and nurturing classroom environments, and research that focuses on the importance of culturally relevant and multicultural education. To date, research in these areas has remained relatively fragmented, without an explicit link between culturally relevant pedagogy and social emotional learning. The creation of a safe classroom space, however, implies that teachers must be both responsive to and hold high expectation of all learners. This means that they must develop,

among other skills, culturally relevant practices. Research shows clear links between caring classrooms, academic achievement, and prosocial behaviors (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008; Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997; Wentzel, 2002). Teachers who have high expectations tend to have students who earn better grades, and also pursue prosocial goals, take responsibility, and show a commitment to learning to mastery (Wentzel, 2002). This strengthens Hamre and Pianta's (2001) finding that the quality of early student-teacher relationships influences the academic outcomes of students through eighth grade. Further, in schools with strong community, there are less student behavior problems, less absenteeism, and less reported bullying (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008; Welsh, Greene, & Jenkins, 1999).

By creating safe classroom spaces, teachers foster environments where students have the potential to grow their social emotional competencies. This is important because research shows that the mastery of social emotional competencies has more influence on school and life outcomes than academic intelligence (Zins et al., 2004). Social emotional skills not only impact everyday life, but they also impact school achievement, and helping students to communicate, resolve conflicts, make decisions, and cooperate more effectively (Catalano et al., 2004). There is a substantial body of literature that supports the idea that strong social emotional competencies are a predictor of academic success (Elias et al., 2003; Shriver & Weissberg, 2005). A study conducted by Caprara et al. (2000), for example, found that indicators of social emotional competence were better predictors of eighth grade academic achievement than were third-grade academic achievement.

**Promising Practices and Pedagogies.** It is important not only to consider what content is salient for developing the knowledge and skills of teacher candidates with regard to SEL, but

also what pedagogies will help them learn and support development of SEL. The research base on teacher education pedagogies more generally consists primarily of small self-studies that professor-researchers have conducted of their own courses. When many of these studies are examined together, however, trends begin to emerge in terms of pedagogies that can be considered best practices. This discussion of teacher education pedagogy focuses specifically on approaches that are aligned with principles of SEL. These include culturally relevant practices, case studies, field experiences, and reflective journals.

***Culturally Relevant Practices.*** It seems unlikely that any course that focuses on the creation of social emotional learning would be complete without pedagogies that help teacher candidates develop an understanding of culturally relevant practices. Culturally relevant practices encourage teacher candidates to attend to the communities, families, home lives, cultures, and differences of the students in their classes. Proven approaches to teaching culturally relevant pedagogy in teacher education programs include an institutional inquiry assignment (Hyland & Heuschkel, 2009), which grew out of social and community inquiry assignments (Hyland & Noffke, 2005) and ethnographic writing (Lenski et al., 2005). These inquiry-based assignments (Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Hyland & Heuschkel, 2009) have different goals but they all support student growth in understanding marginalized groups through experiences that are designed to extend or revise their frames of reference. Pedagogies that support this growth include collaborative inquiry, reflection papers, and extensive class discussions (Hyland & Noffke, 2005; Hyland & Heuschkel, 2009). Ethnographic writing was found to be beneficial when helping teacher candidates better understand their own biases and how careful observation of marginalized groups might help them as they become practicing teachers (Lenski et al., 2005).

**Field Experience.** Field experiences are multipurpose, intended to expose teacher candidates to best practices, allow them to hear experienced teachers' reflections about their work, help them begin to view themselves as teachers, and solidify the connection between university course work and the real world of teaching (Frieberg, 1995; Hopkins, 1995; McIntyre, 1983; Posner, 2005). While field experiences in general are considered to be beneficial to teacher candidates, providing them in Professional Development Schools (PDSs) is considered to be a best practice (Field & Van Scoy, 2014; Darling-Hammond; Goodlad, 1994; Polizzi, 2009). PDSs bridge the gap between theory and practice by creating strong school-University partnerships (Polizzi, 2009). In this way, they are a more authentic, professional, and clinical way to prepare candidates (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Goodlad, 1994).

**Reflective Journals.** Journals are most often used as a means of encouraging reflection during teacher education (Jaeger, 2013). There are multiple ways to use journals in teacher education, ranging from unstructured entries (Schon, 1988) and free-writes (Tremmel, 1993) to more structured approaches where candidates respond to prompts or questions (Ross, 1990). A review of seven studies (Reiman, 1999) focused on the use of reflective dialogue journals to foster conceptual and ethical growth. Although some researchers have expressed concern about reflective journal writing, in that journals can simply reflect stereotypes and biases that students have without helping to address them, or that they are too confessional in tone (Fendler, 2003; Wade, Fauske, & Thompson, 2008), others have shown that candidates showed greater gains in their ethical growth than conceptual growth, but also made gains in their understanding and responsiveness to student needs (Jaeger, 2013).

**Case Descriptions.** Case analysis can be used to help teacher candidates better understand the complex nature of teaching, encourage multiple perspectives, bring the

complexity of day-to-day teaching onto a college campus, and help them make informed decisions about practice in light of that complexity (Floyd & Bodur, 2005). In order to be used effectively, researchers have found that case descriptions should be ambiguous enough to allow for a variety of interpretations and debate among readers (Floyd & Bodur, 2005; Hansen, 1997). Case descriptions can act as a bridge from course theory to practice, presenting teacher candidates with problems to define, the need to identify alternatives, choose courses of action, and consider the consequences of those plans (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Shulman, 2002; Floyd, 2002).

Literature case studies are a particular form of case studies that use books, generally fiction, as the source of cases. They allow candidates to “dig deeper” than shorter, more traditional case studies, though there is less research on their use. Priscilla L. Griffith and Kathryn Laframboise (1998) have pioneered this literature case description work with teacher candidates in their language arts methods classes. They have used literature case descriptions to examine the role of families, ethics in schools, child development, and school culture. Using a qualitative case study approach, they determined that teaching with literature-based cases has five benefits. First, teacher candidates are able to simultaneously respond to issues of classroom practice in a text while formulating their own ideas and beliefs about what they would do in a similar situation. The text gives students a model, and they are able to have a vicarious experience while imagining interactions with the characters and situations that live only within the pages of a book. Next, written and oral responses to the text encourage candidates to take academic risks. Third, through class discussion and written reflections that push candidates to consider how they would handle the situations that are brought up by the text as teachers, literature case studies help candidates make connections between the text (the case) and their

teacher education courses. Fourth, literature cases help candidates develop their identities as teachers. Through discussion and reflection, candidates build confidence and begin to see who they will be once they transition to the other side of the desk. Finally, Griffith and Laframboise (1998) point out that candidates enjoy literature case studies. They build good reading habits and help strengthen reading engagement, which could contribute to building lifelong reading habits – an important quality to cultivate in future teachers.

Building on the work of Griffith and Laframboise (1998), Brindley and Laframboise (2002) completed a qualitative study with 115 teacher candidates enrolled in four sections of a children's literature course over three years. This study examined the use of literature case descriptions with the intent of encouraging teacher candidates to (re)examine their beliefs about culture. Candidates were asked to read young adult novels with culturally diverse characters and engage in drama, role-playing, written reflections, and conversations about those texts. After analyzing the themes of the written reflections made by the teacher candidates, Brindley and Laframboise (2002) found that engaging in this type of work with literature increased knowledge of and appreciation for diverse cultures.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the research on best practices for integrating SEL in teacher education is very limited. There are few teacher education programs that address SEL in their coursework, despite repeated calls for this (Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015). These calls suggest that it is critical to embed SEL in teacher education experiences in order to better prepare teacher candidates to begin their careers ready to meet the challenges that they will face. Such efforts must be based on sound research, and, to this end, more research on SEL in teacher education must be done (Jones et al., 2013; Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015).

This study builds upon the existing research, focusing on the use of literature case descriptions to teach social emotional learning in one Introduction to Education class.

### **Research Design**

The findings presented here draw on data from one course, Introduction to Education, taught within a large College of Education (COE) on the east coast. All COE candidates are enrolled in Introduction to Education regardless of their education concentration, which means that in the class, there were Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Health and Physical Education majors.

### **Participants and Context**

Participants for this study were the 23 undergraduate candidates who were enrolled in the course. 18 of these candidates were female, five were male; 12 were sophomores, 11 were junior transfer students. There were three early childhood, five elementary education, nine secondary education, and six health and physical education majors in my class. Candidates ranged in age from 19 to 32. Six candidates also participated in voluntary interviews once the semester had ended. Four of these candidates were female, two male. There were two elementary education majors, two health and physical education majors, and two secondary education majors in this sample.

### **Guiding Principles of Advocacy Book Clubs.**

The Advocacy Book Club activity was created in order to attend to the SEL core competency of social awareness, which focuses on understanding those of diverse backgrounds and cultures (CASEL, n.d.). It was also implemented to strengthen relationship skills, another SEL core competency. According to CASEL (n.d.), relationship skills include communication, cooperation, and the ability to negotiate with diverse groups of people. ABCs address these

competencies by having teacher candidates read literature about diverse student populations, encouraging candidates to take on the perspectives of those they read about, and asking them to work in collaborative groups for an extended period of time, forming relationships with their classmates to accomplish a task. The book clubs were also designed to encourage teacher candidates to envision themselves as teachers. To meet this goal I drew on the transactional theory of literature (Rosenblatt, 1997)

In her transactional theory of literature Rosenblatt (1995) argues that reading is a process in which the reader creates meaning by drawing on personal experiences in relationship to the text. Reading, in this case, is neither a reaction to nor an interaction with text; it is a transaction, or a back and forth, with text (Rosenblatt, 1995). Rosenblatt argues that there are two stances readers take up during reading transactions, efferent or aesthetic. Readers taking on the efferent stances focus on what will happen after reading is over, what will be learned, what actions will be taken, or what solutions to problems have been figured out. This stance focuses more on developing and deploying reading skills, particularly for academic purposes. Aesthetic reading focuses on what a reader is living through as he or she reads and focuses more on feelings evoked through the transaction with text and experience. Rosenblatt notes that these stances are not mutually exclusive, but that readers may make choices (or be urged to take up one stance or another by a teacher or some other individual) as to how to read, moving back and forth between the two (1995). According to Rosenblatt, because readers can take up dual stances at any time while reading, “we can live different lives; we can anticipate future periods in our own life; we can participate in different social settings; we can try out solutions to personal problems” (p.190, 1995). Ultimately, transactions with text enable readers to imagine their lives differently.

Middle grade and young adult fiction often deals with a wide range of challenging and sensitive topics, including bullying, suicide, pregnancy, gender and sexual identity, body image, self-identity, and drug use. By creating a caring community for reading and discussing books that deal with these issues, teacher candidates have the opportunity to move between the efferent and aesthetic perspectives, considering how they think about these issues personally and how they might grapple with these issues in the future as teachers.

### **Advocacy Book Clubs**

The choice of books that students read in ABCs is critical because books need to provide enough content to allow teacher candidates to read them as literature case descriptions. My first criteria for choosing books for ABCs was that they be young adult and middle grade titles that have protagonists who are students facing a range of challenges. While picture books also might accomplish these same goals, they are shorter in length and therefore do not provide an extended literature case description in the same way. In this instance, longer is better because it allows readers time to get to know the characters, time to dive into the problems they are facing, and time to deeply think about possible solutions.

In ABCs, students work in small groups centered on the book they are reading. Each group read a different book. In order to place students in groups, I gave a book talk about each book I selected by providing an overview of the story, the challenge the main character faces, and why I particularly liked it. Next, candidates filled out an index card ranking their top three choices. This was done immediately and without talking to one another so that their selections would be based purely on interest rather than on whom they wanted to work with. This was important so that teacher candidates would be challenged to build relationships with classmates they did not know, a goal of ABCs. All candidates were assigned to their first or second choice

book, and there were five ABC groups. The books that they read were: *Winger* (Smith, 2013), *Thirteen Reasons Why* (Asher, 2011), *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces* (Quintero, 2014), *George* (Gino, 2015), and *Nineteen Minutes* (Picoult, 2007). These books had a range of characters including gay, Hispanic, and transgender protagonists facing bullying, rape, teen pregnancy, suicide, or school shootings as topics included in their plot lines (see Table 1 for detail).

Table 1  
*ABC Books*

<b>Book</b>	<b>Topics Covered</b>
<i>Winger</i> (Smith, 2011)	LGBTQ, bullying, underage drinking, lack of adult supervision
<i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i> (Asher, 2011)	Rumors, physical violence, invasion of privacy, rape, adult irresponsibility
<i>Gabi, A Girl in Pieces</i> (Quintero, 2014)	Teen pregnancy, drug abuse, body image, cultural differences
<i>George</i> (Gino, 2015)	Young transgender children, bullying
<i>Nineteen Minutes</i> (Picoult, 2007)	Bullying, school shooting, suicide, neglect, depression, popularity

Book clubs met during each class session for ten weeks, on average for 15 minutes (although some weeks they met for as long as 30 minutes). By asking students to take up efferent and aesthetic stances while they read and talked about the books, they were fully engaged in transacting with the text (Rosenblatt, 1995). Taking an aesthetic stance meant considering the book from a personal perspective, making connections to characters and situations as they read. During these book club meetings, candidates were also asked to take up an efferent stance--in this case, to “read like teachers.” This stance asked that they consider what they would do if they were the teachers in the books they were reading. How would they work

to advocate for the children they were reading about? How would they work to make change?

As each group met, I walked around the room in order to conference with the groups, stopping to ask questions and push their thinking, as well as to observe and take notes on what I was seeing.

This approach allowed the Advocacy Book Clubs to remain as candidate-led as possible. There were no formal roles or prompts for the conversations, but I did, at times, join a group if asked or if I felt the conversation needed deepening. Questions I would typically ask were open-ended, such as “Why do you think that?” or “Can you say more about that?” or “How do you know that?” Each group set their own pace for reading in between the class sessions, and did not have a requirement to communicate outside of class to me or with each other about their work. They determined when and how this communication would take place, if at all. ABCs culminated in group presentations to the rest of the class. Groups were asked to share an overview of the book they read, discuss the student or students that were highlighted in their book, explain the problems in the text, and talk about what they, as future teachers, would do to help. They were encouraged to make their presentations interactive, and to look outside of their books for evidence to support their understanding and presentations.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

In order to better understand how Advocacy Book Clubs supported the understanding of social emotional learning among first year teacher candidates, the following data were collected: (1) completed candidate assignments, (2) course documents, (3) observational notes, (4) individual interviews, and (5) researcher journal. Interviews, which lasted for approximately one hour each, were designed to provide more depth regarding the candidates’ understandings of social emotional competencies and what aspects of the ABCs they believe most contributed to those understandings. Six candidates were interviewed once the semester was over and final

grades had been submitted. They were selected, from among those who volunteered, to represent the greatest variety of teacher candidates in Introduction to Education. Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol, which allowed probing questions to be asked as needed.

Data were analyzed using constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I read and reread the relevant course documents, student work, and interviews in order to find emerging themes. Initial codes were derived using a bottom-up approach, and included “working together,” “teamwork,” “learning about diverse students,” “feeling different now,” and “thinking like a teacher.” These codes were grouped together into three themes that addressed the research question.

### **Findings**

Data analysis revealed three key areas of learning related to Social Emotional Competencies as a result of participating in the ABCs. First, candidates learned about effective relationship building as they worked in their ABC groups. They had to build relationships in their ABC, rather than just hear or talk about it theoretically. Next, teacher candidate understanding about individuals whose experiences were different from their own, their social awareness, was deepened. Finally, by encouraging candidates to take up both an aesthetic and an efferent stance while reading and discussing their assigned book, moving back and forth from reading like an interested adult to reading like a future teacher, helped them imagine themselves in their future professional roles, able and willing to advocate for students. This helped them learn the social emotional competency of responsible decision making as they thought about how to do this well. Taken as a whole, these three outcomes highlight student perspectives on the affordances of Advocacy Book Clubs in teaching SEL.

**“We Need Each Other to Learn This Stuff:” Relationship Building**

The SEL of relationship building is the ability to create healthy relationships with diverse people, including being able to communicate clearly, actively listening, cooperate, and deploy appropriate conflict negotiation skills (CASEL, nd.). Building professional relationships in schools is a key ingredient to staying in the profession and functioning successfully. Teacher candidates need skills to do this successfully. But rather than read about or listen to me talk about how to build professional relationships when they are beginning teachers, the ABC activity put candidates in a situation where they would experience relationship building with peers first-hand.

Advocacy Book Clubs required teacher candidates to create effective working relationships with one another in order to complete the task they were given, but also so that each book club member felt comfortable talking about the challenging material contained in their assigned book. Their collaborative task created a lived experience in relationship building. Tim, a 32-year-old military veteran studying to become a secondary history teacher, observed the way this activity promoted learning about relationship building. He said, “There are just some things you can learn from a book and this [building relationships] isn’t one of them. We needed each other to learn this stuff.” When considering building relationships with peers, classmates, and future colleagues, this comment speaks to the importance of linking theory with practice. ABCs, with their long-lasting collaborative structure and the expectation that group members would have to talk about subjects that could be quite sensitive and challenging encouraged relationships to form, and contributed to the feeling that they were actually experiencing social emotional learning.

Relationships among book club members did not form automatically, and, at first, both the candidates and I were unsure that they would form at all. In this case, it is important to recognize that relationship management does not focus solely on forging new working relationships, or even new friendships, but rather on being able to collaborate, have substantive and meaningful discussions, and learn from one another within the scope of the course. My researcher journal from the third week captures the slow development of relationships in the ABCs and my concern about whether they would grow,

Each group seems like they are a group of strangers to one another [even though] I thought I did a good job of helping them to get to know one another with ice breakers, etc. Is this because they are talking about sensitive subjects? I'm struggling with what I can do to help the groups feel more comfortable [with each other] (researcher journal, 9/17/15).

Candidate dialogue journals affirmed that meaningful conversations were not taking place at first. For example, Amy noted that members of her ABC

barely spoke to one another yesterday, even though we are friendly. We made sure we all had the book, and got started reading, and we all did. And then we sat there. I'm not sure why, since I know I had things to say. I just didn't really want to say them. (Amy, dialogue journal, 9/18/15).

Eddie's dialogue journal simply said, "no one talked in my book club this week. It was weird" (9/19/15). While I understand this to be an exaggeration, Eddie made an important point that reinforced the problem that I had noticed. It is quite likely that at this early point in the semester,

students in his ABC spoke about things that were unrelated to the book, or simply checked their phones when I was not with them.

After four weeks, though, the candidates turned a corner. While it is unclear exactly what caused this shift, it is likely that it had to do with both spending more time together, and moving further into their books. My notes revealed that they were talking to one another about the books in far more meaningful ways, and had begun to build connections that extended beyond the classroom. A comment in my researcher journal indicates that the *Winger* group was beginning to bond, as they engaged in planning and began to interact outside of class.

Gabrielle was so excited to share the long group text [with me] that was winging back and forth between all of the members of her group last night. They reached the point where Joey was killed, and they couldn't wait until this morning to discuss it! The text was filled with emojis, ranting, emotion -- but also real questions about how 'something like this could have happened.' The group made a plan to 'think like teachers' as soon as they met in order to figure out how no grown-ups at the school realized that Joey was so targeted (researcher journal, 10/15/15).

Each ABC displayed similar growth in their relationships by week four. This was indicated by their choosing to sit together in class even when we were not doing ABCs, telling each other inside jokes, and sharing increasingly personal stories related to their ABC books.

Candidates were prone to point to this bonding when asked about their experiences in their Advocacy Book Clubs. Four of the six candidates interviewed immediately answered similarly to Amy when she said "book clubs were all about relationship building" (Amy, interview, 12/17/15). Chase, a secondary math education candidate, deepened this idea of book

clubs being “all about” relationships. To Chase, the whole class became close, but book club relationships were particularly close. He said that,

Advocacy Book Clubs gave us a chance to really get to know the people in our groups, right? I mean I'm not gonna say the whole class isn't close, 'cause we are, but you're more closer with the people you did the group with because we talked more. We had to talk out of class. I don't know. It was really good to have a group to be with for this stuff (Chase, interview, 12/18/15).

Amy and Eddie both added clarity and reinforcement to this idea of ABCs helping them experience and learn about the SEL competency of relationship building. Amy, in her interview, explained that, “I really enjoyed book club, and I think it was a good way to get the students together and participating together, because I made a lot of friendships” (Amy, interview, 12/17/15). Eddie, agreed, stating, “The book clubs helped build community because, you're working with three, four other people that you didn't work with before, and you're constantly building through different activities” (Eddie, interview, 12/17/15). These candidates' statements, when looked at collectively, demonstrate that ABCs helped them do two related things: build friendships and build classroom community that mirrored a professional community. Both are important for teacher candidates as they progress toward becoming new teachers.

It is important to note that it was not the working together for the sake of “getting it done” that mattered to the groups. It was the trust-building that took place through collaboration, conversations, and focused work that allowed the relationships to build. Over time, candidates learned to trust one another, have open conversations, and work together in productive and professional ways. They were living one of the core social emotional competencies.

This was a first step, only one of many along the way to teaching social emotional competencies in their own future classrooms. In the time allotted in one course, a first course that is not a methods course, exposing candidates and asking them to consider how to understand relationship building for themselves was a vitally important step. If social emotional competencies are built into additional courses over time, deeper connections to future work can be made in meaningful ways.

### **“There is Only So Much We Can Do if We’re Ignorant:” Social Awareness**

Through the Advocacy Book Clubs, candidates also developed a deeper understanding of people different from themselves. They began the semester by saying that differences in race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status do not matter and should have no impact in the classroom. They asserted that they would see and treat all students the same. Further, they explained that they have the assumption that they are “color-blind,” as this is the fairest and most equitable way for a teacher to be. By the end of the semester, however, all candidates shifted their perspective to understanding that recognizing a student’s background, culture, and life circumstances are critically important to effectively meet their educational needs. This shift in thinking shows growth in the social emotional competency of social awareness which directly addresses not only learning about diverse people, but actively working to take the perspective of others and understanding cultural norms (CASEL,n.d.).

In the class of 23, there was one Latina and one openly lesbian teacher candidate. Beyond that, it was impossible to tell through observation or casual conversation other ways in which individuals in my class were diverse. All appeared to be White and middle class; most are female. While some were willing to share stories about their identities privately with me in their dialogue journals, they did not always disclose this type of information with

their classmates, nor did they seem initially to always understand how their own racialized, sexual, class, and gendered experiences might impact their identities, their relationships with students, or their future teaching practices.

Of all the ABCs, the group that underwent the greatest development in their social awareness was the *George* group. *George* is a middle grade novel about a young transgender child. While the world sees George as a boy, she knows that she is a girl and wants to be recognized that way.

There were five candidates in the *George* ABC. The group participants were Sam, a junior health and physical education candidate, Eliza, a sophomore elementary education candidate, Maddie, a sophomore secondary math education candidate, Zach, a sophomore health and physical education candidate, and Yvonne, a sophomore elementary education candidate. Of these candidates, only Eliza selected *George* as her first choice book, and Sam was openly resistant to reading it, despite the fact that it was his second choice. When ABC groups were announced, he immediately asked to switch groups, raising his hand to come speak to me. He explained that he only picked the book because he thought he would get his first choice. When he was not permitted to switch groups, he said, “the silver lining is that it’s a short book.” This shows how little Sam wanted to read *George*; the only advantage he saw in being assigned to read the book was that it would be a quick read.

The candidates in this ABC struggled from the very beginning in ways both big and small: pronoun use (should they call George “he” or “she?”), where to turn for more information about transgender children, and even what to do when they finished this very short book early in the semester and ahead of the other groups but were still unsure of how they felt about the main character. My researcher journal is filled with notes about this group, and candidate dialogue

journals written by members of this group consistently express their struggles. From my perspective, this group showed evidence of growing awareness of their own discomfort at first and growth over time, both in and out of class, as they switched their pronoun use from “he” to “she,” using transgender people’s preference for the pronoun of the gender they identify with rather than their biological gender, developed questions to pose to the rest of the class to push their thinking about how they would support a transgender student in their future classes, and came to understand the challenges of having a transgender child in their own future classrooms.

Sam explained that he was originally skeptical even about the existence of transgender children, but learned through his ABC that children asking to be referred to by the gender they identify with is a reality:

This was my second choice for my book club book, and I was mad to get it at first. Now I’m glad you made me read it, and I’m glad you never let me off the hook, and you forced me to think about what to call George: he or she. ‘Cause I didn’t want to call her, her, but that’s right, and I see that now. And I know that a kid in my class wouldn’t ask to be called a different gender if they didn’t mean it. It would make life harder for them, and it would be my job to try to make it easier. I was closed to this before and now I get it even though I didn’t want to. (Sam, dialogue journal, 12/5)

The above quote shows Sam’s growth in social awareness over time. He went from being resistant to the idea of accepting the experiences and feelings of a young transgender student to understanding the importance of supporting that choice in his future classroom. The rest of the class, too, indicated they learned about the importance of supporting and making

classrooms safe spaces for transgender children from this group's presentation. Bill explained his own learning in his dialogue journal (12/4), when he wrote:

Unfortunately, there is only so much we can do if we are ignorant. How could we possibly understand what it could mean when a 12-year-old student [who was born a boy] says "I'm actually a girl"? Obviously, it could mean they are actually a girl but we all know students tend to act out. But to have the viewpoint I do now, I truly feel fortunate. I honestly think it will make a huge difference in my career.

This excerpt from Bill's dialogue journal is striking, particularly in what he recognizes in himself and others. He asserts his own "ignorance" about transgender children, while in the next sentence allows that his perspective has changed, that he understands that a child who says he or she is a different gender than that which he or she was born is not "acting out." For Bill, this is potentially transformative in how he thinks about his work as a teacher.

While most candidates proudly declared they were color blind at the beginning of the semester, during our last class session candidate answers to a question I posed indicated a significant change in perspective on this issue, as well as the fact that they traced this shift to their book clubs.

**Jenny:** In the beginning of the semester, many of you said that you would ignore race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, even what's going on in a child's home life when you are teaching--that fair means equal. Do you still feel that way, or do you want to change your stance at all?

**Maddie:** You can't be color-blind when you teach because it ignores what's important to a person, how they were brought up, what their culture is, what is "behind the scenes," so to speak...

**Sam:** I think I learned that the most in my book club. I would have been happy to pretend that everyone is the same. Especially as a

future gym teacher. Kids come into the gym, play around for a while, and then leave. I didn't think I needed to know more about them. I guess I know it's my job to know more now, or I can't teach them fairly. If I treat everyone equally, it's not fair.

**Tim:** Like, we can't assume that every kid celebrates Christmas. Christmas around the world is not multicultural. If we are going to talk about Christmas, we need to talk about all winter holidays, and even about people who don't celebrate any holidays at all.

**Kim:** I learned in my book club that it's not about being color-blind, it's about being inclusive. I read *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces*, and I learned a lot about a culture that was different from mine. I am not Latina, and it was interesting to read about a main character who is so different from me. Being open to people who are diverse is what being a teacher is all about.

Admittedly, this passage was opened with a leading question, meant to push candidate thinking at a point in the semester when we had spent a great deal of time talking about diversity and inclusion. At this point, challenging their thinking felt appropriate. The conversation in the beginning of the semester, in contrast to this one, focused solely on equality, treating all students the same, and on candidates vying to show how unconcerned they were with skin color. The shift in perspective illustrates that candidate understanding of inclusion and fairness had shifted over the course of the semester. Despite candidate perception of their own growth, it is fair to say that "being open to people who are diverse" is just the beginning. There is still considerable work to be done in preparing students to effectively meet the needs of students from a wide range of backgrounds and experiencing diverse challenges, however, the door has been opened.

In more advanced level courses, and additional courses which focus on diversity, it stands to reason that candidates might take this "openness" with them as a new starting point. More concrete connections to practice will need to be made, and candidates will need to be encouraged to think deeply about how they will use the understandings they began to develop through their work in ABCs to inform their work as teachers with students, families, and colleagues. These

next steps, however, was beyond the scope of this course. Despite the fact that helping candidates consider diversity in news ways was only just begun in this course, the ABCs played an important starting role.

### **“I Won’t Ever Forget What it Feels Like to be a Teenager:” Reading Like Teachers**

Candidates also moved forward in their understanding of the core competency of responsible decision making through their work in Advocacy Book Clubs. Responsible decision making, which focuses on the ability to make respectful and appropriate choices about personal behavior and social interaction based on safety, ethics, norms, consequences, and consideration of others, was central to the ABC task of “reading like a teacher.” Candidates began to develop in this competency as a result of their transactions with text and discussions with one another. Rosenblatt points out, “literature permits something resembling ideal experimentation because it offers such a wide range of vicarious experiences” (1995, p.190). Candidates were encouraged to do just this by imagining themselves in the role of teacher to the characters in the books they read. As candidates began to develop empathy for the characters in their books, they thought about how they might respond to similarly challenging situations which they will be likely to face one day as teachers, and how they will advocate for the students when they do.

During their ABC discussions, candidates worked to consider the context within which the characters acted, and the role of schools and teachers in shaping that context. The groups that read *Nineteen Minutes* (which focuses on a school shooting) and *Thirteen Reasons Why* (which deals with relational bullying, rape, and suicide) had a particularly challenging time grappling with the role that teachers played when students were suffering from school violence, bullying, and suicide. Students in these groups noted that there were signs of bullying in the schools portrayed in the books they read and struggled with why teachers did not notice or do

anything about it. They wondered if they will be more observant when they are teachers.

Gabrielle, a member of the *Nineteen Minutes* ABC, puzzled,

Why didn't they notice? I mean, it just seems so obvious that these kids were being bullied. Is this just, like, what happens when you get older, or something? You don't pay attention to this stuff, or you forget what it's like? Because it happened to all of us, right? And it will keep happening forever. And when we're the teachers it will be our job to stop it, won't it? (Observational notes, November, 2015)

Her group concurred; Alex added, "after reading this, I know I'll notice when it happens when I'm a teacher. And I'll do something, too, not just sit back and watch." This idea of taking action was a common one among candidates as they were reading. In this instance, candidates felt the responsible course of action for a teacher would be to intervene in some way. This assertion of responsible decision making, though not a clear plan of action, was a first step in demonstrating the social emotional competency of responsible decision making for these teacher candidates.

The *Thirteen Reasons Why* group had similar conversations, with candidates particularly disturbed by the lack of action taken by the English teacher and guidance counselor in the book. In the story, Hannah, who ultimately commits suicide, sends clear messages to both of these adults that she is struggling, and neither takes the time to get her the help she needs, despite them seeing the warning signs. Candidates felt compelled to look outside of the book for more information about the warning signs of suicide (working as efferent readers, readers who gather facts and external information to solve problems), and spoke about how they would "do more"

when they were “real teachers.” Sarah said, “I won’t ever forget what it feels like to be a teenager, and that’s what will make me able to help students when I’m a teacher” (observational notes, October, 2015). This group wanted to be able to notice, advocate, and take action if a student appears to be at risk of suicide, as well as interact with them in healthy, productive ways. As this group talked about teachers’ responsibility to notice and act when students show signs of emotional distress, they made the link back to SEL, with Catherine saying that she felt this was “an example of how to use relationship building to help students. Even though maybe this isn’t how it was intended?” Sarah affirmed this, saying, “this is exactly what relationship building is there for. Helping people when they most need it.” Catherine seems to be acknowledging that although relationship building is important, it is responsible decision making that teachers need in these situations.

Candidates used their reading experiences along the efferent-aesthetic continuum, as well as their ABC conversations, to envision their future lives as teachers. This was done within the framework of social emotional learning, thinking about how to make responsible decisions as future teachers in order to best advocate for students. As with the other social emotional competencies, this was a starting point. Candidates in their first teacher education course were, for the first time, perhaps, envisioning themselves as teachers through their reading and discussions in their ABCs. Their group discussions allowed them to talk about putting social emotional competencies into action in the future. They will need many more structured opportunities to learn how to make responsible decisions in ways that effectively advocate for kid, in methods classes, in field experiences, and in clinical practice, but this was a viable and enriching opportunity to begin to focus on the need practice and develop these skills.

### **Discussion and Implications**

Middle grade and young adult fiction often deals with a wide range of weighty and sensitive topics, including bullying, suicide, pregnancy, gender and sexual identity, body image, self identity, divorce, and drug use. By reading and discussing books that deal with these issues head on, teacher candidates had the opportunity to gain new perspectives about students whose experiences are different from theirs. They could also more fully empathize with their challenges and struggles in order to consider how they might effectively meet the needs of all kinds of children in their own future classrooms. Using this type of fiction for book clubs was a meaningful and instructive way to help candidates begin to understand the depth and breadth of issues that children face, especially when those issues are different from their teachers'. It also helped them begin to take up adult, teacher identities and see themselves as responsible for the well-being of all students regardless of their backgrounds, experiences, or challenges. They also developed a more complex understanding of diversity; they came to recognize that treating all students the same is not actually fair. These candidates were asked to read and connect to the texts in ways that extended beyond their own experiences. Young adult literature helped teacher candidates deepen their empathy, awareness, and understanding of a wide variety of issues that children and young adults face.

Candidates read their ABC books simultaneously as the young adults that they were at the moment and as the teachers they would become. They brought their life experiences with them, to reflect upon family members, friends, school experiences, and personal experiences similar to those they were reading about, and were willing to share these experiences in their ABCs. Beyond these personal experiences, candidates were able to discuss and analyze the situations in the books as future teachers. They were able to imagine themselves as teachers of

bullied students, transgender children, suicidal teenagers, and think critically about what it means to advocate for students who need it. Additionally, they demonstrated that they were able to think about core social emotional competencies that would help them connect with their future students in order to create classrooms and relationships that might help students who need support.

The language I used to urge candidates to get past thinking of books only from their own perspectives and experiences, “thinking like teachers,” seemed to help them engage in “imaginative rehearsal” of future teacher roles (Gallagher, 2009). Imaginative rehearsals allow readers to visualize events without having to live them. Readers can imagine the events portrayed in their ABC books, consider how they would handle given scenarios, and weigh the consequences of their actions. This is especially helpful when the real life situation is dangerous or scary, or the consequences are of critical importance. I argue that all of the books selected for ABCs facilitated imaginative rehearsal in a relatively low risk setting and that this helped candidates understand, practice and begin to develop social emotional competencies.

Future research could follow these candidates as they move through their sequence of education courses, through student teaching and into their first years of teaching in order to see in what ways their work in ABCs contributes to their ability to support SEL in their students. These findings, however, might help teacher educators consider one strategy for beginning this important aspect of teaching.

### **Conclusion**

Candidates need to begin their teaching careers equipped with the ability not just to nurture students' academic development, but also to take care of students on an emotional level, develop mentoring relationships with them, and be tuned in to the social world of school on their very first day of their careers. Through Advocacy Book Clubs, teacher candidates were given an opportunity to begin to develop these skills vicariously by reading about students struggling in a range of situations and then imagining themselves as teachers to those students. As a result, they demonstrated empathy for the characters in their books and began to see themselves as future teachers who would be caring and responsive to all students' needs. They did this through discussion and by engaging in imaginative rehearsals, thinking about what they would do if they were in the shoes of the teachers in their books.

The ways they discussed and presented how they would advocate for the struggling students in their books connected to social emotional competencies. On the surface, candidates were thinking about social awareness, an ability to understand and respect diverse groups of people. However, they were also becoming more self-aware, planning how to make responsible decisions, and more aware of how to build deep and meaningful relationships with colleagues, families, and students. These core social emotional competencies will hopefully continue to develop throughout their training period and serve them well as they begin their teaching careers.

It is the role of all teacher educators to help candidates deepen their content, pedagogical, and pedagogical content knowledge and be prepared to teach and enact social emotional competencies in their future classrooms, ready to face the challenges of teaching in the 21st century. The core competencies of social emotional learning, at the heart of any engaging, thoughtful classroom, can be introduced and developed through Advocacy Book Clubs.

### **Chapter Three: Practitioner Article**

Putting Classroom Talk to Work: Social Emotional Learning as a Transformative Teacher

Education Experience

Jennifer Rich

#### **Abstract**

This article describes three types of classroom talk that contributed to teacher candidate learning about social emotional learning, particularly social awareness, self-awareness, and relationship building, in one teacher education class. Whole class discussions, small group book club conversations, and reflective dialogue journals created a transformational learning experience.

In an increasingly competitive world, teachers must help their students, *all* students, not only complete rote tasks, but master complex subject matter, solve complex problems, and think critically. They also need to attend to non-academic challenges that students face, including mental illness, bullying, homelessness, divorce, and drugs and alcohol abuse. Teacher education, therefore, must prepare candidates not only to meet academic needs of their students, but social emotional ones as well. To accomplish this, teacher candidate training should be learning-centered, focused on content and performance, and learner-centered, responsive to candidate experiences, interests, and backgrounds (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

In addition, teacher candidates need to learn how to work with students from a broad range of backgrounds. Teacher education programs are often challenged by a “mismatch” between the cultural identities of teacher candidates and the students they will one day teach (Brindley & Laframboise, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Scott, 1995; Willis, 1997). The vast majority of teacher candidates are White, female, monolingual, and middle-class (Brindley & Laframboise, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995), while students in America’s public schools are increasingly multicultural and those growing up in poverty present challenges distinct from their middle class peers. New teachers must arrive on their first day working in schools prepared to meet the needs of students and families of diverse backgrounds, with varying needs and expectations.

One important aspect of their preparation is to introduce teacher candidates to social emotional learning during their teacher education coursework (Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015). SEL is defined as a set of five inter-related competencies that are critical to academic and social success. These competencies are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making

(CASEL, nd). Along with a healthy, nurturing relationship between teacher and student, these competencies are among those that many consider to be the “missing piece” of education (Elias et al., 1997; Shriver & Buffett, 2015) because they are often neglected and yet they are critically important for students to thrive in educational settings.

As part of gaining social emotional competence and thus having the skills and awareness to support SEL with their students in the future, candidates need to become comfortable sharing their ideas about social emotional learning with a group of their peers, asking questions of one another, engaging in academic risk taking, and listening to new opinions with an open mind. Not only are these skills required of teachers, they are all enactments of social emotional competencies. It is important that candidates begin practicing these skills in authentic ways because they will be expected to “hit the ground running” as they begin their teaching careers. They will not have the time to learn or practice these requisite skills as in-service teachers.

Transformational learning, a theory which asserts that learners need to interpret and reinterpret their experiences in order to grow and change in transformative ways (Mezirow, 1997), is an effective instructional match with the learning goal of supporting the development of social emotional competency and understanding of SEL as a key component of classroom practice because many of the students need to develop very new perspectives and understandings; thus they need to undergo transformations. Candidates often arrive to teacher education programs with negative or harmful assumptions about people different from themselves that reflect a lack of competency particularly in the area of social awareness. Changing these assumptions does not lend itself to a transmission model of instruction, but rather comes about through transformational learning experiences that help students question their beliefs and support their development as they form new frames of reference. This process is

often challenging and even disorienting but can help candidates examine their previously held understandings about themselves and others (Brindley & Laframboise, 2002; Mezirow, 1997) and emerge from the process with changed understandings.

Social awareness as a social emotional competence requires being able to take the perspective of and empathize with people from all types of backgrounds and understand norms for behavior (CASEL, n.d.). Gaining this type of competence often requires candidates to get beyond simply normalizing their own cultural norms and expectations. For many, this involves transformational learning.

In the course design I developed for my college of education's Introduction to Education course, I facilitated various forms of talk as a method of developing the social awareness competency. My goal was to help candidates become aware of their own frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997) so that they could critically analyze their beliefs and perspectives and emerge from this process with new understandings. This is necessary because these candidates, like the vast majority of preservice teachers, are primarily White, monolingual women, while the students they will be teaching are increasingly likely to be different from them in terms of race, class, and primary language. Increasing candidates' competence with regard to social awareness is critical to successfully teaching students from diverse backgrounds.

This article aims to describe the transformational learning context that I created in my teacher education class to support the development of students' social emotional competencies and their understanding of the role that teachers play in supporting SEL in their classrooms. In particular, I focus on multiple forms of talk I facilitated, a key element in transformational learning (Mezirow, 1997). First, I will briefly review transformational learning theory, the literature about using talk in the classroom, and the concepts undergirding social emotional

learning. Next, I will explain three types of talk that were implemented to promote transformational learning. Talk is a particularly powerful tool in bringing about transformational learning in that it allows for the rich exchange of ideas, risk taking, and rehearsal (Mezirow, 1997). Finally, I will share implications for practice.

### **Theoretical Framework: Transformational Learning Theory**

The outcome of transformational learning theory involves “constructing and appropriating new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world” (Taylor, 2008, p.5). The process of transformational learning theory begins with a disorienting dilemma and continues through critical discourse and dialogue with others combined with personal reflection (Mezirow, 1996). It is through conversations (and experiences) and subsequent reflections that learners can begin to question, evaluate, and compare experiences in order to make sense of newly developing perspectives. Learners then begin to apply this new knowledge to prior understandings in order to form new understandings, or frames of reference, about the world and others in it. Transformational learning involves reflecting on and analyzing conversations and experiences that are disorienting in order to construct new knowledge (Mezirow, 1996).

Mezirow (1997), who first described transformational learning, asserts that a frame of reference is a preconception that informs a person’s actions during a new experience. It includes two components, habits of mind and points of view. Habits of mind are a set of abstract codes and values that a person obtains from his or her immediate environment. This habit of mind influences a point of view and, therefore, judgments and feelings about others. Habits of mind generally remain static, while points of view transform as a person has experiences that do not fit with previously held points of view. This can lead to reflection, and potentially, in turn, to

critique of previous assumptions (Mezirow, 1997). Mezirow (1997) explains that transformational learning occurs when learners are aware of and can analyze their own and others' frames of reference, can examine beliefs and experiences from different perspectives, and can engage in dialogue to support or reject current frames of reference. The learner, therefore, is transformed through making meaning of experiences in social contexts, in which the learner works to come to terms with new frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997).

What this means in practice is that educators seeking to promote transformational learning should provide learners with challenging and potentially disorienting experiences and then encourage learners to actively engage in critical reflection and dialogue as key components of learning rather than positioning learners as receptacles of knowledge dispensed by the teacher. Educators committed to this approach can help them question their assumptions, expectations, and contexts in order to achieve new perspectives that will then guide their understandings and actions in the future.

Whether a learner successfully completes the transformational learning process is dependent, in part, on being part of a supportive learning community (Ryman, Burrell, Hardham, Richardson, & Ross, 2009). Effective teacher education courses that seek to transform candidates in some way, therefore, need to be constructed as supportive communities in which candidates can come together to face and critically analyze disorienting dilemmas that are relevant to the course content and their future teaching practice.

In order to create a classroom climate conducive to transformational learning, an instructor's role is to first help candidates become aware of their own initial assumptions and points of view (Mezirow, 1997). Once this occurs, instructors can help candidates engage in

dialogue, reflection, and critical questioning to better understand their own values and beliefs in order to assess the reasons behind the ideas that they hold (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1997).

### **Literature Review**

This literature review is designed to ground the Introduction to Education course design described here in the research literature. To that end, it briefly examines the research on the use of talk in transformational learning. Next, it will explain social emotional learning.

### **Classroom Talk**

The literature on transformational learning suggests that talk is critical in facilitating growth and development, but not all types of talk are equally effective in supporting transformational learning. In other words, some types of talk are more likely to encourage transformational learning, while others are more likely to transmit information.

Certainly, the most common forms of talk used in all classrooms is direct instruction, or lecture (Beard, 1999), with recall questions being asked the most often, followed by fewer, higher-order questions. However, research tells us that this is the least effective form of instruction (Beard, 1999; Reynolds & Farrell, 1996; Reynolds, 1998). Further, lecture, even interactive lecture, is not likely to change learners' frames of reference (Alexander, 2008; Mezirow, 1997); lectures tend to be informational rather than transformational.

In contrast, when learners are encouraged to participate more actively in classroom discussions in order to create new ideas, challenge assumptions, and reflect on new learning, talk becomes a powerful tool for learning (Fisher, 2011). This model of conversation, called dialogic talk, which is collective, reciprocal, supportive, and purposeful, supports learner growth (Alexander, 2008). While dialogic talk does, at times, begin in disagreement, it has been found to support deeper understanding (Leftstein, 2010). Unfortunately, Leftstein (2010) argues that

conversation in the classroom is often challenging for instructors and difficult to manage because they are less predictable and it can be harder to attain a planned outcome.

The research, although sparse, about the use of talk in higher education, is closely related to transformational learning. Transformational learning is most likely to occur when learners are given the chance to make meaning through social experiences, challenging their frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997). Dialogic talk that embraces the reciprocal give and take of ideas, as well as disagreement at times, ultimately is what allows learners the experiences that encourage transformation.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

Social emotional learning involves developing social emotional competencies through explicit instruction using student-centered learning approaches that develop communication and collaborative skills (Friedlander et al., 2014). Social emotional competencies, and the instruction of those competencies in schools, help children acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can enhance personal development, establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, and lead to effective academic work (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). These competencies include understanding and managing emotions, setting and achieving positive goals, feeling and showing care and concern for others, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions (CASEL, 2012).

Students are more successful in school and in their day-to-day lives when they can draw on these types of competencies to manage their emotions, take the perspectives of others and relate to them, and make sound personal and social choices (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015). When SEL is taught in classrooms, students often master these competencies and gain many social emotional benefits. These include fostering a more positive attitude

towards oneself and others; gaining an increased sense of self-efficacy, confidence, persistence, empathy, and commitment to school; developing more positive social relationships with peers and adults; reducing risk-taking behaviors and emotional distress; and improving test scores, grades, and attendance (Durlak et al., 2011; Farrington et al., 2012; Sklad et al., 2012; Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015).

The research supporting classroom conversation and social emotional learning guided my own thinking as I planned and implemented Introduction to Education. While I was conscious of wanting to encourage transformational learning experiences for candidates, I was equally aware of wanting to ground these experiences in content. Candidates did not need “fixing,” but, at the same time, I wanted to expose them to the multiple perspectives and new ideas that they would encounter in their future classrooms.

### **Implementing a Course to Transform: Forms of Talk**

I used three different forms of talk in the classroom to create a context in which transformational could occur: teacher-led whole class discussion, collaborative group work in book clubs, and written teacher to student talk in dialogue journals. Each was selected for its potential to teach core social emotional competencies through authentic, meaningful social experiences, and its connection to best practices in teacher education more generally.

#### **Whole Class Discussions: Instructor Led Conversations**

One way I encouraged candidates to examine their frames of references (Mezirow, 1997) was through whole class discussions that challenged candidates and generated deep and sometimes disorienting conversation. The first step was simply to engage candidates. This would be a contrast to most of their classroom experiences; they report that they often sit silently in their University classes, taking notes, covertly looking at their phones, or letting their minds

wander. However, students in my class were required to actively engage, starting with our first class meeting when they had to participate in an icebreaker. This icebreaker utilized both small group and whole class conversation, though it was the whole class portion of the activity that was most important in my planning, and to the group. Tim made clear how unusual, and even unsettling, this was for him.

[Usually] I spend my time watching the clock waiting for class to be over. I don't talk to anyone and I don't raise my hand. On the first day of class I knew you weren't going to let me get away with that because you made us get up and talk to one another in the icebreaker. It threw me off. I knew I better pay attention to see what was going to happen next. I felt like you might call on me, or I might have to talk to the kid sitting next to me, and that, just by itself, made me feel like I better step it up. It made me uncomfortable (Interview, 12/5/15).

By getting candidates talking to each other right away, I was encouraging relationship building, a core social emotional competency. This was intended to be a first step in building trust among candidates, an essential component for the more challenging conversations necessary for transformational learning to occur that I had planned for subsequent class meetings.

While the goal of the first day icebreaker was to get to know one another, a key element in fostering a community that will encourage transformational learning to occur, it seems it also acted as a signal for candidates that Introduction to Education was a course that was different; it shook their understandings and assumptions of what students and instructors do in a college class. Chase, a secondary education math major, shared a similar reaction as Tim did regarding

the icebreaker. It signaled to him that this class would be different and similarly caused some discomfort; this was potentially a sign of disorientation:

On that very first day of class I was out of sorts, [but] in a good way. I don't usually have to get up and talk to people, or tell my story to kids in my classes. I guess I knew then that you'd ask us to think about things and do things that other classes don't (Interview, 12/5).

Chase began to understand, on this very first day of class, that expectations for interaction in this class would go against what he had come to expect.

Moving past the first day, open-ended questions were a regular part of whole class discussions. These questions were selected to challenge, stimulate, and help candidates take up teacher identities. The discussions they generated typically lasted about twenty minutes. After posing the initial question, which was derived from either the topic for the week or a relevant current event, I facilitated student-to-student conversation. I would, at times, intervene in the conversations to add clarity, share my own thinking, ask a question, or push student thinking more deeply. My goal, however, was to let candidates do the "heavy lifting" of the conversation, letting them stimulate and learn from one another.

One example of a question intended to challenge candidate perceptions was "what does it mean to you when parents don't come to back to school night and/or parent-teacher conferences?" Without exception, candidates initially expressed that when parents do not attend school events it means they do not care about school and do not value education. The following excerpt shows the candidates were adamant in their assumption that all parents should attend school events and do so if they care about their children's education. They all assumed that

parents who do not come do not care. For example, the four students quoted here focused on blaming the parents without much, or any, acknowledgement of barriers to attendance which they might face.

**Maddie:** What's going on? They are the parents who don't care. The ones who think they have really awesome kids, maybe they have older kids and have heard it all before, or are just really busy...

**Tim:** We all know the drill. There might be a bunch of different reasons, they could be really rich or really poor, because you didn't tell us where we teach, I noticed that, but if they cared they would show up.

**Allegra:** Yeah. When parents care, they come. Especially in rich districts. Then there just isn't an excuse. The moms don't work there.

**Bill:** (laughing) Or in poor districts. I mean, I shouldn't say this, probably, but the moms aren't working there, either, they could come.

In addition to focusing on the relationship between attendance at school events and parental engagement in their children's education, their comments were laced with stereotypes. At that point, I showed a clip from the PBS special "Poor Kids," a documentary about working families living in poverty. I do not often stop conversations to interject new information in this way, but this video is particularly impactful in the way both children and parents speak about how poverty affects their lives. While the video shows poor students in varied living conditions, candidates were especially struck by a homeless girl and her mother who were living in a motel. Due to their living conditions, the young girl was unable to register for school, despite how badly her mother wanted to enroll her. This was not something candidates had considered before viewing the video. Then, because candidates assumed that all upper- and middle-class families only have

one working parent, we spoke about what it is like to be in a more privileged family with two working parents. After asking candidates to speak quietly with a neighbor for a few moments, students indicated that their understanding of barriers to parent involvement was expanding.

Maddie was quick to reconsider her previous statement:

**Maddie:** You have to let me go first, because I said something pretty terrible before. I guess parents do care. I mean, I know they do. Most of them. At least, you can't make assumptions, especially as a teacher. It doesn't matter if they are rich or poor or in the middle. [Jenny,] you are here with us instead of maybe volunteering at your kids' school. And other parents who are less privileged than you can't go to things at night because maybe they work a night shift. I was wrong.

Here, Maddie demonstrates a transformation in her thinking. However, Sam and Eliza continued to struggle to acknowledge the wide range of reasons parents might not come to school. Sam questioned how accommodating schools can be, and Eliza remained ambivalent about what poor attendance indicates.

**Sam:** I see the point the video was making, and I guess I just think schools need to be different. [Before], I would have said it's the fault of the parents, but it's really the fault of the school. Schools need to offer other times [when parents can come meet with teachers], or teachers should meet parents in other places or something, right? That could happen?

**Eliza:** I know I was thinking in my head that any parent who doesn't go to those school things is awful because my parents always went, but I think maybe that's just not true. But, then, how do you know how to help your kid [if you don't go]? I see that I'm wrong, but I still think you should make an effort as a parent.

This excerpt illustrates that the candidates' frames of reference were challenged by the combination of the discussion, prompted by the open-ended question, and the video. As the instructor, I was able to deepen the conversation by stopping the talk to show the video and push

candidates' understanding beyond their own experiences and assumptions. Candidates indicated that their thinking shifted over the course of this conversation as they acknowledged their views, examined their perspectives, and were able to integrate new perspectives into their own thinking

Discussions like this one happened during every class session. Candidates responded to questions about, for example, classroom management, making and maintaining eye contact with students, appropriate classroom set-up, and working with families of diverse backgrounds.

Candidates had, in general, never been asked to talk about their understandings or opinions on these topics, and many of them took their opinions to be fact. It was difficult to learn that not everyone agreed with what they believed to be "right" or "best". For example, Eddie began the semester asserting that the "best" classroom set-up was to have desks in rows so that students were ready to listen to and learn from the teacher. His classmates spent time talking about how little they liked this, and that there were other ways for students to learn. It wasn't until the last week of the semester, however, that Eddie acknowledged the power of small group seating, so that students can share ideas and learn from one another. In each instance, candidates experienced discomfort as they confronted a challenge to their own existing points of view and worked on resolving the discomfort this often evoked by developing new more complex understandings as a result of having the opportunity to share their ideas and listen to their classmates' perspectives. In every instance, there was a common thread that ran through the questions and discussion topics: they were designed to challenge candidates to confront their existing frames of reference, listen to their classmates, ask questions of others, and, at times, experience a shift in their frame of reference.

Shifting perspectives in this way is not only transformational, but the transformations that these discussions encouraged were designed to encourage growth in core social emotional

competencies, particularly self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness. As candidates participated in conversations that originated in processing disorienting dilemmas, it was critical that they were aware of their own habits of mind and points of view and were able to have confidence in their views as they expressed their opinions. Being self-aware was not enough, however. Candidates also needed a strong sense of self-management. They had to be able to control their own emotions and thoughts once they became aware of them, particularly if they became frustrated, upset, or angry during a conversation. Finally, candidates worked towards understanding the perspectives and experiences of people from backgrounds different than their own. This was often a challenge, but candidates worked towards truly expanding their own frame of reference in our class discussions. In turn, this can potentially help them begin to develop understandings of how to meet the needs of diverse students and families in the future.

### **Book Clubs: Candidate Led, Collaborative Small Group Talk**

Another example of talk that contributed to transformational learning is Advocacy Book Clubs (ABCs), small groups of candidates reading one middle grade or young adult book featuring characters struggling with particular personal challenges. Candidates were asked that as they read, they think about the books both like students and teachers, share their thinking with one another, and, finally, decide how they would advocate for students like those they had read about to make schools safer, more comfortable, and more successful places for all kinds of students. These tasks encouraged candidates to look at challenges that students encounter from different perspectives. This was especially difficult because the students in the books encountered difficulties that usually were unfamiliar to the candidates.

Although many people lament that children and young adults no longer have the ability to have extended conversations, during the book club meetings, the candidates engaged in extended

student led discussions that delved deep into challenging topics that would be difficult even for experienced teachers to address. I encouraged this by giving my students books that were difficult for them to grapple with in some way, and asked them to talk about those books with one another without me guiding them through the process. This task was challenging for them, and they needed one another to be successful. For example, the students in ABC that read *George* (Gino, 2015), a middle grade novel about a young transgender child, relied on one another as they worked through their feelings about transgender students and how they would make school a safe place for George, a transgender girl.

The candidates in this ABC struggled from the very beginning in ways both big and small. They wondered about pronoun use (should they call George “he” or “she?”), where to turn for more information about transgender children, and even what to do when they finished this very short book early in the semester but were still uncomfortable with regard to their feelings about the main character. Listening in to one conversation between members of this ABC illustrated how difficult coming to terms with a transgender child was for them, and how open they became to sharing their confusion and questions with each other. Group members came to this book from very different perspectives, with Sam, in particular, expressing his belief that very young children “could not be” transgender. Other group members were more accepting that this was, in fact, possible. In particular, one group member, Eliza, shared that she has a transgender family member. This disclosure seemed to push Sam’s thinking, helping him to admit that he had been “wrong”:

**Eliza:** You know, I wasn’t going to share this. My cousin is in middle school and he’s transgender. He was born female, and now identifies as a boy. So, yeah. This book is really personal for me.

**Sam:** Well, I feel like an asshole now. Why didn’t you say something?

**Maddie:** Maybe because you never stopped saying how little kids couldn't be transgender? Why would Eliza ever share something like that?

**Sam:** Well, I didn't know. First the book with George, and now this. I guess I was wrong. I was wrong.

Ultimately, this group learned more about social awareness, became more aware of diverse groups of people, in this case transgender individuals and their families, and began to reconsider their original stances. They showed evidence of growing awareness of their own discomfort and change over time, both in and out of class, as they switched their pronoun use from "he" to "she," came to understand the challenges of having a transgender child in their own future classes, and developed questions to pose to the rest of the class to push their thinking about how they would support a transgender student in their future classes. Sam made clear that he had gained a new perspective on transgender students as a result of participating in his ABC.

This was my second choice for my book club book, and I was mad to get it at first. Now I'm glad you made me read it, and I'm glad you never let me off the hook, and you forced me to think about what to call George: he or she. 'Cause I didn't want to call her, her, but that's right, and I see that now. And I know that a kid in my class wouldn't ask to be called a different gender if they didn't mean it. It would make life harder for them and it would be my job to try to make it easier. I was closed to this before and now I get it even though I didn't want to. (Sam, dialogue journal, 12/5)

Sam explains his transformational learning by indicating that he went from being resistant to the idea of a young transgender student to being accepting of what it might be like to teach a

transgender child. In the process, he developed greater social awareness. This learning seemed directly tied to talking about a book which challenged his frame of reference and the dialogue and reflection he did with his classmates as he considered the protagonists' point of view and thought like a teacher about how he himself would support such a student.

### **Dialogue Journals: Candidate to Instructor Written Talk**

Another type of talk that was designed to support transformational learning was reflective dialogue journals. Dialogue journal entries were required weekly and were written conversations between each candidate and me, the course instructor. I did not give them any kind of specific writing prompt; candidates were instead given general instructions to write about something they were curious about, wanted to learn more about, noticed, or wondered. I responded to their entries each week, addressing their concerns, observations, or questions, and asking questions of my own when appropriate. Dialogue journals supported reflection during the process of moving from one frame of reference to another. Rather than prompt transformative learning, they also = documented.

Dialogue journals were candidate led, by their nature, with candidates often using them as a place to consider how their frames of reference had changed over time. For example, at the start of the semester, Maddie questioned the amount of discussion in class and wondered why I didn't use more direct instruction to tell her what she needed to know. This shows me that she did not see the information she was receiving from her peers as valuable, and did not understand that she could learn from their experiences, ideas, and knowledge.

It's nice that you let us talk to each other so much, and I don't get bored, which is more than I can say for most of my other classes.

But I wish you would just tell us the answers to all of the questions

that you ask. My classmates are okay, but I'm not sure they are right or if what they are saying is worth listening to. Why do you let us talk so much? I'm sure there is a reason for it. Can you tell me what it is? (Dialogue journal, 10/9/15)

By the end of the semester, Maddie had undergone a shift in her point of view about who she could learn from. In one journal entry in particular, she demonstrated that she was more socially aware, more self-aware, and more open-minded when listening to her classmates. She wrote:

I think I have come out of this class being more compassionate to my peers, future students, and people that I don't know. The largest influence on this really came from learning more about everyone in this class, both in small group conversations and whole class discussions (Journal, 12/8/15).

Maddie's "compassion" for her classmates and people that she was meeting for the first time is aligned with what she will need as a teacher when working with students and families. As Maddie learned to be more compassionate, she honed her social emotional competencies of social awareness and relationship building; this is critical for a successful future classroom. She was able to point to the conversations we had in class, designed to stretch her point of view, as what helped her develop a new frame of reference.

One way I used dialogue journals was to extend class conversations about social emotional competencies, pushing candidates to reflect about their experiences as a student and think about how these connect to their work as future teachers. Over the course of the semester, I got to know Allegra, a sophomore early childhood candidate, much more through her dialogue journal than during class. She was a quiet student in class, speaking only a handful of times,

though when she did speak she was insightful in her comments. However, she used her dialogue journal to extend class conversations, sharing ideas with me that she might not have been comfortable saying out loud in class. In the middle of the semester, I raised a question about whether it was appropriate to expect that all students make eye contact with their teachers. There was a fairly lengthy conversation in class about this, but Allegra did not share her thoughts. She did so, however, in her dialogue journal:

I was so relieved when we talked about eye contact today. Growing up, I always had to make eye contact with people, even my parents or a teacher [told me this] if I got in trouble. Sometimes people tell my little cousin “look at me when I talk to you!” But he can’t because he has Autism and it’s uncomfortable for him. I know now it’s respectful in other cultures, too, to look down if you are being reprimanded, and I didn’t know that before. I definitely would have just assumed they were disrespectful or ignorant. I just think there is so much we don’t know as teachers, or don’t think about. I hope we all can remember this when we have our own classrooms. I hope we never make anyone feel bad about what is uncomfortable for them.

(Journal, 11/6/15)

This type of openness was possible in the privacy of the dialogue journal, and gave Allegra and me the ability to write back and forth about what is possible and acceptable in a classroom. By the end of the semester, she was able to reflect on her own changed frame of reference when she wrote,

Most importantly I learned a lot about myself. I realized that before taking this class I did judge people just by looks or things that they say. I would never say anything out loud, but once you judge someone or only see them as someone in a certain category you do treat them differently. You may not realize it and that is where problems occur (12/9/15).

Over time, Allegra, Maddie, and the other candidates in Introduction to Education used their journals to reflect on and document their changing frames of reference. The dialogue journal provided an important space within which candidates could “speak” to me about whatever was on their minds in a private, individualized way.

### **Conclusion**

Rather than listen to lectures about social emotional learning or watch videos about what SEL looks like in practice, students in this class experienced it first-hand through multiple types of classroom talk. Tim noted the appropriateness of learning about social emotional competencies in this way in his dialogue journal. He wrote, “there are just some things you can learn from a book and this [SEL] isn’t one of them.” Many candidates echoed Tim’s point in their dialogue journals and in conversations we had together: SEL was something that occurred through conversation. To be confronted with challenging issues relevant to teaching and then have opportunities to actively listen to classmates, work in collaborative groups, and share their own ideas and questions with their classmates as they worked through their feelings and understandings of these challenges helped them to practice the SEL competencies as they learned what they were and how to support their development in their future classrooms. This was a

transformational experience for candidates as it encouraged them to think about themselves and others in new ways.

Multiple forms of talk through whole class discussions, small group conversations, and dialogue journals led to increased awareness of diverse populations, increased knowledge of social emotional competencies, and, ultimately, new frames of reference for teacher candidates. These types of talk are easily and immediately applied in a variety of teacher education settings and courses. In order to implement these strategies, however, it is critical to establish a supportive classroom environment where candidates feel comfortable expressing their ideas, taking academic risks, and asking questions. Asking open-ended questions that challenge candidates to consider their frames of reference related to course content, encouraging the expression of multiple ideas and opinions, and creating a classroom environment that makes participation in multiple ways both expected and comfortable for all candidates are all ways to begin this process.

## **Chapter Four: Course Design and Materials**

### **Introduction**

This chapter includes a syllabus for Teaching in Learning Communities I (TLC I), PowerPoints for each day of class accompanied by a brief lesson plan for the day, and supplemental course materials, including case descriptions, edTPA context for learning, and brief descriptions of book club choices. Versions of these materials were originally designed as a part of my dissertation research, as I studied a research-based approach to teaching social emotional learning in teacher education.

As a result of my data analysis, I have made some revisions to the course design. One significant change can be found in my PowerPoint slides, where I have included fewer slides per class. This is in direct response to my findings related to the importance of conversation for experiencing SEL, and I plan to engage my class in discussions more regularly. Cutting down the number of slides indicates shorter lectures and more time for talk. To this point, I have not included speaker's notes on slides, as classroom talk and responsive teaching are critically important elements to this course. Brief lesson plans have been included, and these include goals, key activities, and one guiding open-ended question intended to generate candidate conversation.

Parts of the syllabus are standard, as my College has guidelines as to both the components that have to be included and the language that has to be used. I have, where possible, tried to simplify this document, finding a balance between what is required by my University and the messages I consider to be important.

**Revised Syllabus**

**College of Education  
Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education  
Fall 2016**

**Instructor and Course Meeting Information**

Name: Professor Jenny Rich  
Department: Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education  
James Hall Office 3062  
Email: [richj@rowan.edu](mailto:richj@rowan.edu)

Class Day and Time: Thursday – 2:00 PM – 4:45 PM – James 3102

Field Day and Time: Thursday – 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM – Vineland – Johnstone

Office Hours: Fridays 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, and by appointment as needed

**Course Number and Title**

EDUC 01270.7 - Teaching in Learning Communities I

**Required Texts**

Charney, R.S. (2002). *Teaching children to care: Classroom management for ethical and academic growth, K-8* (Revised ed.). MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.

Putnam, J. & Burke, J. B. (2012). *Organizing and managing classroom learning communities* (4th ed.). San Francisco: McGraw-Hill. **\*PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL ALSO HAVE ACCESS TO THE PORTIONS OF THIS TEXT THAT YOU NEED VIA BLACKBOARD!**

You will be asked to purchase one additional book in order to participate in a book club. We will discuss your choices during the first class session.

**Catalog Description**

This course introduces teacher candidates to the elements of successful, caring learning communities and builds a foundation for *Teaching in Learning Communities II* and further educational work. Candidates study, observe, and participate in various elementary school learning communities and collaborative teaching-learning environments as they examine the interplay between planning, instruction, assessment, culture, diversity, and management within a learning community environment. A 21-hour field experience component is required. Acceptance into the Education Minor or a degree program in Education is a prerequisite. This course should be taken first semester of the sophomore year.

**Connection to the Mission of the College of Education**

To positively impact and develop local, regional, national and global educational communities by:

- Collaborating with partners in the field to promote learning and the mental and physical health of diverse learners in all settings
- Integrating teaching, research, and service to advance knowledge in the field

- Preparing and supporting professionals through the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions

with the ultimate goal of ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all learners.

### **Program Purpose Statement**

The Teaching in Learning Communities 1 course is a core course required by every teacher candidate in the College of Education because it establishes foundational understanding of the four functions of schooling – academic achievement, social responsibility, personal responsibility, and social justice – taught within the context of building an effective learning community. The Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education offers multiple sections of this course each semester, which includes a mandatory urban field placement for all teacher candidates.

### **Vision Statement of the College of Education**

The College of Education will be a leading force in preparing and supporting reflective practitioners who use education to transform our global society.

### **Connecting to the College of Education Conceptual Framework Pillars:**

The four pillars of the College of Education Conceptual Framework are an important foundation that informs who we are and what we truly value. Those pillars are:

1. Content and pedagogical knowledge,
2. Technology to facilitate teaching and learning,
3. Diversity with a commitment to social justice, and
4. Impact on student learning.

Building a foundation of content and pedagogical knowledge, using technology to facilitate teaching and learning, valuing diversity with a commitment to social justice, and impacting P-12 student or client learning to inform our practices and provide a foundation upon which learning

### **NJ Professional Standards addressed by course**

Since this course focuses on philosophies and practices within collaborative learning communities, Standard 6 (*Learning Environments*) is most relevant. However, the other nine standards are also addressed. Standards 1 (*Subject Matter Knowledge*), 4 (*Instructional Planning and Strategies*), and 5 (*Assessment*) are addressed as candidates review and discuss inquiry-oriented lessons. Standards 2 (*Human Growth and Development*), 3 (*Diverse Learners*), and 7 (*Special Needs*) are addressed as candidates critically examine various aspects of successful learning communities such as classroom culture, learning theory, and members' propensities. Standard 9 (*Collaboration and Partnerships*) is addressed through activities that develop candidates' commitment to valuing and including various stakeholders within learning communities. Finally, Standards 8 (*Communication*) and 10 (*Professional Development*) are addressed with multiple opportunities for candidates to develop their oral and written communication skills and to engage in meaningful personal and professional reflection.

### **NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards addressed by course**

This course requires candidates to begin considering the impact of content standards on instructional planning and assessment decisions within learning community environments.

**Prerequisites**

There are no course prerequisites to enroll in Teaching in Learning Communities 1.

**Course Policies**

*Our Learning Community: At Rowan University, we recognize that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. In this class, people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, religions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from our community or if you need any specific accommodations, please speak with the instructor early in the semester about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community.*

Statement on Accommodations: Your academic success is important. If you have a documented disability that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact me. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center in order to receive official University services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856-256-4234. The Center is located on the 3rd floor of Savitz Hall. The staff is available to answer questions regarding accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations.

Professional Behavior: Students are expected to display professional behavior at all times but especially while at work and in the classroom.

Policy on Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is fundamental to education. Authentic learning and improvement demands leaders who have the utmost integrity. Please visit the Provost's website for the full academic integrity policy: [http://www.rowan.edu/provost/policies/documents/2009\\_AcadInteg\\_policy.pdf](http://www.rowan.edu/provost/policies/documents/2009_AcadInteg_policy.pdf).

Policy on Incompletes: The College of Education and the Registrar's Office will allow one (1) semester, immediately following the semester in which the course was originally taken, for students to complete any incomplete work in a course. After one (1) semester, the INC grade will automatically become an F, unless the student successfully completes and submits all assignments.

Late Assignment Policy: We are striving for gaining professionalism as you progress through your program to clinical practice, and then your first teaching job. Meeting deadlines and being prompt and ready are of utmost importance in education. Late assignments are accepted only upon special arrangement with and approval from the professor.

Laptops/iPads: Laptops and iPads are permitted and you are encouraged to bring a device to class.

**Departmental Policies:**

The Department of Inclusive and Interdisciplinary Education has a policy that students should not be late or leave class more than 3 times and should not miss more than 15% of classes (2 days). Departmental policies also require active participation in classes and a respectful and professional demeanor. Violations of these policies result in a dispositional report being submitted to the department and kept on file, and two such reports will require a hearing with the Student Progress Committee. Please review the report form that is attached to this syllabus.

**Additional University Policies**

Be sure that you are aware of and that you read the following policies: attendance, student behavior, academic integrity, and disabilities. All policies are located on the Provost's web site ([www.rowan.edu/provost/policies](http://www.rowan.edu/provost/policies)) as well as in the Student Handbook.

**Objectives of the Course:**

<i>Teacher candidates will consider, understand, and explain:</i>	<b>Standards Meets</b>	<b>Assignment Where Assessed</b>
How background, cultural identity, and educational experiences influence their work as teachers	NJPST 2, 3, 6, 7	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal
The elements of a student's background, cultural identity, and educational experiences that influence his/her experiences in school	NJPST 2, 3, 6, 7	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
The importance and influence that diversity and elements of identity have on community, school, and classroom environments/experiences	NJPST 2, 3, 6, 7	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
The role and influence that educational policies and practices have on learning community environments/experiences	NJPST 6, 9	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
The goals and characteristics associated with effective classrooms built around the concept of a learning community	NJPST 2, 3, 6, 7	Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
The propensities and dispositions displayed by teachers and members who work in a learning community	NJPST 6, 9	Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
The functions and purposes of schools and learning community classrooms and schools	NJPST 6, 9	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal

		Advocacy Book Club
<b><i>Teacher candidates will provide evidence they value and are committed to:</i></b>	<b>Standards Meets</b>	<b>Assignment Where Assessed</b>
Creating and constructively contributing to a variety of learning community environments	NJPST 2, 3, 6, 7	Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
Working towards the building of caring classrooms built on the concept of a learning community	NJPST 2, 3, 6, 7	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
Critically considering the role and influence of diversity, culture, values, and beliefs on teacher identity and schooling	NJPST 2, 3, 8, 9	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
Engaging in professional reflection and growth	NJPST 8, 10	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal Advocacy Book Club
Developing the skills associated with “professional” writing in educational settings	NJPST 8, 10	edTPA Context for Learning Reflective Journal

### Topical Outline/Guiding Questions

I look forward to exploring the following questions with you through readings and engaged class discussions:

- What is a safe classroom space?
- Who decides what “safe classroom space” means? (In other words, does that mean the same thing to all students?)
- How do we, as teachers, account for all cultures and groups of students in the creation of safe classroom spaces?
- What is the role of the individual teacher as we consider the idea of safe classroom spaces? (Or – how do your individual beliefs and biases impact how you run your classroom?)
- How do we create a climate for social emotional learning so that students can attain the requisite social emotional competencies?
- How do social emotional competencies help reduce bully-victim-bystander behaviors?

### Tentative Course Calendar

*Please note that this is subject to change based on student need.*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Due</b>
Week 1	Introductions and norms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllabus review</li> <li>Acknowledging mental models</li> </ul>	SEL Articles on BB	
Week 2	Ecological Systems Perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity book club selection</li> </ul>	Culture articles on BB	Print edTPA from Blackboard
Week 3	Community, culture, and diversity: Defining our terms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edTPA Overview</li> </ul>	Case study and written thoughts	
Week 4	Community, culture, and diversity: Exploring issues of privilege and “otherness” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edTPA School Context overview</li> </ul>	Putnam & Burke pages: 232-244; 256-264; 272-307; 340-354; 376-380	
Week 5 <i>Field #1</i>	Safe and inclusive schools: Envisioning schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edTPA School Context workshop</li> </ul>	Parent Involvement articles on BB; Book club reading	
Week 6 <i>Field #2</i>	Safe and inclusive schools: Including parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edTPA Class Context overview</li> </ul>	Charney 1-5; Book club reading	
Week 7 <i>Field #3</i>	Creating a safe classroom space: Who’s in your classroom? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edTPA Class Context workshop</li> </ul>	Charney 6-9; Book club reading	edTPA School Context
Week 8 <i>Field #4</i>	Creating a safe classroom space: Structures, space, and time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edTPA Student Context overview</li> </ul>	Charney 10-12; Book club reading	
Week 9 <i>Field #5</i>	Teaching for SEL: Pedagogies to support SEL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>edTPA Student Context workshop</li> <li>Book club prep time</li> </ul>	Charney 13-15; Book club reading	edTPA Class Context

Week 10 <i>Field #6</i>	Teaching for SEL: Teacher Talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• edTPA Student Context workshop</li> <li>• Book club prep time</li> </ul>	Charney 16-17; book club reading	
Week 11 <i>Field #7</i>	Students in a safe space: The bully-victim-bystander dynamic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• edTPA Reflection overview</li> <li>• Book club presentations</li> </ul>	Bullying articles on BB	edTPA Student Context Book Club Presentations
Week 12	Students in a safe space: Becoming an Upstander <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book club presentations</li> </ul>	Bullying articles on BB	Book Club Presentations
Happy Thanksgiving!			
Week 13	Revisiting mental models <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulating theoretical frameworks</li> </ul>	Readings TBD	edTPA Reflection
Week 14	Disbanding our learning community		Journal
Finals Week			

### **Description of Assignments**

**edTPA Context for Learning:** This is our signature assessment for TLC I. You will be asked to consider the contextual factors of your field placement in order to help you think about implications for instruction. You will be given additional information about this assignment in a supplemental packet, and we will review each piece of the process in class. (40 points)

**Reflective Journal (including Field Reflections):** Beginning the first week of class and continuing through the last, you will be asked to keep an online reflective journal to document your thinking throughout this course. Journals will be kept in a Google Doc, and will be visible to only you and me. You are required to write at least once each week, but encouraged to write more often. Each week that you have field visit, one post should focus on your field experience. In order to focus your thinking, you will find prompts for these posts on Blackboard. I will respond each week to your journal entries, and, as such, this will serve as a dialogue journal between us. Additional details about journal posts can be found on Blackboard, and will be discussed in class. (25 points)

**Advocacy Book Club:** You will closely read a middle grade or young adult fiction book that focuses on a population of students that will one day be represented in your classroom. Working in a small group, you will discuss the book each week and then develop a presentation which should include information about the population discussed in the book, how that population is challenged by the current structure of school, and how you, as a teacher, will create a safe classroom space for students from this group. Additional details of this assignment will be on Blackboard and discussed in class. (25 points)

**Attendance and Participation:** Our classroom is designed to be a model of what your future classroom built around what a learning community might look like. While the content will be that of TLC I, the pedagogies used will, whenever possible, be easily adaptable for a K-12 classroom. For that reason, and many others, it is not easy to make up what you miss when you are not in class. Classes will often function as workshops where you will work in partnerships and small groups. Your active participation, preparation, and willingness to be on-task and professional is expected at all times. Further, you are expected to consider varying points of view, engage in open dialogue, and develop the dispositions and habits of mind of future teachers. (10 points)

Grading Policy & Criteria:

edTPA Context for Learning*	40 points
Reflective Journal	25 points
Advocacy Book Club	25 points
<u>Attendance/Participation</u>	<u>10 points</u>
Total:	100 points

**Student Evaluation: (Grading Policy)**

A = 100-94    A- = 93-90    B+ = 89-87    B = 86-84    B- = 83-80

C+ = 79-77    C = 76-74    C- = 73-70    D+ = 67-69    D= 64-66    D- = 60-63

**IMPORTANT:** Any grade below C- translates to a “stop” in the program sequence and you may NOT continue onto TLC II the following semester.

**Rowan Success Network**

The Rowan Success Network powered by Starfish® is designed to make it easier for you to connect with the resources you need to be successful at Rowan. Throughout the term, you may receive E-mail from the Rowan Success Network team (Starfish®) regarding your academic performance. Please pay attention to these emails and consider taking the recommended actions. Utilize the scheduling tools available through RSN to make appointments (tutoring, advising, etc.) at your convenience. Additional information about RSN may be found at [www.rowan.edu/rsn](http://www.rowan.edu/rsn).

**Daily Plans**

Beginning on the next page, there are lesson plans for each class session. They include:

- Goals
- Activities
- Key Questions

These plans have been designed in an intentionally open-ended manner in order to allow for responsiveness in teaching, as well as time for class discussion. The activities and key questions are intended to be supports to help meet the goals for each week, and are not intended to be mandatory for instructors.

Following the lesson plans, PowerPoints for each class session have been included. These do not include speaker's notes in an attempt to account for responsive classroom instruction.

## Week One: Introductions and Norms

Goal	Begin to build community and set the tone for the semester
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hopes, fears, questions chart</li> <li>• Four Corners Icebreaker</li> <li>• Syllabus review</li> <li>• Small group work: Ideal classroom poster</li> <li>• TED Talk: Every Child Needs a Champion</li> </ul>
Key Questions	What does your ideal classroom look like?

## Week Two: Ecological Systems Perspective

Goal	Create an organizing framework for SEL
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick Advocacy Book Club books</li> <li>• Discuss SEL theory</li> <li>• Case study – Family Night</li> </ul>
Key Questions	What does it mean when parents don't come to school events?

## Week Three: Community, Culture, and Diversity: Defining our Terms

Goal	Define terms related to diversity
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review edTPA</li> <li>• Small group work – SEL research and ABCs</li> <li>• Small group work – Defining diversity terms</li> <li>• Whole class discussion – microaggression video and conversation</li> </ul>
Key Questions	What is your experience with microaggressions?

## Week Four: Community, Culture, and Diversity: Exploring Issues of Privilege and “Otherness”

Goal	Understanding microaggressions
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for the field</li> <li>• Whole class discussion – microaggressions</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> <li>• Small group work – SEL research and ABCs</li> </ul>
Key Questions	As a teacher, how do you intervene if you hear a microaggression?

## Week Five: Safe and Inclusive Schools: Envisioning Schools

Goal	Examining SEL on the whole school level
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debriefing the field</li> <li>• ABC meetings</li> <li>• Connecting SEL to learning communities</li> <li>• Talking to PDS teachers about safe school spaces</li> <li>• PDS walk</li> </ul>
Key Questions	What does a “safe school” look like and sound like to you?

## Week Six: Safe and Inclusive Schools: Including Parents

Goal	Develop strategies for engaging diverse families in school activities
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC meetings</li> <li>• Talking to PDS teachers about engaging families</li> <li>• Role play – talking to families about challenging situations</li> <li>• Revisit edTPA</li> <li>• Small group work – SEL research</li> </ul>
Key Questions	How do we engage families that don’t seem engaged?

## Week Seven: Creating a Safe Classroom Space: Who's in your Classroom?

Goal	Develop strategies for getting to know your students
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect SEL to Danielson</li> <li>• Case Study – Oliver</li> <li>• Talking to PDS teachers about getting to know students</li> <li>• ABC meetings</li> </ul>
Key Questions	Does getting to know students matter? Why or why not?

## Week Eight: Creating a Safe Classroom Space: Structures, Space, and Time

Goal	Use Danielson to consider SEL throughout the day
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in field groups to map an observed lesson to the core social emotional competencies and Danielson</li> <li>• Critical Questions Protocol</li> <li>• ABC meetings</li> </ul>
Key Questions	Case study is the basis for this key question: A teacher hears a student say, “everyone who works at McDonalds is poor.” She doesn’t address this comment, but the students start to talk amongst themselves, arguing because some of their parents work at fast food restaurants. The teacher is clearly uncomfortable... what would you do?

## Week Nine: Teaching for SEL: Pedagogies to Support SEL

Goal	Identify pedagogies that can be used to support SEL
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify pedagogies that support SEL from classroom observations and readings</li> <li>• Talk with PDS teachers about strategies that support SEL</li> <li>• Small group work – SEL research</li> <li>• ABC meetings</li> </ul>
Key Questions	What happens when the strategies we’ve discussed don’t work? How can you handle bigger behavior issues fairly?

## Week Ten: Teaching for SEL: Teacher Talk

Goal	Workshop day: catching up on projects, answering questions
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student panel</li> <li>• Human Bean Activity</li> <li>• Small group work – SEL resource guide</li> <li>• ABC meetings</li> </ul>
Key Questions	How diverse is your own world? Does the Human Bean Activity reflect this accurately? What does this mean for you as a teacher?

## Week Eleven: Students in a Safe Space: The Bully-Victim-Bystander Dynamic

Goal	Understand the bullying paradigm
Activities	Watch the film <i>Bully</i>
Key Questions	N/A

## Week Twelve: Students in a Safe Space: Becoming an Upstander

Goal	Understand the bullying paradigm
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a definition for bullying</li> <li>• Develop solutions</li> <li>• ABC meetings</li> </ul>
Key Questions	What can you do, as future teachers, that might help reduce bullying?

## Week Thirteen: Revisiting Mental Models

Goal	Build social awareness through book club presentations
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC presentations</li> <li>• Small group work – revisiting ideal classrooms</li> </ul>
Key Questions	How do we talk about current events in our classes?

## Week Fourteen: Disbanding our Learning Community

Goal	Saying goodbye to our class
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Six-word memoirs</li><li>• Final exam: revisiting Oliver</li></ul>
Key Questions	N/A

## Beginning the Journey

TLC I  
Day 1 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### As you come in...

- Please take three post-its
- Use one each to answer the prompts:
  - What is one hope you have for this semester in TLC I?
  - What is one fear you have for this semester in TLC I?
  - What is one question you have about this semester in TLC I?
- Place your post-its on the appropriate charts

Then, please make a name-tag and place it on your table spot.

*Thank you!*

### Welcome!

Today's Agenda:

- Getting to know our learning community
- Getting to know our course
- Getting started



### Our learning community

- A little bit about me
- Ice breaker:
  - **Four Corners**
  - Directions:
    - For each of the questions I put up, move to one of the corners of the room – A, B, C, or D
    - Introduce yourself to someone you have not yet met during each round
  - At the end of this activity, we will debrief to find out how you might use this in a classroom...

### Round One:

Where is your hometown?

- A – Southern New Jersey
- B – Northern New Jersey / Central Jersey / New York
- C – Pennsylvania
- D – Other

### Round Two:

What is your Dual Major?

- A – Math / Sciences
- B – English / Writing Arts/Literacy
- C – History / Social Sciences / Geography
- D – Liberal Arts / Spanish

### Round Three

What is your Education Concentration?

- A – Early Childhood
- B – Elementary Education
- C – Secondary Education
- D – Health and Exercise Science

### Round Four:

How many siblings do you have?

- A - 0 (only child)
- B - 1
- C - 2
- D - 3+

### Round Five:

Which is closest to your favorite activity?

- A – athletics
- B – art
- C – music
- D – reading

### Round Six:

What is your preferred type of assessment?

- A – Multiple choice test
- B – Written report or essay
- C – Presented project
- D – Demonstration activity

### Round Seven:

How do you academically perform best or prefer to work?

- A – completely individually
- B – partner or pairs
- C – small groups (4-5)
- D – larger group (10 – 12)

### Round Eight:

How strong is your decision to become a teacher?

- A – Hands down, I definitely want to be a teacher
- B – Pretty sure, but not 100% right now
- C – The debate is still open, 50% sure
- D – I am not sure that teaching is for me, but I am still weighing my options.

Debriefing:

What did you think?

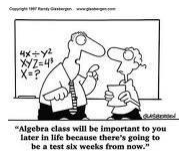
How would you use that in a class?

### Our Course

- Goals
- Content
- Assignments
- My expectations
- Your questions

Setting up your journals:

- Via Google Docs
- Share with [rich1009@gmail.com](mailto:rich1009@gmail.com)
- Allow me editing privileges!



### Mental Models of Education

What do you think of when you think of school?

In a small group, please draw/chart/show what you think of when you think of an **ideal classroom** for your intended age level (elementary, middle school, high school). Some things to consider:

- How should a classroom be set up?
- What is the role of the teacher?
- How loud should an ideal classroom be?
- What types of "things" should be found in a classroom, and where should they be stored?

You will be asked to share your poster with the class, so think about how you will present what you create!

### One model of education

Every Child Needs a Champion:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/rita\\_pierson\\_every\\_kid\\_needs\\_a\\_champion](https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion)

Some things to think about:

- What does this talk tell you about teaching and learning?
- Is this at all connected to your education growing up? To anything you have seen in your own field experiences?

### For next time:

- SEL Readings on Blackboard
  - Content
    - SEL Links
      - Read all of the articles that are linked
      - Watch the short videos that are found under the last link
- Write at least once in your dialogue journal. It can be in response to your reading!
- Please sign the syllabus review page and have it ready to hand in

If you have questions, please let me know!

### One Minute Write

What is one thing that you learned today that was particularly interesting to you OR something that we did that worked well for you?

What is something that we talked about today that you are confused about OR something that we did today that did not work well for you?

This is ANONYMOUS – you do not need to put your name on your paper!



## A Theory for SEL

TLC I  
Day 2 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Today's Agenda

Equity Book Club Picks  
Reviewing the SEL articles and videos  
Creating a theory for SEL

Questions/Comments?



### Equity Book Clubs

Big Ideas:

- It's critical to understand who **will** be sitting in your classrooms one day
- Classrooms are becoming more and more diverse
- Understanding diverse populations can be challenging
- Fiction – story – offers us “mirrors and windows:” ways to reflect upon our own understandings and ways to better understand others

Book selected offer “windows” into diverse cultures and populations, as well as situations that we have not **all** experienced.

Choose one that you are not familiar with, or are less comfortable with. Challenge yourself!!

### Book Club Choices

Middle Grade Books:

- The Skin I'm In, by Sharon Flake (bullying, race)
- Fish in a Tree, by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (learning disabilities)
- George, by Alex Gino (transgender, bullying)

Young Adult:

- Gabi, Girl in Pieces, by Isabel Quintero (nationality, multiple issues)
- The Absolutely True Story of a Part Time Indian, by Sherman Alexie (nationality, bullying)
- Thirteen Reasons Why, by Jay Asher (relational bullying, suicide)
- The Truth About Alice, by Jennifer Mathieu (rumors, bullying)

### Equity Book Club Project

Consider the population or problem presented in your book, and think like a teacher:

- present your book to the class
- present the problem
- what went wrong in school
- how do you think we can do things better?

Your presentation should be about 10 minutes long, creative, and thorough. We are working together to solve problems. In class, we'll create a rubric together for your presentation, which I will use to score your work

Questions or comments?

### Debriefing the reading

In table groups, please answer these questions:

1. Define SEL
2. What are the five SEL competencies?
3. Why is SEL important?
4. What are some things we can do to promote student SEL?
5. What questions do you have?



### Creating a SEL framework

There are theories and frameworks for how to think about, organize, and teach SEL.

How are you organizing what you've learned so far?

With a partner or your table group, please draw a diagram to show how SEL is organized. Consider the following:

- All of the people involved
- How the teaching and learning takes place
- Give your theory a name

Be prepared to explain!

### Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner) says that all humans interact in individual, interconnected systems

In SEL, we think of those systems (socio-ecological systems) as:

1. Community
2. Family
3. School
4. Peer Groups
5. Classroom
  - a. Teacher
  - b. Student



### Case Analysis

Seven steps in an equity literacy case analysis approach:

1. Identify the problem(s) posed by the case
2. Take stock of varying perspectives
3. Consider possible challenges and opportunities
4. Imagine equitable outcomes
5. Brainstorm immediate-term responses
6. Brainstorm longer-term policy and practice adjustments
7. Craft a plan of action

Case Study



### Case Analysis: Family Night

Use the handout provided in order to analyze the case entitled Family Night. Consider this case from an ecological systems perspective, and think about what you know about SEL.

Read the case on your own, but then complete the organizer however you are most comfortable – on your own, with a partner, or with your table group.



### For next time:

Cultural Competence readings on BB:

- How Teachers Promote Social Justice
- Moving Beyond Colorblindness
- The Fun Thing about Studying Different Beliefs is that... They are Different (in the YC magazine)
- Supporting Transnational Families (in the YC magazine)

Print edTPA – found on BB

### One Minute Write

What is one thing that you learned today that was particularly interesting to you OR something that we did that worked well for you?

What is something that we talked about today that you are confused about OR something that we did today that did not work well for you?



## Community, Culture, and Diversity

TLC I  
Day 3 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Today's Agenda

edTPA  
SEL Practices  
Debriefing the reading  
Defining terms  
Microaggressions  
Questions, comments?



### edTPA Purpose

- National assessment
- Performance-based
- "measure novice teachers' readiness to teach both literacy and mathematics in the elementary grades"

### edTPA Tasks

1. Planning for Literacy Instruction and Assessment
2. Instructing and Engaging Students in Literacy Learning
3. Assessing Students' Literacy Learning
4. Assessing Students' Mathematic Learning

\*We are going to focus on a part of Task One (adapted)

### edTPA Context for Learning

1. School Context
2. Class Context
3. Student Context
4. Teaching
5. Reflection

Some thoughts:

- This is similar to a social-ecological perspective
- What matters here is the quality of your analysis, and the way you prove your thinking

Let's take a look...

### Debriefing the Reading

Group 1: How Teachers Promote Social Justice

Group 2: Moving Beyond Colorblindness

Group 3: The Fun Thing about Studying Different Beliefs is that... They are Different

Group 4: Supporting Transnational Families

Each group should come up with two good discussion questions about your article to share with the rest of the class. Questions should be "beyond the text" questions, please!

### SEL Practices

In book club groups, you will research and present teaching strategies to support the five SEL core competencies, aligned with Responsive Classroom:

- Morning Meeting
- Routines and Procedures
- Conflict Resolution
- Cool Down Strategies
- Responsive Teacher Talk

Today's Task: begin to research these practices

### Defining Terms

In groups, please define the following terms without using anything other than each other to help you (i.e. – no technology!):

Gender	Minority
Sexuality	Prejudice
Race	Stereotype
Nationality	Discrimination
Religion	Racism
Equity	Microaggressions
Culture	
Diversity	



### For your consideration...

Kids talk about microaggressions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RfwnibEd3A>

This week, in your journals:

1. How do we, as teachers, stop these from happening in classes? In what ways might you accidentally perpetuate any of these microaggressions?
2. Pay attention to your surroundings (campus, classes, tv, etc.), and listen for microaggressions. Keep a list of what you hear and share it in your journal.

### For next week

Case study: Terms of Endearment

Complete the case study organizer



### One Minute Write

What is one thing that you learned today that was particularly interesting to you OR something that we did that worked well for you?

What is something that we talked about today that you are confused about OR something that we did today that did not work well for you?



## Exploring Privilege and "Otherness"

TLC I  
Day 4 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Agenda

Questions about field?  
Debriefing the Case Study  
Privilege and Otherness  
Self-Assessment  
Group Work



### About the field!

Questions about field orientation?

My expectations for field

Your expectations, concerns, and questions



### Case Study: Terms of Endearment

Using an Equity Literacy perspective, review the case study with your table group.

Be prepared to share the following big ideas:

- What problem(s) does the case present?
- What did Ms. Lawson do well?
- What could she have done differently in the short-term?
- What are long-term solutions?

Case Study



### Microaggressions

Problem solving:

- How do we change this dynamic?
  - Where does this start?
  - How do you feel?
  - What's appropriate?

Quick Bulletin Board Practice:

"I am more than a \_\_\_\_\_"

"Instead of \_\_\_\_\_, try \_\_\_\_\_!"

How lame. It's just a joke. That's gay.  
You don't belong here. You're so sensitive.  
They're just not as good at programming.  
So simple your mother can do it. It's a lymph node.  
Where are you from? You're only here because of quotas.  
The event isn't accessible. You should take notes again.  
What's your real name? It doesn't matter. I want to talk to a real engineer.

### Self-Assessment

In this first part of the course, we have considered diversity, community, and culture. Please complete the following questions in order to self-assess and reflect:

1. How do you understand diversity as you think about school and classroom community?
2. How will you use the five SEL core competencies to help students understand diversity?
3. What is one the one most important thing you have learned so far?
4. What is one question that you still have?

### SEL Practices/Book Clubs

- In your groups, you will be assigned one SEL practice that you will see used at Johnstone
- Use the time allotted to you to do two things:
  - Create a reading schedule
  - Begin to research your SEL practice (more on the next slide...)



### SEL Practices

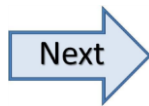
In book club groups, you will research and present teaching strategies to support the five SEL core competencies, aligned with Responsive Classroom:

- Morning Meeting
- Rules and Expectations
- Conflict Resolution
- Cool Down Strategies
- Responsive Teacher Talk



### For next week:

- Field: 8:30 at Johnstone!
- Campus class: 12:30 at Johnstone!
- Read the Putnam chapters that are on BB (be ready to discuss)



### One Minute Write

What went well, what is one big take-away?

What didn't work for you, what questions do you still have?



## Envisioning Safe Schools

TCL I  
Day 5 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### DO NOW...

As you come in, please sit with your book group in order to have your book group conversation.

First, think like a reader.

Next, think like a teacher.

We'll get started at around 12:45...

### Agenda

Welcome!  
Field Debrief  
Safe Classroom Spaces  
Learning Communities Reading  
Group Time

AGENDA

### Field debrief

First day in the field:

- What did you do?
- What did you notice?
- What questions do you have?

### Safe classroom spaces

1. How would you define a "safe classroom space?"
2. In what ways did your morning experience match this definition?
3. In what ways have your readings and on-campus class experiences supported or shaped this definition?

Please be ready to share your thoughts with the group in no more than 10 minutes!

### Learning Communities Reading

Making connections:

1. What are the stages of a learning community according to Putnam and Burke?
2. How does each align with the core competencies of SEL?
3. What are the drawbacks to the framework outlined by Putnam and Burke? In other words, what don't they seem to consider?

Please create a double-sided chart that shows your thinking as a group for question 2, and be prepared to share your thinking for question 3!

### Group Work

In your book groups, please complete the following tasks:

1. Take a walk around the school (no more than 10 minutes!). Note the bulletin boards, classroom doors, displays that are visible as you walk, etc. What messages do you get as you do this? Take notes, and be as specific as possible.
2. SEL Theory to Practice: continue to research your practice, making clear links to the five SEL core competencies
3. In what ways did you see the SEL core competencies enacted in your classroom? Be specific, creating a double-sided chart with the instance and the competency
4. Find a Johnstone teacher who is working with us during this time. Have a conversation with him or her about how they envision and enact safe and inclusive practices.

### One Minute Write

What worked well today, and what did you learn?

What was hard for you today, and what questions do you have?



## Including Families

TLC I  
Day 6 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Today's Agenda

- Do Now: Book Clubs
- Learning from the Experts:
  - Practical strategies for including families
  - Maria Negrón, Colleen Worley, Amanda Armstrong, Teresa Jones, Dawn Bernard
- Debriefing the Day
- edTPA
- SEL Strategies



### Book Clubs

As you come in, please try to talk about your books *like teachers*.

To help you, create a triple-column chart:

Issue in Book (with examples)	Thoughts as a reader	Thoughts as a teacher

### Including Families

- What are questions and concerns that you have?
- What strategies have you seen that are effective?
- How do you make including families equitable for *all* families?



### Talking to Parents...

At your tables, please complete ONE of the following:

Write out a phone or face-to-face conversation that you would have with a parent(s) regarding the following issue:

- Chloe's parents are concerned that you are not challenging their daughter and that she will fall behind her peers. Chloe is in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
- Miguel's family just emigrated from Juarez, Mexico. He speaks very little English, yet seems to be making a few friends. Cinco de Mayo is in two weeks and you thought that it would be a good idea to involve his family in culturally related class activities. Miguel is in kindergarten.
- You are concerned that Charles is not completing the extra assignments that you are sending home. You are doing this to help Charles catch up, but you sense resistance from his stepmother. Charles is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- K.J. thinks it is funny to make fun of his classmates who are overweight. More than once, other students have come crying to you because of his teasing. K.J. is in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

### edTPA: School and Classroom Contexts

1. General Questions
  - a. Which prompts apply to everyone?
  - b. Which prompts are specific based on classroom?
2. Working in partnerships or triads
  - a. Work with your field partner(s) in order to complete (as best you can) the school and class context sections. I will be around to help you. If you need me and I'm busy, please put your name on the whiteboard and I'll come to you next!
3. School Context is due in hard copy to me next week!
  - a. You may hand this in individually or as a partnership/triad
    - i. This applies for School, Classroom, and Student Contexts. The Reflections and Videos must be done individually.

### SEL Strategies

Try to create a double-column chart:

Your Strategy (Ex: Cool Down Strategies)

Core Competency	How you see it
Social Awareness	Kate is frustrating Jenny. Jenny goes to the take-a-break spot.
Self Awareness	Jenny realizes she's getting upset.
Self Management	Instead of lashing out, Jenny removes herself.
Responsible Decision Making	Same.
Relationship Building	Jenny and Kate are able to hash it out later rather than fighting now.

### One Minute Write

What is working?

What's not?

What questions do you have?



## Who's In Your Classroom?

TLC I  
Day 7 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Today's Agenda

- Announcements
- Debriefing the Field (using Danielson!)
- Debriefing the Reading
- Strategies for Getting to Know Students
- Book Clubs



### Announcements

- edTPA school contexts due today
- Next week: plan for edTPA video with your teacher
- Midsemester evaluations today at the end of class

### Debriefing the Field: SEL and Danielson

Focusing Our Lens: Using Danielson

- First, Danielson is the framework for teacher evaluation that Rowan and many districts across the country use
- Four domains:
  - 1: Planning and Preparation
  - 2: The Classroom Environment
  - 3: Instruction
  - 4: Professional Responsibilities
- We're going to try to link our observations to both the SEL competencies and the Danielson domains...

Charlotte Danielson's FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING	
<b>DOMAIN 1: Planning and Preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1a. Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content knowledge</li> <li>• Pedagogical knowledge</li> <li>• Content strategies</li> </ul> </li> <li>1b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior knowledge</li> <li>• Learning processes</li> <li>• Special needs</li> <li>• Student social, knowledge, and personality</li> <li>• Learning and cultural heritage</li> </ul> </li> <li>1c. Setting Instructional Objectives           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, measurable, and relevant</li> <li>• Feasible</li> <li>• Suitable for diverse learners</li> </ul> </li> <li>1d. Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For classroom</li> <li>• To extend content knowledge</li> <li>• For students</li> </ul> </li> <li>1e. Designing Coherent Instruction           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning activities</li> <li>• Instructional materials and resources</li> <li>• Instructional groups</li> <li>• Lesson and unit structure</li> </ul> </li> <li>1f. Designing Student Assessment           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent with outcomes</li> <li>• Criteria and standards</li> <li>• Constructive assessment</li> <li>• Fairly grading</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DOMAIN 2: The Classroom Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Support           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher interaction with students</li> <li>• Student interaction with students</li> </ul> </li> <li>2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional context</li> <li>• Expectations for learning and behavior</li> <li>• Student effort and work</li> </ul> </li> <li>2c. Managing Classroom Procedures           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional process</li> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Materials and supplies</li> <li>• Non-instructional duties</li> <li>• Expectations of punctuality and performance</li> </ul> </li> <li>2d. Managing Student Behavior           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations of behavior</li> <li>• Response to misbehavior</li> </ul> </li> <li>2e. Organizing Physical Space           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and accessibility</li> <li>• Management of furniture and resources</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>DOMAIN 3: Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3a. Communicating With Students           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication by teacher</li> <li>• Communication and procedures</li> <li>• Communication by student</li> <li>• Student interaction and peer management</li> </ul> </li> <li>3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of questions</li> <li>• Question techniques</li> <li>• Student participation</li> </ul> </li> <li>3c. Engaging Students in Learning           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities and assignments</li> <li>• Student groups</li> <li>• Instructional materials and resources</li> <li>• Student and pacing</li> </ul> </li> <li>3d. Using Assessment in Instruction           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment criteria</li> <li>• Monitoring of student learning</li> <li>• Feedback to students</li> <li>• Student self-assessment and monitoring</li> </ul> </li> <li>3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson adjustment</li> <li>• Instructional strategy</li> <li>• Response</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>DOMAIN 4: Professional Responsibilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4a. Reflecting on Teaching           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Use in lesson planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>4b. Maintaining Accurate Records           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student completion of assignments</li> <li>• Student progress in learning</li> <li>• Other instructional records</li> </ul> </li> <li>4c. Communicating with Families           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear communication</li> <li>• Access individual students</li> <li>• Communication with families</li> <li>• Communication with community</li> </ul> </li> <li>4d. Participating in a Professional Community           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction with colleagues</li> <li>• Participation in school projects</li> <li>• Involvement in culture of professional inquiry</li> <li>• Service to school</li> </ul> </li> <li>4e. Growing and Developing Professionally           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to growth</li> <li>• Knowledge and pedagogical skill</li> <li>• Service to the profession</li> </ul> </li> <li>4f. Ensuring Professionalism           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity and conduct</li> <li>• Service to students</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Decision-making</li> <li>• Compliance with administrative regulations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Goal #1: Link SEL Competencies with Danielson

Use the Danielson anchor charts around the room to get you started. Place post-its with the SEL competencies and a BRIEF explanation on each anchor chart to show how they align.

### Goal #2: Connect Observations with Danielson

Now that we've aligned SEL with Danielson, try to decide where your observations might fall...

### Debriefing the Reading: Critical Questions

- In your book groups, you will be assigned a chapter
- Come up with two **critical questions** to ask the class about your assigned chapter

*Critical questions should:*

- Be based in the text, but go beyond it
- Start good conversation
- Make connections to other sources or experiences

For example – How is Charney's description of a LC similar to and different from Putnam & Burke's?

### Case Study: Oliver

Suggested Process:

1. Read the case through once on your own
2. Read the questions
3. Re-read the case, looking for evidence and underlining and/or taking notes
4. Talk it through at your table or with a partner

### Strategies for Getting to Know Your Learners

Guest Speakers from Johnstone

Other strategies:

- Morning Meeting
- Lunch and Recess
- Writer's Notebook
- Reading Conferences
- Group Work
- ???

### Book Clubs

Today, please work on your three-column charts!

Issue in book (with examples)	Think like a reader	Think like a teacher

### One Minute Write

Today, we are halfway through the semester...

Please take an extended moment to respond to the following:

- Overall, what is working well about this class?
- What do you feel you are learning and understanding?
- If there was anything that you could change about this class, what would it be?



## Supporting SEL Learning

TLC I  
Day 8 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Agenda

- Feedback about mid-semester feedback
- Connecting observations to SEL and Danielson
- Debriefing the reading
- Case study
- Book clubs



### Mid-semester evaluation

- 



### Field Observations

- Four Danielson Domains
  - Planning and Preparation
  - Classroom Environment
  - Instruction
  - Professional Responsibilities
- Five SEL Core Competencies
  - Self Awareness
  - Self Management
  - Social Awareness
  - Responsible Decision Making
  - Relationship Building

How did your mentor teacher encourage the core competencies today?

### Debriefing the Reading: Critical Questions Protocol

#### The choices teachers make

1. Brainstorm as many questions as you can about this topic
2. Change open-ended questions to closed questions, and vice versa
3. Prioritize your questions, and pick three to share with the class
4. Choose one question, from all you heard, to write about in your dialogue journal

Debriefing the protocol...

### Case Study

- "people who work at McDonalds are poor"

What would you do?

**Book Clubs**

Today, please work on your three-column charts!

Issue in book (with examples)	Think like a reader	Think like a teacher

**Book Club Feedback**

What are you learning from your book clubs?

What works well?

What could we change?

## Pedagogies to Support SEL

TLC I  
Day 9 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

## Agenda

Debriefing the field  
Debriefing the reading  
SEL in action  
Book clubs



## Field Today

In table groups, please determine the following:

- What did you see that connects to the core competencies?
- What did you see that connects to the reading?
- What did you see that connects to Danielson?

Be ready to share the most interesting thing from each table.

## This Week's Reading

### Difficult Classroom Behaviors

- Critical Question Protocol:
  - Brainstorm Questions
  - Open-Close Ended Questions
  - Pick Priority Questions
  - Share and Answer
- Funneled Strategies:
  - Class Meetings
  - Social Conferences
  - Individual Contracts



## SEL Strategies

### RC Binder Project

- Work with a partner to revamp one section of the RC Binder
  - Look back to the work you have already done with the core SEL strategies
  - Deepen this work, using your new resources, and what you have learned during your time in the field
- Update it, getting it ready to put online and share with all of Johnstone
- Take pictures around the school to support your work

## Book Clubs

### Your Task:

- Begin to think about your presentation
- What are the key issues in your book?
- What are the implications for education?
- How can you advocate for the population in your text?



## Workshop Day!

TLC I  
Day 10 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Agenda

- "Kid Panel"
- RC Resource Guide
- Human Bean Activity
- Book Clubs
  - Creating a Rubric
  - Workshop Time



### Kid Panel

Introductions  
Questions



### RC Resource Guide

- Google Slides
  - Theme: GameDay
- Goal:
  - Create around 5 slides
  - NOT text heavy
  - Interactive
    - Scenarios?
    - Key points
    - Engaging
    - Images
- Share them with me: [jrich1009@gmail.com](mailto:jrich1009@gmail.com) as you set up the presentation

### The Human Bean Activity

- Please sit in groups of five with people you do not know very well
- When you are settled, start the recorder (if this applies to you), and introduce yourselves
- Take a bag and write your name on it
- All decisions must be made as a group

I'll be around with written directions for each table from this point on, and we'll debrief at the end...

### Human Bean Discussion

How did that feel?

Why did we do that now, in this class?

What are the implications for you personally? For you as teachers?



**Book Club Rubrics**

As a class, we need five scoring categories; each will be assigned points from 0-3.

In your book groups, you will draft the scoring criteria for each and turn them in. I will create a rubric and send it out to you from this...

The categories are...?

When rubrics are done, please talk about your books!

**One minute write!**

Today: Kid Panel, RC Guide, Human Bean Activity, Book Clubs

What worked, what did you learn?

What felt hard, what questions do you have?



## Students in a safe space

TLC I  
Day 11 \* Fall 2015  
Professor Jenny Rich

## Agenda

Housekeeping  
Film: The Bully Project



## The Bully Project

Please view *The Bully Project* the lens of a teacher  
Think about solutions, even small ones  
We'll share ideas at the end of the film



## Next class session...

...we'll talk.

In the meantime, please write in your dialogue journals!

## The Bullying Paradigm

TLC I  
Day 12 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Agenda

Debriefing  
The Bullying Paradigm  
Book Clubs

### Building a Definition for Bullying

Take a couple of minutes, and think about any form of bullying that you have experienced, seen, or heard about. Write it down. In other words, what forms does bullying take? Be specific. Places, words, incidents, etc. are all appropriate for this list.

We will share these and categorize the types of bullying we see in order to develop strategies we might use as teachers.

### Some Bullying Statistics

- 10% of children report having been the victims of severe bullying at least once during the school year
- 75% report being bullied at least once during the past ten months
- 25-50% report being bullied during their school years
- 40-75% of bullying incidents in school take place during class breaks, in the lunchroom, bathroom, or hallways
- 30% of children who suffer from food allergies report being bullied at school (sometimes verbally, but more often, by having the allergen thrown or waved at them)
- 30% of children who report having been bullied said they sometimes brought weapons with them to school
- 57% of the time when a peer intervenes in a bullying situation, the bullying stops within ten seconds
- The average bullying episode lasts only 37 seconds, and school personnel are reported to notice or intervene in only 1 in 25 incidents

### Problems and Solutions

- What are some ways teachers try to help that actually hurt?
- What can teachers do that might really help?
- What does the research say?

### Book Clubs

Presentations are next week!

Please use the rest of this class session to work in your groups. I am available if you need me...

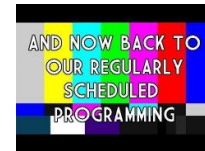


## Revisiting Mental Models

TLC I  
Day 13 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

### Today's Agenda

Some Thoughts...  
Book Club Presentations (!)  
Case Study  
Revisiting Mental Models  
One Minute Writes



### Some (Totally Disconnected) Thoughts...

- Today: last day to hand in edTPA for feedback – final copies due in class next week, please!
- Talking about current events in classrooms: how, when, what do we do?



### Book Club Presentations



### Case Study: Oliver

Please read about Oliver on your own, and then discuss the case with your colleagues.

Be prepared to share your action steps with the class, as well as how you came to agree on your plan.



### Revisiting Mental Models

In the beginning of the semester, you all drew your ideal classroom spaces.

Now, please do the following:

- Draw and label your ideal classroom space, considering the following:
  - How your space teaches the five core SEL competencies
  - How it is a safe space for everyone
  - What materials you have and how they allow access for all



# Last Day of Class!

TLC I  
Day 14 \* Fall 2016  
Professor Jenny Rich

## Agenda

- tk20: Dispositions
- Activity
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBnP0DoGjRI>
- Read Aloud
- Exam



**Case Descriptions**

The following case descriptions are to be used as supplemental materials. While each has been suggested for use during a specific class session, there is certainly a degree of flexibility to be considered with each. The cases are designed to facilitate candidate conversation, either in the whole class or in small groups.

## CASES ON LANGUAGE

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understand in English. She glanced at Ms. de Leon, who looked back at her and shook her head gently. "Are you saying this is what we're going to do?" Ms. Mancini asked, although she was afraid of what the answer would be.

"Starting next term, so that we have time to decide the best way to address noncompliance on students' parts," Mr. Sumpter answered.

Ms. Mancini knew this was bad policy. She knew it was going to hurt the English Language Learners in her classes and that it already was alienating Ms. de Leon. She wanted to find a way to reverse this policy decision. She also needed a plan for what she would do in her own classroom if the policy did go into effect. Could she follow a policy she knew would negatively affect student learning?

*Questions*

- 1 Why might some people find it threatening or discomforting when somebody is speaking a language they do not understand?
- 2 Should Ms. Mancini enforce the policy and support the administration's decision even though she believes this policy is bad for her students, or should she attempt to change her colleagues' minds? If you believe she should do the latter, how might she go about trying to do so?
- 3 Would you have reached out to Ms. de Leon following the faculty meeting? If so, how?
- 4 If you were in a school in which an English-only policy was instituted, how might you engage students in a conversation about the policy and its implications, recognizing that students from families who do not speak English at home could feel alienated by the policy?

Turn to page 153 to view the Points for Consideration for this case.

**CASE 10.3: FAMILY NIGHT**

Among all the grade-level teams at Crestwood Elementary School, the most collaborative one, by far, was the fifth grade teachers. The five team members met regularly, working together to address a wide

variety of issues. So when they noticed, during several school-wide events earlier in the year, disproportionately low attendance among parents and guardians of English Language Learning (ELL) students, they met and decided to do something about it.

The fifth grade team decided to host a Family Night event on a weeknight in February and set about planning the evening, being mindful to find a variety of ways to entice as many parents and guardians to attend as possible. Snacks and student performances surely would draw a crowd, they figured. The teachers sent home fliers that had been translated into the languages spoken in the homes of each student. They even arranged for students to perform the songs they had learned in music class. Following the performance, the teachers planned a brief presentation about how to reinforce math concepts at home by utilizing Web sites and online resources. The entire event would last only 30 minutes, they decided, trying to be sensitive to the fact that many of their students' parents and guardians worked evening shifts or had other responsibilities that made long school events difficult to attend. The program was scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Nelson, one of the more veteran fifth grade teachers, hoped that his grade-level team would set an example for the rest of the school, demonstrating how to optimize family participation. He was excited to prove that if events were planned thoughtfully, attendance would increase. He even took it upon himself to create a handout about how to access online math tools.

The evening of the Family Night, several families began arriving shortly before the published start time. The teachers noticed, however, that most of them were the families who attended every school event. Five minutes after the scheduled start time, with several people seated and awaiting the performance, but other families not yet in attendance, the teachers decided to change the order of the program around, moving their discussion of home support for math learning to the beginning, to be followed by the student performance.

The teachers were relieved to see more and more families filing into the event as they were speaking, and by the end of their presentation, almost all of the families had arrived. *This is a great turnout*, thought Mr. Nelson, but he worried that so many of the families missed learning how to help their children with math. He and the other

## CASES ON LANGUAGE

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teachers noticed that several of the families of ELL students stood in the back of the cafeteria rather than joining other families in the rows of seats they had provided. Many were chatting. The students did not seem to notice, but several parents and guardians who were sitting and watching the students perform appeared to be growing frustrated with the background noise.

Around 7:40 p.m., ten minutes after the event was scheduled to end, many families who arrived after the event had started were still chatting. Ms. Stowe, one of the newer fifth grade teachers, noticed that several copies of the handout Mr. Nelson had created were left on the table, so she personally handed one to each of the adults who did not have one. She felt disappointed that when she gave them the handout, so few of the parents and guardians in attendance took time to ask questions about it. By 7:45 p.m. several of the teachers were walking around the cafeteria reminding the remaining families that the event had ended.

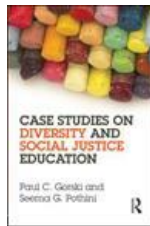
Once everybody had left, the teachers met briefly to discuss the evening. Ms. Stowe expressed her discontent over what she interpreted as many of the ELL parents and guardians showing disinterest in the handout. Other fifth grade teachers complained that the evening was not a success because many of the ELL families for whom the event primarily was intended arrived late and seemed more interested in their conversations than the presentation.

Mr. Nelson could tell that his coworkers were discouraged by the evening. He knew it would reinforce some of the stereotypes they and other teachers in his building already had about certain families. He also knew that the evening held an important lesson for the fifth grade team and the school, but he was not sure what that lesson was.

*Questions*

- 1 Do you agree with the teachers' conclusion that the evening was not a success? Why or why not?
- 2 The teachers were careful to try to alleviate some potential barriers to participation for ELL families, such as language. What else, if anything, might they have done to make the evening as engaging to the families as possible? What strategies have you used successfully to maximize participation in these sorts of events?

## Case Study 6.4: (Racist) Terms of Endearment



Written by Paul C. Gorski ([gorski@edchange.org](mailto:gorski@edchange.org)) and Seema Pothini ([sq1515@hotmail.com](mailto:sq1515@hotmail.com)) for their book, **Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education** (Routledge, 2014). Check out the book for this more than 30 additional school- and classroom based case studies on issues like race, class, (dis)ability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.

**Synopsis:** A high school math teacher overhears a White student directing the N-word at an African American classmate. When she confronts him, he claims that he was using it as a term of endearment—a claim that is not explicitly contested by the “friend” to whom he’s directing it.

Ms. Lawson was glad to be teaching math at Greenstown High School, a racially and economically diverse school. She previously had worked at predominantly white schools with very few students receiving free or reduced-price lunches. After losing her job due to budget cuts, and after taking a course on diversity while earning her Masters of Arts in Teaching degree, she accepted a job teaching in a more diverse environment. She arrived at Greenstown feeling eager and prepared to take instructional advantage of the diversity.

Several weeks into her first year at Greenstown, Ms. Lawson was happy about how well she had adjusted to her new environment. She had taken several measures early in the school year to demonstrate her commitment to racial equity and it seemed as though students were responding positively. She was especially pleased when she saw students of color reading the Diversity in Mathematics posters she hung around the room, highlighting historically important mathematicians of color from around the world. They complained a little—predictably, she thought—in all of her classes on the second day of school when, responding to the racially segregated seating patterns she noticed the first day of class, she assigned seats. She never mentioned her reason for assigning seats, though, and students were accustomed to seat assignments from some of their other classes, so that tension passed quickly. All in all, things were progressing smoothly.

One afternoon around mid-October, as she gathered her materials for her fifth-period class and students made their way into her classroom, Ms. Lawson overheard one of her students use the n-word. Understanding how inflammatory the n-word was, her immediate reaction was concern that there would be a fight in her classroom. So when she looked up from her desk and peered toward the back of her classroom, where she was sure the word came from, she was surprised to see Reggie, an African American student, Adolfo, a Latino student, and Anthony, a white student, all laughing together.

“Who said that?” Ms. Lawson asked as she stood and walked toward the back of the room.

“Said ~~at~~?” Adolfo asked, still laughing.

“You all know exactly what it means. The n-word,” Ms. Lawson replied. Nobody responded, but Adolfo and Reggie both glanced at Anthony.

“Anthony?” Ms. Lawson prodded.

## Case Study 6.4: (Racist) Terms of Endearment 2

"I didn't say the n-word, I said n-i-g-g-a, nigga," he explained. Ms. Lawson was unsettled by how confident Anthony sounded, as though he really did not believe he had done anything wrong. "I always call Reggie that. He's cool with it. It's a term of endearment."

Keisha, an African American young woman who had overheard their conversation, interjected, "That's no term of endearment, you idiot. I's racist and you're lucky you're not getting a beat down right now for saying it."

"Enough of that," Ms. Lawson said, glaring at Keisha. "There won't be any threats of violence in this classroom. Sit down and let me take care of this."

Unsure what to say next, Ms. Lawson turned toward Reggie. He no longer was laughing and, she thought, was beginning to look uncomfortable. "Is that true, Reggie, that he calls you that all the time and you're fine with it?"

"It's not a big deal," Anthony explained. "Right, Reg?" he asked playfully, nudging Reggie with his elbow.

"Reggie can speak for himself," Ms. Lawson said, then looked back at Reggie, who was looking even more uncomfortable. Just then, the start of class bell rang and Ms. Lawson looked up to see everybody in the room staring at her and Reggie. Feeling that, whatever he really felt about Anthony's use of the n-word, Reggie was even more uneasy with the spotlight she was shining on him in that moment, she decided to drop the issue and commence with teaching class.

As she walked back toward her desk, she said with a half-defeated sigh, "Please remember, everyone, that one of our community norms is respect. I don't care how you pronounce it or what you mean by it, there is no room in this classroom for that kind of language."

She knew, even as she was making that statement, that she did not handle the situation well. She also knew she needed to figure out a way to respond more thoughtfully in case it happened again.

## Questions

1. Did Anthony's explanation about how he didn't really use the n-word make his actions less of a problem? Is there any circumstance in which it would be fine for somebody to use the n-word or any variation of it in a classroom or school? If so, what would that circumstance be?
2. When Keisha voiced her displeasure about Anthony's language, Ms. Lawson, worried that the tension would escalate, chastised her and ordered her to sit down. How could she have addressed Keisha's comments more effectively?
3. Ms. Lawson put Reggie on the spot by asking him how he felt about the situation in front of his friends, in front of Keisha, and in front of whomever else was in earshot as students filed into the room. What are some other ways Ms. Lawson might have checked in with Reggie in order to avoid shining the spotlight on him in that way?
4. Ms. Lawson knew she needed to address the use of the n-word with her entire class, as she couldn't be sure how many students overheard the conversation. How might you approach such a task?

## Case Study: Oliver

You have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom of twenty-five students. Oliver comes in every day tired and hungry, but yet this student would probably fit into the obese category. Oliver walks around the playground not talking with anyone else at recess, has no energy to complete your assignments, and is quite irritable around other students. You begin to collect specific data:

- a. This week, Oliver brought only potato chips and dip for lunch two days in a row. The other three days he brought a pizza Lunchable with dessert.
- b. Oliver, when asked to draw a favorite activity at home, drew a picture of an X-box. During the discussion, he added no other activities that he likes.
- c. You asked the class to record all of the tv shows they watched for a week. When the class discussed and graphed their data (time and favorite show), Oliver reported he watched 24 hours of tv and that his favorite show is Jay Leno.
- d. While graphing the data, you overhear Oliver tell Kennedy that “only babies like Liberty Kids” and respond to Kamden’s show by saying, “Law and Order. Like you’ll ever be a lawyer. You’re too dumb.”
- e. For a science experience, you ask the children to write their own problem involving angles, distance, and force. Oliver turned in the following problem: “How much force and at what angle do you need to hold the knife in order to throw it at your teacher if you sit in the back row.” Oliver sits in the back row of your class.

You begin to have many questions: 1) Is this child really staying up until 12:30 and then getting up at 7 am to go to school? 2) Does the child engage in other activities other than computer/video games? 3) Does the child eat a balanced diet at home? 4) Would he go beyond verbal insults and actually physically harm me or others in the class?

You decide that conversations with the parents are warranted because you cannot answer these questions without them. You schedule a conference with the parents and when they walk in, they, too, are obese. Dad has even brought along a large Steak n’ Shake milkshake to drink during the meeting.

Here you sit with your observations of the child and the immediate observations of the parents; you feel tongue-tied but open with a positive comment about Oliver being a willing helper at school. The father laughs and says, “That can’t be my boy!” Oliver’s mother is clearly upset and is holding onto her purse handles for dear life. She says in a wavering voice, “I’m glad you called this meeting. We’ve been so worried about Oliver. He tells me every day that the hates school because the kids are so mean to him at recess. He told me that you and other teachers do nothing to stop their hitting him and calling him names.”

Please answer the following questions generously citing information from your text to support your answers:

1. What will you do during this conference and why?
2. What barriers may have been preventing Oliver's parents from coming forward sooner? What will you need to consider as a teacher to remove these for them and other families?
3. How will you adjust your curriculum to help Oliver with his peer relationships, anger management, and other issues raised above?

**edTPA Context for Learning (Adapted)****School Context**

1. What type of school do you teach in? (Elementary, middle, other? Urban, suburban, rural?)
2. Describe special features of your school or classroom that might impact your teaching. These might include co-teaching plans, bilingual students, special education classrooms, small group pullout classes, and other arrangements.
3. Explain the requirements and expectations that surround planning and teaching. These might include required curricula, pacing plans, specific instructional strategies, and standardized tests.

**Class Context**

1. What is the daily schedule like?
2. Is there any ability grouping? How are students grouped? What are the implications of this grouping?
3. What resources are available in the classroom to teachers and to students?

**Student Context**

1. Grade:  
Number of students in the class:  
Males:  
Females:
2. Consider the variation among learners in your class in order to respond to the following:

- How many students in your class have 504s or IEPs? What are the accommodations? Can students be clustered together by supports and goals?
- How many students have language-based needs? What supports and goals are in place for these students?
- What other learning needs (not documented by 504s or IEPs) are there in your class? What supports are in place for these students?

**Reflection**

Please write a reflection about the specific context of learning that addresses the following: If you were the teacher in this classroom, how would you meet the needs of all of the students?

Consider these prompts as you write your response:

- How would you meet all academic needs?
- How would you meet all social emotional needs?
- How would you address the variety of cultural and language differences?
- While still being realistic and working within the requirements and expectations of the district and school, what changes might you make within the day?

This reflection should be approximately 2 double-spaced pages.

**Advocacy Book Club Choices****Young Adult Books**  
**Winger**

Ryan Dean West is a fourteen-year-old junior at a boarding school for rich kids. He's living in Opportunity Hall, the dorm for troublemakers, and rooming with the biggest bully on the rugby team. And he's madly in love with his best friend Annie, who thinks of him as a little boy.

Ryan Dean manages to survive life's complications with the help of his sense of humor, rugby buddies, and his love for drawing comics. But when the unthinkable happens, he has to figure out how to hold on to what's important, even when it feels like everything has fallen apart.

**Thirteen Reasons Why**

Clay Jensen returns home from school to find a strange package with his name on it lying on his porch. Inside he discovers several cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker—his classmate and crush—who committed suicide two weeks earlier. Hannah's voice tells him that there are thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life. Clay is one of them. If he listens, he'll find out why.

Clay spends the night crisscrossing his town with Hannah as his guide. He becomes a firsthand witness to Hannah's pain, and as he follows Hannah's recorded words throughout his town, what he discovers changes his life forever.

**The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian**

This is the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the reservation to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which is based on the author's own experiences, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live.

### **Gabi, A Girl in Pieces**

Gabi Hernandez chronicles her last year in high school in her diary: college applications, Cindy's pregnancy, Sebastian's coming out, the cute boys, her father's meth habit, and the food she craves. And, best of all, the poetry that she writes that helps her create her identity.

### **Middle Grade Books**

#### **George**

When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl.

George thinks she'll have to keep this a secret forever. Then her teacher announces that their class play is going to be *Charlotte's Web*. George really wants to play Charlotte. But the teacher says she can't even try out for the part . . . because she's a boy. With the help of her best friend, Kelly, George comes up with a plan. Not just so she can be Charlotte -- but so everyone can know who she is, once and for all.

#### **Fish in a Tree**

Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, she thinks, how can you cure dumb? However, her new teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the troublemaker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She

discovers that there's a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don't always think alike.

### **The Skin I'm In**

Maleeka suffers every day from the taunts of the other kids in her class. If they're not teasing her about her homemade clothes or her good grades, it's about her dark, black skin. When a new teacher, whose face is blotched with a startling white patch, starts at their school, Maleeka can see there is bound to be trouble for her too. But the new teacher's attitude surprises Maleeka. Miss Saunders loves the skin she's in. Now Maleeka's challenge is to learn to do the same.

### **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

This dissertation has allowed me to investigate a problem of practice regarding how to effectively teach social emotional learning in a teacher education class. Reporting on the results using the portfolio format is both immediately applicable in my day-to-day work and has broader implications for other teacher educators in my College of Education and beyond. In creating three products rather than the traditional format dissertation, I will be able to share my findings immediately not only with my colleagues, but with audiences outside of my University who might be interested in this topic. Each product in this portfolio allowed me to take a close look at one “slice” of my data in order to create something practical and to continue to refine my own teaching.

#### **General Implications**

Ultimately, my research yielded the finding that through a variety of teaching methods, particularly Advocacy Book Club, student collaboration, and different types of challenging class talk, teacher candidates were able to “live” social emotional learning in order to learn what it is and how it looks in practice. While I am unable to say that more traditional methods of teaching, including lecture, would not accomplish the same things, it is clear that through participation in small group work, whole group, small group and written interaction, Advocacy Book Clubs, and dialogue journals candidates grew and developed their social emotional competency and increased their understanding of social emotional learning with regard, in particular, to working with diverse students. This was accomplished, in part, because these teaching methods allowed them to grapple in meaningful and safe ways with the large and challenging issues involved with social emotional learning. They also have the potential to encourage them, by virtue of the

positive learning experiences they reported, to continue to do so as they move forward in their training and in to their teaching careers.

These findings suggest that the Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education should consider course revisions in-line with those described here. According to student reports and my own observations, this course pilot was an effective one. Not only was candidate learning increased, but candidates were authentically engaged in the course material. They also suggest that department faculty could benefit from becoming more purposeful and systematic in considering how the course helps students develop and learn how to create classrooms that teach social emotional competencies by considering why it is important and what pedagogies can effectively achieve this.

A main goal of this study is to disseminate findings broadly, including with departmental colleagues. As I have been hired into a tenure track position and will take on the role of course facilitator for this course, I will now have the opportunity to do so. Due to the success of my pilot syllabus, I am able to speak with confidence about the methods that were employed. I believe that the three products I have developed for this dissertation portfolio creates a compelling case for why instructors should buy into this change and a deeper understanding of how to implement it. While this pilot did show initial success, I see it as a work in progress. I look forward to working with colleagues to fine-tune it and embed SEL throughout the College of Education course sequence.

### **Implications for Practice**

Although I have documented substantial learning as a result of the course design described, analyzing the data for the two journal articles contained in this portfolio highlighted aspects of my course that can be further improved, but that I might not have noticed otherwise.

For example, while the Advocacy Book Clubs did yield learning benefits for candidates, in future I will provide some structure for group discussion, including providing prompts for the groups as they read, and a three-column chart that more easily allows them to move between the efferent and aesthetic stances of reading. The columns will be labeled “text,” “what I think as a reader,” and “what I think as a teacher.” I believe that providing structure will help deepen the conversations by providing focus and giving candidates a lens through which to focus their reading and discussions. Additionally, although my data collection strategy did not capture this, it is likely that participation in small groups was somewhat uneven-- that some group members spoke more than others, and that comments, questions, or ideas may have gone unsaid. This might be because a candidate did not have the tools or vocabulary to bring his or her thoughts up, felt silenced in some way, or because he or she was not a dominant member of the group. I believe that giving students some discussion structures which invites full participation will help safeguard against this.

It is important to note that my teaching did not focus explicitly on helping candidates learn how to develop their own students’ social emotional competencies. This was beyond the scope of this first course. The focus instead was on helping candidates think about their own teacher identities in relation to social emotional competencies, and how these competencies might help them in the future. While candidates did have a field component to this course, their primary experience there was learning how to simply “be” in a classroom: how to be professional, relate to students and colleagues, and understand how a school works. I did not believe that they would be able to also focus consistently on social emotional learning throughout their time in the field. However, this should develop over time. The candidates will need many opportunities to revisit social emotional competency for themselves and as a way to

begin to focus more on how to develop them in their students. To address this, it is my goal to embed social emotional learning and the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to teach social emotional competencies throughout other courses in our program, particularly in methods courses.

### **Implications for Further Research**

There are several avenues of research to explore now that this study is complete, all of which tightly link both research and practice. This was very much a problem of practice study, and the questions that it raised to investigate further are also primarily situated in examining my own practice.

First, in order to continue to generate knowledge, it is worth repeating this study with additional classes and comparing findings across groups. This should be done with the classes that I teach, but also, perhaps, with classes that other faculty members teach that use this syllabus. I will also refine the course based on further iterations of the syllabus.

As I think carefully about what to look for in my own teaching and research, I will, first and foremost, audio-record all small group conversations, so that these become data I can analyze. I will then be able to look at the quality of candidate talk to better understand what gets said, what gets left out, and who does the talking. Not only will that guide my research, it will guide my teaching as I will be better able to understand the barriers to further analysis and encourage groups to go deeper into critical conversations about diversity and social emotional learning. I did not take a close look at the dynamics of the small groups during the book clubs, and this would give me a “new way” to my research in a new study.

I would also like to ask my next class to read several young adult books all together, rather than having small groups of candidates reading different novels. It would be interesting to

see how the discussions changed, both by reading more and by involving more voices in each conversation.

### **Creating Change**

It is my ultimate goal, and the goal of the Elementary Education course coordinator, to transition this course design from a pilot study to the design that is used across all sections of TLC I. In order to support this process, I would like to implement Professional Learning Communities as a way of both sharing what I have learned, and learning from and with my colleagues in order to deepen my knowledge about SEL and how to effectively develop knowledge and skills in this realm with our teacher candidates.

Creating a PLC is fraught with many challenges right now, however, and implementing a formal training session to share this knowledge isn't the way to accomplish this given the current culture of the College. Morale is low for a variety of reasons, leadership is instituting a series of confusing and complicated guidelines to navigate, and my own place in my department is unusual. I have been at my College for two years in a Clinical line, so am not treated like "new faculty," but this coming year will be my first in a tenure track position. I am conscious of not wanting to make waves or do anything that is not quite politick, but, at the same time, am being asked to take on leadership roles that new faculty would not normally be given.

Faculty, too, are feeling overwhelmed with the changes coming from the Dean's office. There is an increased focus on research, both on publishing and getting grants, and while good teaching is valued, it may be less valued right now. The message has been sent that collaboration among colleagues is "okay," but writing for publication should be done alone or as first author. There is a general sense of distrust among faculty, and competition is both maligned among colleagues and very present. Without an incentive or a formal expectation for

participating in PLCs, generating much buy-in from peers may be difficult, despite the fact that many have informally expressed interest in participating in one. That being said, there is real value in PLCs, including the potential to conduct research related to faculty development, and it is my belief that colleagues who participate in PLCs can not only learn, but produce research emerging from this learning if we commit to a self-study.

In order to overcome these challenges and implement change within the confines of my context, I identified two frameworks that could guide my efforts. These are instituting cultural change and recognizing short-term wins. Reeves (2009) describes a helpful approach to implementing them both.

*Instituting Cultural Change.* Reeves defines culture as “the way we do things around here” (Reeves, p. 37, 2009), and, this framework looks to change the way things are done within an institution. Although it was how things were done in the past, convening a small group of faculty to collaborate on improving their teaching, implementing a PLC, is not “the way things are done around here” now. Currently, the focus is on conducting publishable research, and obtaining grants; there is a lot of competition among faculty and not a strong sense of collegiality. A focus on collaboration and student-centeredness has fallen by the wayside very quickly over the past two years. In order to move back to this “way of doing things around here” (Reeves, 2009), we need to think about faculty governance once again, something I know my colleagues care deeply about. This is a stretch on the Reeves’ definition of cultural change, as I am not suggesting we create a brand new culture, but look to a culture that we once had, but have moved away from.

Reeves (2009) defines several steps to managing a lasting cultural change. First, he suggests that change leaders identify what will not change despite the implementation of a

change effort. By this he means that change leaders should honestly evaluate what can and cannot change with regard to values, practices, traditions, and relationships. In the case of the College, it is clear that the emphasis on research will remain; I am certain that if we asked the Dean what she values most, her response would be “high-quality research.” I am just as certain, however, that if we were to meet in a PLC we could focus on both research and teaching. While investigating the implementation of new practices related to SEL, we could also write about our new practices and student learning as well as the process of collaboration, how we worked together to help our students, and what we learned about our work together in order to produce high quality research. It is a shift in mindset, perhaps, but this does not need to stop the work that we want to do.

Reeves (2009) also asserts that leaders need to change their actions in order for change to take place in meaningful ways. In this case, I think the opposite is true: faculty need to change its response to leadership in order for change to take place. We need to better understand our circumstances and work to develop appropriate responses. Another way to think about this, perhaps, is that we need to become our own leadership to some degree. If faculty took more responsibility for the worklife of the College, we could change our actions in meaningful, positive ways.

Leadership tools, as Reeves (2009) defines them, include role modeling and establishing a clear vision. Currently, our College administration is often using “power tools” instead, including slightly veiled threats and coercion (Reeves, 2009). If we faculty are our own leadership, however, learning to work within the system, we can create our own vision, become our own role models. We can decide to prioritize our teaching putting students at the heart of our work, by focusing our research our work with them. While it would not be wise to ignore

our Dean and the demands she is putting on us, we can work to support one another, improve practice, conduct research on our practice and collaborate rather than compete. While I don't expect a PLC focused on social emotional learning in teacher education can address all of these issues, I do think it might begin to support the development of collegiality and a shared goal that focuses on improved teaching and learning and the formation of a collaborative community to help us attain this. Even a small group of dedicated faculty studying something they are interested in with the clear goal of improving how they do their jobs as instructors and preparing candidates who are better able to teach SEL would prove to be beneficial in this regard.

*Recognizing Short-Term Wins.* Reeves (2009) argues that recognizing short-term wins is important when trying to sustain change. He explains that without short-term wins, managing change can become too painful, even when trying to keep the anticipated long-term benefits in mind. Reeves (2009) asserts that recognizing effective practices simply and clearly throughout the year is an example of this. In my College, this is not happening on a "macro" level, but this is something I will try to do during every PLC meeting that I am a part of. I envision beginning every meeting with the question, "What's working well?" This will set a positive tone, one that will allow every faculty member to have a success, or a "win."

Due to particularly low morale at this point, the importance of identifying short-term wins cannot be underestimated. As faculty members, we have been discouraged from sharing our small wins and praised only for large grants and publications in top-tier journals. Everyday achievements have been dismissed, and pre-tenure faculty have been told that they will not be granted tenure for these small wins. In a College mission statement that asserts the value of "access, success, and equity," it makes sense that faculty are rewarded for a focus on these goals in ways that are both big and small. Research ideas can be shared, and grants can be sought.

Teaching, too, can be important. That improving practice may be viewed as short-term and much less important wins, is a matter of perspective. Faculty working together to improve can choose to place a value on this work that may not be shared by College leadership.

### **The Path Forward**

Certainly, this is a time of transition for my College. While this unsettled period can make implementing any change effort challenging, there are specific strategies that I will use as I work to encourage and help faculty adopt the course design described in this portfolio.

Implementation will happen on multiple levels. On a personal level, teaching this course again will give me another opportunity to revise and refine my syllabus as I continue to investigate best practices related to teaching about social emotional learning. On a broader level, I will share my syllabus, course materials, and the articles that I have written with my colleagues who are teaching this course. I will also hold regular PLC meetings for the teaching team in the fall and spring semesters in order to celebrate short-term wins, talk through teaching strategies, and develop greater content knowledge regarding social emotional learning. I also plan to research and write about our PLC work. There are two purposes for doing this: to learn more about teaching and learning social emotional competencies, and to act on the Dean's expectations regarding research. At the same time that we work on improving our practice, we will also be pursuing a research agenda related to teacher education, SEL, faculty development, and/or faculty collaboration. This will be beneficial to everyone involved.

Clearly, implementing this study was a learning process for me. It produced scholarship and generated additional questions. I see my dissertation as a beginning rather than an end, as a way to enrich practice and begin a line of research and writing that can reap professional rewards as a scholar and a teacher educator.

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