Journal Issue Theme: "Reimagining Education"

In recent years recognition has grown that standardized testing and punitive measures of school accountability have largely failed to move the needle on student educational achievement. Beyond the political divide of dueling approaches of the Obama and Trump administrations, a "Reimagining Education" movement has begun to take root that seeks to consider a range of issues that affect student achievement and to evaluate solutions being advanced through evidence-based approaches. Examining education at all levels in both United States and international settings, efforts at reimaging education have sought to focus on individualized student needs and ways that particular circumstances of families and communities surrounding schools and influences in the larger society may impact student learning. As well, the focus has extended to the role of teachers and other educators and to the effectiveness of teacher education programs.

At bottom, the reimagining education movement seeks productive ways to increase individual students' ability to "control" the focus, pace, and ways of demonstrating their learning in order to stimulate student engagement and ownership of their learning as a strategy to improve achievement. Thus, a variety of potential influences are being analyzed, including socioeconomic environmental factors, individual student aptitudes and learning disabilities, and the role of such circumstances as school funding, curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching resources, plus potential affects of such societal issues as gun violence, racism, bullying, and sexual and drug abuse.

Papers from the Center for Success Summer Institute at North Central College, June 14, 2019, on the theme "Reimagining Education in Illinois" are featured in this issue of *Success in High-Need Schools.* The Summer Institute invited presentations on personalized learning and differentiated instruction, cultivating equity and culturally responsive teaching and learning, innovative and standards-based pedagogies, social and emotional learning, roles of technology, and teacher leadership. Among other useful resources are the just-released book, *Re-imagining Education for Democracy*, Stewart Riddle and Michael W. Apple (May 2019, CRC Press); Columbia University's annual Summer Institutes since 2015 on reimagining education; and the XQ Institute's reimagining high school "Super Schools" project involving 19 high schools across the United States.

Table of Contents: *"Reimagining Education"*

Publisher's Column: Overview of "Reimagining Education"

By Dr. Jan Fitzsimmons

Author Bio: Janis Fitzsimmons, Ph.D. is Director of the *Center for Success in High-Need Schools* and publisher of Success in High-Need Schools Journal. She is also Executive Director of the Urban Education Laboratory at North Central College in Naperville, IL. Dr. Fitzsimmons completed her Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. She can be reached at jcfitzsimmons@noctrl.edu.

The *Center* provides a forum for generating ideas, raising questions and sharing successful programs, practices and policies. Since its launch in 2004, the *Center for Success in High-Need Schools* has provided support and opportunities for teachers in high-need schools to come together and examine critical issues and aspects of teaching and leadership that teachers and other leaders in education identify as being most perplexing. Issues like the achievement gap, college and career readiness, teacher shortage, classroom management, assessment, differentiating instruction, teacher leadership and teaching in a culturally responsive way, as well as teaching in the content areas of reading, special education, mathematics and science span the spectrum of programming provided by the Center. Research shows that it is essential to support teachers' growth and development to retain the best and brightest in the classroom. And, at a time of teacher shortage and enormous educational reform, it is essential that we support both teachers and leaders as we strive to find, strengthen and increase teachers for all classrooms and success for all students. The *Center* is proud to be a leader that invests in teachers and educational leaders and our national treasure ---our children!

This issue of our journal brings together P-20 teachers and administrators, teacher educators and soon-to-be teachers along with corporate and government advocates from across Illinois to develop key understandings that help us in our pursuit of finding success for each student! I hope through your interactions with articles in this issue, you will deepen your understanding of significant issues in education, explore innovative and effective strategies for teaching and learning and acquire new approaches for classroom problem solving to re-energize your vision and passion and prepare for a new year of "Reimagining Education!"

In Reisberg's article, *Reimagining Education in Illinois*, Reisberg emphasizes the importance of state agencies listening to and enacting policies and procedures based on authentic voices from educators, families and communities. Reisberg argues that it is only through active listening that state agencies are able to identify and shape policies that effectively address a state's strategic needs and priorities. To *"reimagine education,"* Reisberg outlines critical issues that must be addressed in Illinois including improving

inequities in school funding, student voice, personalized learning, cultural responsiveness, advocacy and reflection.

Shah and Apantenco deepen the conversation Reisberg begins on cultural responsiveness in their article, "*Purposeful Without the Pressure; Discussing Race in a Third Space with Female Teacher Candidates of Color Through Book and Movie Clubs*." Specifically, this article offers a case study of three female teacher candidates of color and their experiences on a predominantly white campus where third spaces provided discussion opportunities on race relations. In addition to an enlightened conversation, the authors share both book and movie questions and opportunities for discussion.

Komac, in *Video Games Or Martial Arts? An Argument for Standards-Based Reporting*, raises questions about the role assessment and the structure of education play in reimagining education. Should assessment and the structure of our schools be more like video gaming with a focus on getting the most points and then moving on, or should it be more like the martial arts where one must master the skills at one level in order to move on to the next?

In a second column, Komac, in *Teachers Are Cool as ICE,* takes up the conversation of relationship building and the importance of the teacher connection to student learning. "Inspire, Connect and Engage" are the critical actions discussed in this column that touts a formula for effective teaching!

Through Meissen's column, we look at reimagining education through the arts. Opportunities for students to safely "explore and experiment" are essential argues Meissen. And, those skillsets represent the "fundamental essence" of art education. Why then would we cut the arts when budgets tighten, she queries? Why indeed!? What role do, or should the arts play in reimagining education?

And, what is the role of leadership in "reimaging education?" Two articles offer a response.

First Lenarz, in *Establishing A Culture of Teacher Leadership to Attract and Retain Teachers,* looks at the role of teacher leaders in "reimagining education." Lenarz argues that "new and experienced teachers are seeking opportunities for leadership." She describes three ways to establish and maintain a culture that supports teacher leadership in this engaging article.

Second, McGee looks at leadership from teacher and community leadership levels to administrator leadership in *"Design Thinking 101: Reimagining Problem Solving Processes for Every Leader at Every Level."* McGee advocates that leaders at every level in education should apply design thinking practices to reimagine education and to "address some of education's most pressing needs." McGee discusses design thinking steps that include "empathy, define, ideate, prototype and test."

In this issue, our authors raise many questions and examine many issues that surface when considering the possibilities for reimagining education—a quality education for all—equitable education for each! What possibilities resonate with you? How will you "Reimagine Education" in your classroom, school, district, community, and state?

Reimagining Education in Illinois

By Darren Reisberg

Author Bio: Darren Reisberg was appointed to a four-year term as chair of the Illinois Board of Education (ISBE) by Governor JB Pritzer in February 2019. He has an extensive background in educational policy and higher education administration. He is currently vice president for Programs and Strategy at the Joyce Foundation. Prior to the Joyce Foundation he spent seven years at the University of Chicago, most recently as vice president for Strategic Initiatives and deputy provost and, initially with David Axelrod, as the first executive director of the University's Institute of Politics. From 2005-2012, he served as ISBE's general counsel and deputy superintendent overseeing the legal department and legislative affairs. He began his career in Chicago as an employment and labor attorney with Sidney Austin LLP after serving as a judicial law clerk for US District Court judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer. Darren Reisberg received his bachelor's degree in political science from Duke University and his JD from Yale University. He may be reached at darren.reisberg@isbe.net.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) relies on the voices of teachers to inform how we "reimagine education in Illinois." ISBE does not have lawmaking or appropriations authority; the agency sets the tone, direction, and educational priorities for the state, as allowed by law. Authentic engagement with teachers, families, and communities produces policies that are more effective and resilient, so wherever possible, ISBE ensures that its actions are informed and shaped based on the needs of and voices from the field.

Perhaps no one is more familiar with the need for and the power of advocacy than teachers. Teachers deeply understand how systemic racism and inequities in resources and opportunity impact children and families. This lived reality, translated into action, resulted in the enactment of the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act, a revision of the school funding formula, in 2017. This significant change to how schools are funded in Illinois is beginning to rectify what was the least equitable school funding system in the country.

To place this work in perspective, while Illinois is on the path toward adequate and equitable funding for all students, 81 percent of the state's students still attend schools in districts with inadequate funding. In this funding reality, improving outcomes for students is about identifying the levers to close equity gaps and directing investments toward those systemwide changes.

American engineer W. Edwards Deming stated, "Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets." A systemwide approach to improving student outcomes recognizes that achievement gaps are the result of inequities in how the school system is designed and operating. The work of reimagining education must occur in each school and district. We must ask: What does each student need in order to find and succeed in an area of

interest? Is our system set up to recognize, value, and meet those needs? If so, how? If not, why not? What types of change need to occur?

To this end, ISBE released a needs assessment tool last year aimed at helping schools identify systemwide needs – structures of leadership, family engagement, employee quality, governance, culture, and instruction that may be contributing to students being inequitably served. As our student population becomes increasingly diverse – racially, linguistically, and in terms of social-emotional needs and learning styles – equity must be at the heart of everything we do.

This needs assessment – called the Illinois Quality Framework and the Illinois Quality Framework Supporting Rubric – includes feedback from families and students as key pieces of data. Conversations with parents and community members can help identify the areas where change is needed, in addition to analyzing student performance data and other indicators. We encourage teachers to ask questions of parents and guardians about their perceptions of the school and what suggestions they may have to move closer to educational equity for all students. Equally, if not more importantly, ask students, too, and listen closely to their observations. How "student voice" is both collected and used is important in understanding the culture and climate of a school and refining it based upon the needs of those that it is intended to serve.

The idea of systemwide equity in the classroom ties directly into personalized learning – the practice of customizing instruction to meet each student's strengths, needs, and interests. I encourage new and veteran educators to investigate approaches to learning, such as competency-based education and blended learning, that affirm and create opportunities for students' different learning styles and paces. ISBE has written case studies on schools and districts implementing these effective and replicable practices at www.isbe.net/stories. What would these systemic shifts in your instructional approach require in terms of how you organize learning experiences and manage a classroom? How might shifts in instructional practice provide students even more space to investigate and discover areas of interest?

Equity in the classroom also includes cultural responsiveness. Culturally responsive schools and classrooms utilize our students' inherent diversity as an asset in working toward equity for every single student. Becoming culturally responsive means incorporating our students' values, intrinsic knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and preferred modes of representation to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for each student. Our increasingly diverse student body means all teachers must be able to engage students from all backgrounds. Doing so requires educators who are sensitive to students' differences and view them as assets upon which to build inclusive instruction and opportunity. Imagine that each of your students is a "bundle of assets." How might this vision of students impact how you think about their experiences, opportunities, and role in the classroom? Further, how might such a view assist you in your professional learning as a teacher?

Governor JB Pritzker recently signed an executive order to provide greater supports to schools in fostering safe and inclusive environments for transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming students. Cultural responsiveness includes LGBTQ identities. When I envision the future of public education, I see school environments in which all children are comfortable in their own skin, continue to develop into who they wish to be, and are – each and every day – welcomed, safe, and included in classrooms, in the halls, and in afterschool activities.

Educators increasingly play the role of advocate for students as they develop their sense of competence and confidence. Providing appropriate supports inside the classroom and advocacy outside of it requires that teachers reflect on their core values. When thinking about teaching, ask yourself, "Why do I do what I do?" Reflecting on these ideas with others provides a foundation from which common understandings form and lead to powerful change.

The process of reimagining public education must embrace many voices, including yours. Effecting change via advocacy can be as simple as sharing the good work being done in your school on social media or as formal as testifying before your school board, the State Board of Education, or the General Assembly. ISBE's role is to create the conditions that empower this transformative work to occur. We will continue to listen to what you need – what barriers you need removed, what guidance and supports you need delivered – in order to shape a more equitable future for all students in Illinois. Thank you for choosing to be an educator and for the important and essential work that you do.

Purposeful without the Pressure: Discussing Race in a Third Space with Female Teacher Candidates of Color Through Book and Movie Clubs

By Jennifer K. Shah & Cynthia Apantenco

Author Bios: Jennifer K. Shah is an assistant professor at North Central College. Dr. Shah teaches classes on topics of diversity and inclusion in education and is the faculty sponsor at North Central for Project L.E.A.D. (Leaders in Education Advocating for Diversity). She completed her doctorate at Loyola University Chicago. You can reach Jennifer at jkshah@noctrl.edu.

Cynthia Apantenco recently graduated from North Central College with a BA degree in social science/history and secondary education with a minor in psychology and is currently teaching social science at Yorkville High School. Cynthia is interested in social justice and teaching multiple perspectives in her classroom. You can reach Cynthia at cmapantenco@gmail.com.

Abstract

This case study examines the lived experience of three female teacher candidates of color as they participate in a voluntary book and movie club on the topic of race relations at a predominantly white institution in the Midwestern United States. This article discusses the potential benefits of third spaces (or spaces that exist somewhere between the professional and personal spaces on campus) created for female teacher candidates of color that foster open dialogue around traditionally controversial topics. Findings show that participation allowed for varied use and purpose of text by female teacher candidates of color and empowered them during further conversations on race relations. Female teacher candidates of color also shared the potential to feel heard in third spaces in ways that varied from their traditional classroom experience and their intentions of applying their new knowledge and experience to their future classrooms and school settings.

Introduction

Educational research is still exploring the unique needs of pre-service teachers who identify as women of color (Sleeter, Neal, & Kumashiro, 2014). Female teachers of color bring vulnerability into their teacher preparation classrooms because they are "both individuals and members of historic groups that likely possess the knowledge and experiences that are different from but complementary to those found in dominant society" (Brown, 2014, p. 340). Their unique cultural capital places them in a position to be racial brokers and cultural insiders simultaneously. When teacher candidates of color are not prepared to meet their vision and mission of social justice and equity in education, demoralization ensues (Santoro, 2014). Just like their peers, female teacher candidates of

color need time to grapple with critical consciousness and practical social justice strategies in the classroom (Pham, 2018) while examining their experiences in school through a critical lens (Kohli, 2014). The preparation of female teachers of color must include their unique positionality and power (Villegas & Davis, 2008), something that is often not happening in their multicultural classes which causes frustration, despair, fear, and ultimately leads to their silence in teacher preparation classrooms (Amos, 2010).

In addition to teacher preparation courses working on inclusive pedagogy in our classrooms, third spaces or opportunities outside of traditional classrooms should exist where female teacher candidates of color take the lead. Third spaces are already present (Soja, 2004) and serve as a middle ground between classrooms and personal spaces on college campuses. These spaces take a reciprocal approach to knowledge creation (Hallman, 2012) and aim to bring students' individual lived experiences to the forefront (Kirkland, 2010). In third spaces, "binaries are challenged and new possibilities and spaces for meaning-making are created (Hallman, 2012, p. 244). These intentionally created spaces allow for teacher candidates of color to share and build on each other's experiences and focus on peer learning (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015; Zeichner, 2010).

This study describes a third space created in conjunction with an existing student-led organization called Project L.E.A.D. (Leaders in Education Advocating for Diversity). Project L.E.A.D. is a statewide initiative in Illinois that focuses on the recruitment and retention of a diverse teacher candidate pool. Teacher candidates who participate in Project L.E.A.D. are called ambassadors. The third space described in this study involves a book and movie club attended voluntarily by Project L.E.A.D. ambassadors at a predominantly white, small liberal arts college in the Midwestern United States. The research question that grounds this work: "How did teacher candidates describe their experiences discussing race in a voluntary third space book and movie club?" After data collection, the research question included "female teacher candidates of color" instead of simply "teacher candidates."

Literature Review
Contemporary research speaks to the use of book clubs and movie clubs in third spaces with high school students, teachers, and teacher educators from Latino/a backgrounds and other marginalized populations. Boske and McCormack (2011) explored critical media literacy through a third space in their work with a Latino teacher and his 13 Latino/a high school students who met after school voluntarily twice a week for two hours with the goal of deconstructing norms regarding media messages. After viewing the Academy Award winning children's film, *Happy Feet*, through a critical lens, students were able to enhance their consciousness about how negative images of those from Latino/a backgrounds are portrayed instead of just viewing the film as "innocent" fun (Boske & McCormack, 2011). The study also found that deeply embedded student beliefs regarding the LGBTQIA+ population shifted during the study. Polleck (2010) echoes these findings in her study with 12 Latina and African American inner city high school girls as they participated in a

voluntary third space book club after school. The girls in the study chose their own texts and the literacy coach at their school loosely guided the discussion.

Findings of this study demonstrated that participation in such a space enhanced their growth cognitively and affectively as they used their cultural contexts to center the text within their lived experiences. Benefits included enhanced literacy and identity development as well as personal and social growth. Zavala and Henning (2017) describe the creation of a political third space by social justice educators for social justice educators in the southern part of Los Angeles. Teachers who participated in a teacher-led grassroots organization took part in reading circles and film screenings around the topic of colonizing ideologies. In addition to dialogue and intentional engagement with the text, teachers in this third space were able to discuss applications to their classrooms thus bridging the theory to practice divide. Finally, Suh & Hinton (2005) describe their work with teacher educators of color who participated in a voluntary book club as professional development. Findings from this study revealed that teacher educators of color were able to re-examine their beliefs and cultural attitudes in order to make better connections with the experiences of the pre-service teachers they prepare.

Scholars argue that media has the potential to simply "reinforce dominant social values" if it is not viewed through a critical lens (Duncum, 2009, p. 233). Students reported that their experience with films in their classrooms differed from their critical media literacy experience in the after school club and that the latter was much more purposeful and relevant to their lives (Boske & McCormack, 2011). While the literature in education is beginning to explore third spaces, third spaces that involve book and movie clubs specifically with female teacher candidates of color are still missing. The current study hopes to add to that conversation and answers the call to do this research as posed by Sleeter, Neal, and Kumashiro (2014).

The theoretical lens for this study utilizes the idea of social constructivism articulated by Vygotsky (1978) and built upon by Au (1998). Textual meaning making in this study is communal and the conversations that the teacher candidates had after the book and movie club are vehicles for transformation of their ideas of self, society, and social justice.

Methods
Female teachers of color serving as ambassadors brought up the need for a third space during a Project L.E.A.D. meeting in the fall of 2018. It is important to note that the author is the faculty sponsor for this club, serves as the primary investigator for this study, and identifies as a female teacher of color. The pilot study described took place during the 2019 spring term. First, Project L.E.A.D. ambassadors all read Chapter 8 titled, "Understanding the structural nature of oppression through racism," in the text, *Is everyone really equal?,* by Ozlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo (2017). Ambassadors voluntarily participated in a third space book club discussion with other ambassadors after completing a graphic organizer about the chapter individually (Appendix A). A month later, Project L.E.A.D. screened a documentary called "America to Me" by Kartemquin

films (2018) about race relations at nearby Oak Park/River Forest High School. A mix of ten teacher candidates including Project L.E.A.D. ambassadors attended the movie club and stayed for unstructured discussion after watching the first episode of the series.

Participants and method

The primary investigator then invited the four Project L.E.A.D. ambassadors who attended and experienced both the book club and the movie club to be part of a focus group to generate preliminary data. Three participated in this research, becoming the purposive sample population for this case study (Yin, 2009). Case study was the chosen methodology due to the ability to draw from rich narratives directly from participants. All three participants identify as female teachers of color from Latina and Mexican backgrounds and were juniors or seniors at the time of the study. Participants chose pseudonyms in order to protect their identity and all data was stored on a password-protected device owned by the primary investigator.

Data collection and analysis

The primary investigator facilitated a 45-minute focus group, which collected qualitative data (Appendix B). The primary investigator used Temi online software to create a transcript. The primary investigator and a participant researcher coded the data separately and then met to determine initial codes and themes in order to ensure reliability (Charmaz, 2006). Member checking the data allowed the other two participants to weigh in on the fidelity and accuracy of the findings that follow (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Findings and Discussion

Three major themes emerged in the data including a) Use and purpose of multiple forms of text for teachers of color, b) Advantages of third spaces for teachers of color, c) Impact of movie clubs on future teaching for teachers of color. Teacher candidates explained the advantages of critical book clubs and movie clubs and discussed the benefits of having third spaces available to them in their teacher preparation program. They also described how they would apply what they learned to their future classrooms.

Theme 1: Use and purpose of text

Text in this study refers to media written or oral and includes books and movies (including documentaries). Two subthemes emerged describing the use of scholarship and academic vocabulary as the benefit of book clubs and eliciting examples with human connection as a benefit for movie clubs. Ultimately, all participants agreed on the need for both clubs and identified their purposes as complimentary in third spaces.

Two participants discussed the value of having academic vocabulary defined in the book. Margarita noted that the terms and definitions in the text were more "straightforward" and even though she already knew what they meant due to her life experiences, she stated, "having a word or definition we can turn back to was really helpful." Margarita also noted that when it came to stereotypes that the book gave "explicit examples to

people who did not know what that was." Susana elaborated on Margarita's response by specifically bringing up the term, reverse racism, "Just finding words or things you already knew. So like specifically, 'reverse racism.' I know that this makes sense, but then finding scholarship for it and then later on I had a conversation with my friends and I referred back to that [referencing the term reverse racism]."

The concept of reverse racism was not new to Margarita and Susana, as they have experienced examples of it in their lives. However, having the term defined and named allows them to use it in conversation with friends or others who have less experience with this phenomenon. Defining what they mean as well as offering concrete examples from the book allowed female teacher candidates of color to feel more validated in their future conversations.

The third participant, Sofia, was attracted to the movie club because she preferred to "see it" rather than to read about it and found there was more emotional affect to the movie, "It was very interesting to see all the examples of…subtle racism or subtle stereotyping that were going on in the high school…that I didn't notice as much or didn't have like the awareness to see that when I was in high school." For Sofia, seeing examples of real lived experiences of high school students in the first episode of "America to Me" provoked her ah-ha moments. She explained that everyone watching the film had a similar shared experience and could discuss examples from the movie allowing difficult conversations about race to be more organic versus having less free flowing conversations based on the book text:

> And I feel like it's more difficult to have a conversation, especially if you are not an academic in an academic setting, using those words that the author had and it's all kind of higher level thinking and it takes more work for things to flow naturally rather than if, you know, it's the movie and the anecdote that you say, like 'when so and so.' When this argument was being made and constructed in this way, it's a lot more complex and harder for everyone in the club to *not* wrap their mind around it.

For Sofia, the communal experience of watching the movie together was an advantage because everyone "saw that character facing it in that moment" and everyone had some point of reference that was harder to dispute or disregard than if they had simply read the example in the book.

Examples from the book were more easily discounted than examples from the movie, according to Sofia. Susana supported Sofia's argument by adding that "reading is different than seeing something" and, although reading is seen as more "scholarly," the movie could speak more directly to others because "it's human," while the book text is just "words on a page." Ultimately, Margarita stated that the book and movie clubs each had advantages to offer and that "it's almost like you need both."

If female teachers of color find themselves in academic settings having academic conversations with peers and professors around issues of race, they find academic

language and vocabulary from the book clubs to be useful. On the other hand, more personal conversations about race with friends and non-academics needs more of a human touch. Female teachers of color were able to utilize the lived experiences of those they saw in the movie club documentary to make their points regarding race relations and inequities in education. Based on this finding, third spaces that focus on critical issues such as race should include multiple text dimensions for the maximum benefit to female teachers of color.

Theme 2: Advantages of third spaces for female teachers of color
All participants discussed the advantages of third spaces in their teacher preparation program. Two subthemes included, a) Disruption of the power dynamic of the classroom through freedom of speech, especially around peers and, b) Differentiated social justice learning. All three female teacher candidates of color discussed power relations in their traditional classrooms and felt that a social justice curriculum in their teacher preparation programs did not suit their needs.

Two participants discussed the power dynamics present in their classrooms and stated that they were more careful about what they said in class, not because of their professors, but more directly because of fear of future peer interactions. Margarita and Susana both describe their thoughts as female teacher candidates of color as they sit in class. Margarita is perturbed by possibly creating tension between herself and her white friends after class, which inhibits her at times from driving her point home during class. Susana questions her authority in that classroom and fears being labeled as stereotypical, "And so you talked about power dynamics with the people around you. Especially a person of color, there are white people all around, do I say this? Am I in my right to say this? And you don't want to be the typical person of color." Margarita commented, "In the classroom you have to be careful with what you say more or less, because whatever happened, the students sometimes…don't want to be part of that conversation. And then for you to say something…puts this sort of tension between you guys later. And so you have to be careful not to offend anybody even though sometimes you feel like you should push back."

On the other hand, Margarita explained that the voluntary participation in third spaces outside of the classroom allowed her to be her authentic self without worrying. Peers who opted into these conversations were more willing to be open during discussions about race, "Whereas with the book and movie club, I can say what I want because these people want to be here. These people are interested in talking about this and having a lot of them can at least relate to one thing that was going on in the movie. And even if they don't relate, they're having that empathy and they're willing to put in the work to have that empathy. Whereas in the classroom, you can't really do that," Similarly to Margarita, Susana described the advantage of the third space as "purposeful without the pressure." It is clear that Margarita and Susana felt more comfortable sharing their perspectives during the book and movie clubs rather than in class, even those they took with the primary investigator. Creating third spaces where female teacher candidates of color feel

less pressure to be themselves and state their point of view based on their lived experiences can create spaces that are more purposeful for them on primarily white campuses.

All three participants lamented that the social justice curriculum presented in their teacher preparation classes seemed geared to their white peers. This leads to frustration and boredom and has teacher candidates like Margarita wondering, "How can this benefit me if I already know this?" Sofia also pointed out that these conversations in class often led to teacher candidates of color teaching others based on their experiences and do little to further their own learning and development on the social justice spectrum. She states, "We don't have as much opportunity to learn about race because the conversations we have in the classroom are geared to those students who haven't explored it. So we have to go back to basics and then in the end it's trying to teach or speak up, whereas we're not able to further explore and read things like this [referring to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*]." Susana agreed with Sofia and added that she was in search of next steps as well and though talking to friends who had similar views was nice, it did not propel her own learning in any way, "Cause when you're with friends, sometimes it's like you're preaching to the choir. Like if you're surrounded by like-minded individuals, you're just saying the same things, yeah, we get it, but then what?"

All three female teacher candidates of color were in search of experiences related to social justice beyond what they were receiving in the classroom and their interactions with like-minded, equally social justice driven friends on and off campus. Instead of having all teacher candidates reading the same material, perhaps teacher educators can differentiate for social justice to meet the needs of female teachers of color in their classrooms. In addition, third spaces provide an option for female teacher candidates of color to explore social justice topics of their choosing and allow them to direct their own learning in this area.

Theme 3: Impact on future K-12 teaching
All three participants elaborated on the impact of critical conversations through third spaces on their future teaching practices. The theme here revolved around building a space for talk in K-12 classrooms and teacher preparation with an explicit agenda towards social justice teaching.

Susana perceived that students have a desire to talk and discuss critical issues, but that the current educational system often does not give them the time or space to discuss issues that are important to them, "Students want to talk, they do, and oftentimes we shut them down…they're aware that it's happening. So when you're stuck trying to fit into a book curriculum, you don't give them that option. When they are living it and they care, take advantage of it. Cause if you don't give them the space, you'll shut down the conversation." Susana stresses that if teachers do not capitalize on this desire for student talk there will be missed learning opportunities, as in her case. She goes on to lament about her own experience in teacher preparation and wished that she had been given the

tools to explore social justice issues more deeply. "Like me, yes we talked about it, but again, I didn't have the scholarship and the academic language on these things. I was not given the resources to fully explore or fully dive into it [social justice themes] as much as I wanted to." Margarita and Sofia describe the taboos associated with outwardly teaching towards social justice. Margarita questions why teachers are pushed to be neutral while Sofia suggests teaching social justice topics in a more clandestine manner. Margarita comments, "I think in your classroom you're not really allowed to do that or that's what they say you're not supposed to do. I think part of the issue is even the author is pushing an agenda, why can't it be anti-racism? Susana advises, "Don't be obvious about it, you know, plant those little seeds maybe with those students that you know are willing to listen or catch what you are alluding to, but it's not accepted to have it just outright."

Sofia elaborates on her comment by suggesting that students could watch the film *Zootopia* and have the lesson be about the literary elements as well as a discussion of equity by pausing and naming things in certain scenes. Sofia struggles when her mission and vision of teaching does not align with curriculum in her teacher preparation classrooms. She finds that her desire to teach towards social justice sometimes puts her at odds with her peers in the program:

> A big part of why I want to become a teacher was to help bridge those opportunity gaps. And then we get here [higher education], it's kind of like, let's talk curriculum. And yes, those things are important, but curriculum in this environment is different. Everything has it's context. I feel like because maybe my mindset is not like the rest of my peers, we don't connect as much and we don't see those connections in class."

It is imperative that teacher preparation programs support female teachers of color so that they can implement their mission and vision of teaching with fidelity in the real world; not doing so could result in demoralization as discussed by Santoro (2014). Often, teacher candidates receive the message that teaching is neutral and that agendas that cater to social justice are not accepted in K-12 public schools. Teacher preparation programs can work with teacher candidates to effectively teach towards social justice while meeting accountability standards so that social justice teaching does not have to happen only behind closed doors, as Margarita and Sofia suggest.

Limitations, Implications, and Conclusions
The small sample size is a limitation of this study, but the data collected is no less impactful. More can be done to retain our female teachers of color, like Margarita, Sofia, and Susana, and help them be the change they set out to be in the world. The road from tolerance to inclusion is long and arduous; why not create spaces that value the funds of knowledge and lived experiences of our female teachers of color?

The third space created in this study gave female teacher candidates of color time to grapple with critical consciousness (Pham, 2018) and examine their lived experiences with a critical lens (Kohli, 2014). Similar to Hallman (2012), a space for intentional meaning making was created, but in different ways as it related to the book club or the movie club.

Teacher candidates who identified as Latina had similar reactions to the first episode of "America to Me," as students did to "Happy Feet," in deconstructing the norm as it related to their educational experiences during dialogue and were able to use these examples in further discussions outside of this context (Boske & McCormack, 2011). Similar to the findings of Pollick (2010), teacher candidates shared cognitive gains such as learning academic vocabulary that they could also use to their advantage in academic conversations. Participation and communal dialogue through voluntary book and movie clubs centered around race relations also helped to combat the frustration and fear that teacher candidates of color often said they felt in their teacher preparation classrooms (Amos, 2010) and helped them think more about their mission and vision for social justice in their future classrooms, similar to the teachers in Zavala & Henning (2017).

Third spaces may be advantageous for female teacher candidates of color in predominantly white teacher preparation programs at small liberal arts colleges. Third space book and movie clubs do not require policy change in our schools of education and can be implemented in a timely manner. Future research can continue to speak to the benefits of on-going third space book and movie clubs in schools of education.

Top Five Primary Themes
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Representative Quotation:

_____

_____

_____

Draft a Debate Question:

_____

_____

_____

Picture Representation of the Chapter:

If I could ask the author anything…

Discussing Race in a Third Space with Teacher Candidates
Focus Group Script and Questions

Focus group script:
Welcome and thank you for participating in the focus group regarding your voluntary experiences with the book and movie club through Project LEAD. Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may decide not to participate in this research at any time or decide not to have your data included in the study. Your participation in this study does not affect your academic standing in the teacher preparation program at _____in any way. Please feel free to be as honest and as direct as you choose and know that your identity will be protected by the assignment of a pseudonym. All data will be stored in a password protected database accessible only to me.

At the beginning of the study I will ask you to identify your gender and your ethnic background because I believe they will contribute to the findings of this work. You may choose not to share this information with me and simply say pass.

I will ask a total of 12 interview questions and you may choose to answer any or all of them. Do you have questions for me before I begin?

Focus group Interview questions:

1. How would you identify your ethnic background?
2. How would you identify your gender orientation?
3. What did you learn by participating in a book club around the topic of race that you did not know before?
4. What did you learn by participating in a movie club around the topic of race that you did not know before?
5. What were the strengths and challenges of participating in the book club?
6. What were the strengths and challenges of participating in the movie club?
7. Which format did you prefer and why?
8. How would you describe learning about race in a "third-space" with third space being somewhere between class and your personal life?
9. What would you change about your experience with the book club or the movie club to make the experience more valuable?
10. Which format would you recommend to teacher educators and why?
11. Do you have any texts in mind that you would want to examine with other teacher candidates in a third space book or movie club?
12. As future teachers, would you utilize third space book or movie clubs? Why or why not?

References

Amos, Y. T. (2010). "They don't want to get it!" Interaction between minority and White preservice teachers in a multicultural education class. *Multicultural Education, 17*(4), 31-37.

Au, K.H. (1998). Social constructivism and the school literacy learning of students of diverse backgrounds. *Journal of Literacy Research, 30*(2), 297-319.

Boske, C., & McCormack, S. (2011). Building an understanding of the role of media literacy for Latino/a high school students. *High School Journal, 94*(4), 167-186.

Brown, K. (2014). Teaching in color: A critical race theory in education analysis of the literature on preservice teachers of color and teacher education in the US. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 17(3)*, 340. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2013.832921

Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Villegas, A. M. (2015). Studying teacher preparation: The questions that drive research. *European Educational Research Journal, 14*, 379–394. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904115590211

Condne, J., Sanders-Weir, R. (Producers), & James, S. (Director). (2018). *America to me* [Motion Picture]. United States: Kartemquin Films.

Duncam, P. (2009). Toward a playful pedagogy: Popular culture and the pleasures of transgression. *Studies in Art Education, 50*(3), 232-244.

Hallman, H. L. (2012). Community-based field experiences in teacher education: possibilities for a pedagogical third space. *Teaching Education, 23*(3), 241.

Ingersoll, R. M., & May, H. (2011). *Recruitment, retention, and the minority teacher shortage* (Research Report No. RR-69). Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Kirkland, D. (2010). Englishes in urban contexts: Politics, pluralism, and possibilities. *English Education, 42*(3), 293-306.

Kohli, R. (2014). Unpacking internalized racism: Teachers of color striving for racially just classrooms. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 17,* 367–387. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2013.832935

Miles, M.B.; Huberman, A.M., Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*, 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pham, J. (2018). New Programmatic Possibilities: (Re)Positioning Preservice Teachers of Color as Experts in Their Own Learning. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 45*(4), 51-71.

Polleck, J.N. (2010). Creating transformational spaces: High school book clubs with inner-city adolescent females. *The High School Journal 93*(2), 50–68. https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.0.0042

Pour-Khorshid, F. (2016). H.E.L.L.A.: Collective testimonio that speak to the healing, empowerment, love, liberation, and action embodied by social justice Educators of Color. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal, 10*(2), 16–32.

Santoro, D. A. (2011). Good teaching in difficult times: Demoralization in the pursuit of good work. *American Journal of Education, 118*(1), 1-23.

Sensoy, O., DiAngelo, R.J. (2017). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Sinner, E. (2007). Writing Workshop Meets Critical Media Literacy: Using Magazines and Movies as Mentor Texts. *Voices from the Middle, 15*(2), 30–39.

Sleeter, C. E., Neal, L. I., & Kumashiro, K. K. (2014). *Diversifying the teacher workforce: Preparing and retaining highly effective teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Soja, E. (2004). *Postmodern Geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Verso.

Suh, Y., & Hinton, K. (2015). Mirroring Ourselves: Teacher Educators of Color Reading Multicultural Texts. *Issues in Teacher Education, 24*(2), 23–42.

Villegas, A. M., & Davis, D. E. (2008). Preparing teachers of color to confront racial/ethnic disparities in educational outcomes. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & E. Kelly Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education* (3rd ed., pp. 583–605). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis and the Association of Teacher Educators.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Journell, W., & Buchanan, L.B. (2012). Rethinking "General Audience": A comparison of students' understanding of popular film in high school honors and general-level classes. *American Secondary Education, 41*(1), 31.

Yin, R.K. (2019). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zavala, M., & Henning, N. (2017). The role of political education in the formation of teachers as community organizers: Lessons from a grassroots activist organization. *Urban Education 00*(0), 1-27.

Zeichner, K. (2010). Rethinking of connections between campus courses and field experiences in college- and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(1–2), 89–99. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109347671

Video Games or Martial Arts?
An argument for standards based reporting

by Heather Komac

Author Bio: Heather Komac earned her B.A. in Mathematics from Lake Forest College and her M.A. in Education from Barat College. She has taught for the past 23 years at Lake Bluff Middle School, where she specializes in Algebra and Algebra 2. She is passionate about making learning meaningful, accessible, and lifelong for both students and teachers alike! She can be reached at hkomac@lb65.org

By the time our students reach adulthood, they will surely have played their fair share of video games. Most video games have the same basic structure - you complete a level to achieve some kind of point score at the end. There is some flexibility in how you complete the level, either by doing just what is needed to get through or looking for extra side quests to complete. No matter your choice, there is a prescribed way to get through the level that all players must follow, and you get to move to the next level whether you just do the minimum or take time to explore. While side quests add to your final score or perhaps earn you extra bonuses that you can use in future levels, video games are designed so that any player can "beat the game" simply by doing the minimum and move on without really needing to have mastered the prior level.

Think about how this video game experience compares with the traditional structure of schools. Students must complete each grade in school to advance to the next grade, with a system in place that defines the minimum needed for students to advance. Students are given letter grades as a final score, and they can make that letter grade higher by successfully completing extra tasks beyond the minimum. Students can get their D or C grade and move on without truly mastering the work. As long as they do what is needed day to day, turn work in, and earn the required number of points on assessments, they will move forward. Students leave our schools with the message that education is just a series of tasks to complete, that as long as they get the required points, they can move on.

This system encourages a focus in our classrooms on how to "beat the game." What must be done to earn the right number of points to get the grade? How do students make it through if they struggle with tasks like completing work on time, knowing that they will be penalized by losing points for each task not completed fully or on time? As a result of this focus, students are incentivized to learn more about how to manipulate the system to get points than to learn the knowledge and skills we are trying to teach. Students and parents alike obsess about those points, begging for extra credit to make up for low scores elsewhere or just to nudge that final score higher. Mistakes come with penalties, as all students who want that higher final grade must be able to reproduce the assessed skills accurately by the fairly arbitrary date on a calendar lest they lose points for even small

inaccuracies or lack of comprehension. As a result, student anxiety levels are reaching new highs while student learning and achievement continue to fall short in comparison with other countries.

Imagine what would happen if we change the motivating dynamic, as many schools have done, to have our schools reflect a system more like martial arts. When students begin a martial arts journey, they do so with a beginner belt level. Each belt level comes with a series of skills that students must master before testing for the next level. These skills are a mix of basic moves, combinations of those moves in a sequence, and applications of those moves in interactive drills. Class time is spent teaching a skill, then practicing that skill with plenty of instructor feedback. Belt tests are scheduled at various intervals, usually 2-3 times per calendar year, and students must have instructor approval to attend a test to insure that the students will be able to meet the basic requirements. Should the students demonstrate total mastery, they will move to the next color level. Should they demonstrate partial mastery of skills, they advance a little in their current color but then need to try again.

Now let's consider what the martial arts approach looks like in education. Schools that operate in a martial arts mode have shifted to standards based reporting. Each grade level comes with a set of skills that students are expected to master and descriptions for each skill as to what that mastery looks like. Formative assessment occurs frequently in the form of class activities and homework that do not "count" toward any final "grade." Only summative assessments, which happen after plenty of practice and feedback, are used to determine mastery. If students only show partial mastery of the skills, there will be a chance to try again later. Reports to students and parents give information on progress toward mastery of each skill rather than one single averaged letter, as well as reports on those basic student skills like turning in work, quality of work, etc. Students can see clearly their strengths and challenges, and their focus in the classroom is not on getting points but on what they need to do to learn and improve upon their challenges. The classroom becomes a safer place for students to make mistakes without penalty, to see mistakes as a chance to get feedback and refine their work. Anxiety levels drop because students are focused on achieving mastery over a longer period of time rather than needing to prove their worth after 7-10 days of practice.

It seems clear that a standards based model will change the learning dynamic from playing the point game to a mastery centered environment. Students will not have a vehicle by which to compare themselves to anyone, instead focusing on improving their own work. Teachers spend less time "grading" and more time guiding students along. Student differences in learning can be accommodated better, and teachers can truly use their professional judgment to assess where students are in their mastery journey. Letter grades promote comparison, anxiety, and a firm pathway to success. Standards open the door for students to learn, find themselves, and develop as people. It is the next step in education. Are we ready to take it?

Good Teachers are Cool as ICE!

By Heather Komac

Author Bio: Heather Komac earned her B.A. in Mathematics from Lake Forest College and her M.A. in Education from Barat College. She has taught for the past 23 years at Lake Bluff Middle School, where she specializes in Algebra and Algebra 2. She is passionate about making learning meaningful, accessible, and lifelong for both students and teachers alike! She can be reached at hkomac@lb65.org

We all went into teaching with the hopes that we could change the world by educating the ones who will take control of it. We all hope to be the teacher that students remember fondly, the teacher that can inspi**re** them to be successful. To achieve these hopes, we just need to be cool as ICE: **I**nspire, **C**onnect, and Engage.

Inspiring students is not trying to be those larger than life images from movies and media. Those characters are not realistic or sustainable – they are based on true stories at best, condensing great moments from an entire school year into a short story with entertainment appeal. A real teacher inspires in different ways at different times each day. Some days, you inspire students by sharing the love of what you do, sharing your passion for a specific subject you teach, or being excited about a particular lesson. The students can get caught up in your excitement and maybe find a nugget of joy in what they thought was going to be uninteresting. Other days, you can inspire students by being honest about your own motivation. I have told students upfront that today's lesson is not the most fun, but it is an important part of a larger picture and that we can get through it together. I have been honest on days when I am feeling sick enough to lack energy but well enough to be there, asking for their help to get our work done. I have owned up to mistakes, thanking students for catching them and pointing them out. Those instances of honesty inspire students by showing them that we all have down days and "failures," and that we <u>can</u> ask for help and persevere. The word "inspire" means to give people the belief that they can and want to do something. Sharing who you are, being honest with students, and being excited about your work will inspire them without the need for grandiose gestures.

Connecting with students is critical to helping them become learners. If the students feel that you care, feel that you value and know them, they will work harder for you (and for themselves). So how do you connect in meaningful ways with students? First, learn to properly spell and pronounce their first and last names. This seems like such a small action, but it shows you care to take the time to learn about them and that you respect them as individuals. Second, get to know something about each student. You can do this by offering vague problems in class that allow students to make choices. For example, you could give students a standard word problem about planning a banquet with a choice of two catering companies that comes down to one "right" answer. You could get as many copies of that right answer as you have groups, and you will learn virtually nothing about

the students themselves. Instead, just ask them to plan a party for their family. Require them to research two different catering companies, offer at least two different types of food, and expect them to minimize the cost. You will learn so much about the students and their families by listening to their choice of food type, whether they need vegetarian or gluten free food, and how many people they would feed. On the subject of food, another excellent way to connect with students is the dreaded lunch supervision. Jump at the chance! Many schools offer extra money for this duty, and you get a chance to see students in their social spheres. You can chat with students, remark on tasty looking leftovers, or discuss topics just for fun. You will see who sits alone, who are the friend groups, and how they all interact. Connecting with students can be as simple as greeting each one by name each day or respecting the pronouns or nicknames they choose to use. When you make these connections, you are treating students as people worthy of respect and care.

Engaging students is the hardest challenge of all. Most students don't walk into your classroom each day totally excited to do whatever you have planned, especially in middle school. Their brains are wired to be social and not always thrilled to work hard. You engage students by first understanding that they all learn in different ways and so you need to teach in different ways and offer multiple pathways by which students can show they have learned. The best tool to engage students is to become a storyteller. Every topic has a story, and if you have connected with students you can relate those stories to their lives and interests. When students complain about "why do we have to know this," remind them that there are two kinds of skills in our world – skills we will use in that form and "learning workouts." Think about an exercise workout. We all do sit-ups to get a strong core and be healthy, not because we need to do sit-ups in our careers. Most of the learning in school will be exercises that strengthen their "core" ability to learn. Explain that to them. Explain why solving equations involves the same logic as a first person POV video game. Explain why the scientific method is useful in any kind of problem solving in life. Discuss current events through the lens of historical patterns. This is how you will engage them in learning. Show them the value in what they are learning and they will be willing to work.

Teaching has become a far greater challenge than it ever used to be! Teaching used to be more about passing along stores of information, most of which is now accessible at our fingertips. Our mission is to teach students how to be learners, so that they can use the vast resources in their pockets to change the world. Inspire, connect with, and engage students in the journey and they <u>will</u> get there!

The Intrinsic Value of the often Marginalized Art Curriculum

By Ruth Meissen

Author Bio: Ruth Meissen was the 2008 Illinois Teacher of the Year. She is a 7th Grade Exploratory Art Teacher at Harlem Middle School in Loves Park, Illinois. She can be reached at iltoy08@gmail.com.

In a state as large and diverse as Illinois, there can be no doubt that the students who sit before us have the potential to do great things, to be leaders of their own lives and active participants in the communities where they will ultimately reside. In the largest to the most rural and modest schools, our students are challenged to respond in the learning environments we have prepared for them. As their teachers, we are privileged to be the ones responsible for delivering an educational experience for our students that will prove relevant and transformative. It must not only provide them with the skillsets needed to be successful in a world that is changing exponentially, but the curriculum we offer must generate multiple pathways for their future success. Our former students will be asked to address issues and solve problems that do not yet exist. They will be asked to pull from their knowledge base in order to fix the problems that we could not. With the task of preparing the students before us for a life in a world we cannot fully imagine, how can we be assured we are creating pathways that engage them in ways that will prove meaningful?

The answer, of course, is not crystal clear. However, only in a safe and creatively expressive learning environment can students begin to consider the value of society's past history and current realities while being challenged to offer viewpoints helpful in the future. By providing regular opportunities for engaging exploration and experimentation, students can learn how to think critically and evaluate new approaches. Through the process of reflection and analysis, each student can generate unique perspectives for shaping and reshaping their world. It is reassuring, indeed, to know that there is value added through articulating one's views and the contributions of one's ethnic heritage as vital to a respectful, engaging, and collaborative learning environment. Additionally, connecting experiential learning to previously learned content fosters a cross-curricular mindset. The ability seamlessly to navigate these essential skillsets will be necessary for our students to participate and work in an increasingly diverse global society. Though the description of such an educational setting may seem idyllic, it is in fact the fundamental essence of the often overlooked, comparatively devalued or considered non-essential, minimalized to the point of ending up on a cart art classroom.

Although the lens through which art programs are viewed is often skewed by the viewer's previous personal experiences, it is important to note that the state of Illinois has taken measures to provide a clear vision. Adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2016, the Illinois Arts Learning Standards for Visual Arts provides a template for a classroom setting designed to be democratic by nature. These learning standards clearly

define the pathways needed to make meaningful connections not only in the arts, but in other content areas as well. They also affirm what veteran art teachers like me have always known: the creative, cultural, and self-awareness learned through the problem-solving process of a rigorous and engaging art program opens student eyes to a new and meaningful world perspective. By allowing students to push the boundaries of their imagination, students learn new ways to think outside the box. As a result students pioneer new ways to explore, experiment, and take risks while spontaneously generating new, innovative, and meaningful connections with other subject matter. During a time when the stringencies of a standardized education dominates so much of our academic programs, the freedom of self-expression an art program provides is like recess on a playground for the mind.

As part of the creative process, artists and art teachers regularly generate pathways to share a vision or a message that will prove meaningful to others. Thus, for educators who teach other subject areas, the art teacher can be a valuable ally. When cross-curricular insights are shared with students, they not only reinforce what is being taught, but can provide a depth of interest and understanding that may otherwise be lost. This is especially true with visual and spatial learners who may struggle with language and numbers. An important lesson for teachers is to remember that art teachers are specialists in reaching these very students.

Just as researchers strive to gather, analyze, understand, and describe in order to make sense of the world around them, the same can be said about those who create art. All the components necessary for critical thinking are honed each day in an art classroom: observation, analysis, interpretation, reflection, evaluation, inference, explanation, problem solving, and decision-making. It reflects profound ignorance that a rigorous art curriculum is often the first thing to be trimmed or cut completely when school budgets tighten or when "remedial" programs are added. I would argue that the cost to our students by such action is far greater than any perceived gain. Last spring, a 7th grade student of mine wrote, "Art is expression. It's how students like myself can be comfortable showing feelings and thoughts through drawings and paintings as compared to words on a blank sheet of paper. It's what brings together students of different languages, cultures and race to enjoy and understand something without even saying a word. Art is a language." Though some may argue that it would be financially unfair to require all schools to include art programs as part of their curriculum, would we dare be so bold as to put a price tag on the voices of our students? Imagine a choir that included all the voices of the students from Illinois. Who would dare say to some, "You must sit this out. Your unique voice will not be part of this collective until your school can afford to do so?" How can this be perceived as fair, equitable, and non-punitive?

As teachers, we owe it to the students entrusted in our care to advocate for multiple and diverse learning experiences while continuing to create the pathways necessary for our students to connect with the content we teach. We can only strive to do this fully when we value the incredible resources we have in each other and the varied and essential disciplines we teach. In collaboration we can equip our students with the

skillsets needed for a strong foundation for their future. The time and energy spent now is our investment. Their success will be our legacy.

Establishing a Culture of Teacher Leadership to Attract and Retain Teachers

by Kelly A. Lenarz

Author Bio:

Kelly A. Lenarz is assistant professor of Education and director of Education Assessment, Innovation, and Traditional Undergraduate Programs at Trinity Christian College. Lenarz earned a B.S. from Trinity in elementary education and a M.Ed from University of Illinois, Chicago, IL in Instructional Leadership: Curriculum, Instruction, and Evaluation. She recently finished her Ed.D. in Ethical Leadership at Olivet Nazarene University. The topic of her dissertation was Leadership Preparation of Preservice Teachers. Kelly can be reached at kelly.lenarz@trnty.edu

Teacher educators are passionate about attracting, developing, and retaining the best teachers. In the significant work of preparing teachers, it is important to continually ask – What does it take to attract and retain a diverse, high quality educator workforce? How can we remove barriers while maintaining excellence in teacher preparation? How can we continue to support teachers once they are in the profession? The answer to these questions is teacher leadership. New and experienced teachers alike are seeking opportunities for leadership and meaningful careers. A professional culture built around teachers as leaders is optimal for the education profession and important to consider when addressing the current teacher shortage.

Teacher leadership is both a process and a professional stance through which teachers leverage their collective influence and expertise to positively impact student outcomes school-wide (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) throughout their careers. All teachers, whether in the profession for a long time or just a little while, benefit from teacher leadership. Teacher leadership development and opportunities support the common reasons most often cited for becoming a teacher such as making a difference, promoting life-long learning, and working in collaborative communities. As Bond (2011) argued, "Novices are expected to function at the same level as veterans in terms of instruction in the classroom and engagement in activities of the larger school community. Leadership from beginning teachers is implied" (p. 281). Unfortunately while new teachers enter the profession with leadership skills that need development (Angelle, 2017), experienced teachers often leave because they have not been afforded the opportunities to fully realize or practice leadership (Nordengren, 2016). Many of the reasons teachers cite for leaving teaching, such as isolation, stress, burn out, bureaucracy, and lack of opportunities, will be addressed in schools where teacher leadership is expected, developed, encouraged, and recognized.

There are three primary ways to establish a culture of teacher leadership. The first way is to support a continuum of teacher leadership. Research on the roles and positions of

teacher leadership illuminates how teachers can best unleash their leadership potential within and across their careers, through conceptualizing teaching as a continuum of leadership from teacher candidacy through early and mid-career all the way to advanced career. Teachers throughout their careers can capitalize on informal leadership roles, as well as formal roles and positions. Some of these roles may have titles associated with them (lead teacher, team leader, mentor teacher) while others do not. Some opportunities allow the teacher to remain in the classroom full-time or part-time, taking on hybrid leadership roles. Other opportunities move the teacher outside of the classroom into a full time non-teaching leadership position. The important thing to note is that teacher leaders are serving in a teacher leadership role and are not serving formally in an administrative role. Most individuals in teacher leadership positions and roles remain on a teaching contract, though they may be compensated differently or have a different contractual period.

The second way of establishing a culture of teacher leadership is through offering professional development in teacher leadership. Professional development in teacher leadership supports building knowledge and skills in areas such as how to lead change, adult learning, mentoring, coaching, peer observation, professional development design, action research, and other areas that are not part of typical teacher preparation or professional development. Continuous professional development in leadership should be as frequent as other types of professional development and can be embedded into existing models such as professional learning communities, coaching, and book studies. Professional development in leadership can also be accomplished through professional organizations that offer webinars, workshops, conferences, or graduate work in teacher leadership programs.

Despite numerous opportunities for professional development in leadership, teachers rarely participate. A more typical practice is for teachers to assume teacher leader roles with little or no preparation in leading their colleagues. It is essential when encouraging teachers to lead outside their classrooms to provide them with the necessary opportunities to develop leadership knowledge and skills. Similarly, just because teachers appear to be able to teach effectively and collaborate with colleagues they should not assume leadership positions without preparation or advanced study. Leading colleagues effectively is much different than being competent within a classroom of students. Professional development in leadership is important for all teachers, especially for coaches and mentors who work with new teachers, to support the successful induction and retention of teachers in the profession.

The third way of establishing a culture of leadership is through creating a lattice of teacher leadership that provides a variety of opportunities to practice leadership in formal and informal ways. While a continuum of teacher leadership can move teachers across boundaries, the lattice of teacher leadership allows teachers to experience different leadership roles at different points in their career, presenting a plethora of exciting professional opportunities. Each teacher's progression through this leadership lattice will

be unique because of the the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of the profession. The key is that when teachers have the capacity and opportunity to lead, they revitalize the school, impact student achievement, enhance the professional community, and build meaningful careers.

A culture of teacher leadership sets high expectations within a supportive system of professional educators. Not every teacher can or wants to take on the same (or perhaps even any) leadership role, but all teachers want to make a positive impact and work in collaborative environments focused on student achievement and teacher success. Schools in which teacher leadership is nurtured, from first year teachers to 31st year teachers, become places where teachers at all career stages find continuous opportunities for professional growth and meaningful work – thus attracting and retaining the best classroom teachers for their students.

References

Angelle, P. S. (2017). Leading beyond the classroom. *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management (CCEAM))*, *45*(3), 101-106.

Bond, N. (2011). Preparing preservice teachers to become teacher leaders. *The Educational Forum*, *75*(4), 280-297.

Nordengren, C. (2016). Teaching new dogs new tricks: Teacher leadership in the performance assessment for California teachers (PACT). *Issues in Teacher Education*, *25*(1), 91-106.

York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research*, *74*(3), 255-316.

Design Thinking 101: Reimagining Problem Solving Processes for Every Leader at Every Level

By Glenn "Max" McGee

Author Bio: In his 45 years in education Dr. Glenn "Max" McGee has served in every role from substitute teacher to Illinois state superintendent. Most recently he was superintendent of the Palo Alto (CA) Unified School District and is currently president of Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates, an educational consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, executive search and support, and student and staff wellness. He can be reached at maxmcgeehome@aol.com

Design thinking has solved many complex problems, in the process improving the human condition of thousands of people. Collecting water from cool night air in the desert, waterless toilets, third world "clean teams," mobile community clinics, and efficient emergency room procedures are just a few examples. Design thinking literature abounds with case studies of how organizations have used it to improve their products, work flow, results, and value to customers. Thus far, however, design thinking has not impacted education in any significant way. Seldom, if ever, does this topic appear in district professional development plans. With the magnitude and extent of problems our profession faces, the time has come to use this process at every level – from the classroom to the district – to address some of education's most pressing needs whether student engagement, recruiting and retaining staff, evaluating educators, or even to assuring student safety.

The Innovation Design Engineering Organization (IDEO) is generally credited with developing – or at least codifying "human centered design" into design thinking for education in 1978. IDEO notes, "we took up the phrase 'design thinking' to describe the elements of the practice we found most learnable and teachable—empathy, optimism, iteration, creative confidence, experimentation, and an embrace of ambiguity and failure." (https://designthinking.ideo.com/history). These elements essentially describe the design thinking process. Here is how they might be applied to education:

Empathy: This first step is arguably the most critical one. To make things better for students, we must be students of our students. To solve problems with staff, we must – in the words of Steven Covey – "seek first to understand and then be understood." (2013, p. 247) Too often teachers assume they know what is best for a child, a group, or a class; administrators too often assume they know what is best for teachers, students, and parents. The design thinking process emphasizes that we have to learn from students and staff. We do this through interviews, through shadowing, and sometimes supplement these lived experiences with surveys. When we sit with individuals or groups of students, teachers, or parents and ask them to share their perspective on a problem, we will gain significant insights. When we non-judgmentally shadow someone for a day,

we will begin to understand how the particular problem we are trying to solve impacts them.

For example, following a suicide cluster in Palo Alto, we spent hours during my time as district superintendent talking with students and listening to their take on this problem. What we learned about lack of sleep, homework, GPAs, and more resulted in sweeping policy changes that we would have never considered and which to date, have proven successful in fostering a more healthy climate and culture.

Define: After learning about the problem from the perspective of those most impacted by it, we optimistically attempted to define it specifically in words. We sought to envision the differences between causes and symptoms and constantly referred back to what we were learning. For example, when students told us about how little sleep they generally had, we asked ourselves to what extent factors – or combinations of factors - such as the start of the school day, omnipresence of technology, daily homework, extracurricular activities, jobs, college applications, family dynamics were root causes. The more we returned to listen to students, the more we understood the role of the school in sleep and what we could do to promote better sleep.

Ideate: Once problems are clearly defined and root causes at least mostly understood, the solutions begin with ideation. This phase involves generating multiple ideas for solutions and then prioritizing them. In this phase we often look to connect more than one idea knowing that the most complex problems require creative solutions and sometimes a hierarchy of them. This stage does not focus on getting the right idea, rather on generating a vast array of possible solutions.

In our extended example, we discussed implementing later start times, revamping bell schedules, limiting the number of AP classes a student could take each semester, eliminating grade weighting, capping hours of homework, dropping zero period (the class period before the start of the school day), holding parent education workshops, educating students about college admissions, sleep, and managing stress, and many more.

Prototype: This step involves actually making a product, developing and implementing a pilot project, or creating a policy, program, or practice to test market. This is the action phase when those engaged in the design thinking process literally test market their prospective solutions and garner feedback to improve them.

Test: The experimental prototypes lead directly into testing. In this phase we learn from our students and staff, accept failures and celebrate successes. Failures enable us to reshape prototypes – or abandon them in some cases - and successes encourage us to extend them.

To reach a solution to our problem of sleep deprivation in high school students, we created and tested many prototypes. Failures were educating students on the need for

more sleep; eliminating weighted grades (lost that on a split board vote); controlling technology access; and giving some student surveys on every class every semester. Successes were dropping zero period; changing the bell schedule – including lengthening passing periods – from a traditional to a block schedule; capping the amount of homework; not allowing freshmen to take AP classes; moving back start times; parent education seminars given by local experts; requiring the completion of time management; and mandating parents and students sign off when students wanted to take three or more APs per semester. From conversations with students and parents as well as some survey data, we found that these changes created a more positive, relaxed climate and culture in which student achievement continued at the highest levels and students simply said, "now I can get more sleep."

With the process is this case described, one has to ask if there are other examples of how design thinking can impact education? The "wobble chairs" finding their way into more and more classrooms are one example of a successful outcome. Getting fidgety students – especially boys – to focus, to engage, and to participate productively is a problem. Although traditional approaches had involved punishment, seating them near the teacher, using token economies or putting them with a partner to monitor behavior may have had limited success, a 2017 study presented at AERA known as "Freedom to Fidget" showed that wobble chairs – a product of design thinking – were effective in generating more class participation and more novel participation. In other words, having seats that moved fidgety students rather than moving their seats or punishing them increased engagement! Stanford researchers Marily Oppezzo and Daniel Schwartz (AERA, 2018) have further contributed to the research showing how the ability to move enhances focus and creativity.

Another example that is currently a work in progress involved having the entire administrative team select a student to shadow for a day. As a result of the shadowing and interviews with the students, empathy was built that led to developing a prototype for classroom observations that focused more on the student experience and less on the teacher's activity. When administrators took what they learned from the students into classrooms and shared their observations of students with teachers, we found teachers more amenable to trying new practices, less threatened by post observation conferences, and even more appreciative for their administrators' focus on students rather than trying to "fix" teaching. Currently, discussions between union and management are under way to revise the long standing and mostly ineffective system of observations and evaluation.

Design thinking holds exceptional promise for making a powerful difference in education, often at minimal cost. We know that as schools and districts begin teaching and then using this process to address their most critical issues, we will begin hearing more good news about the success of our schools. Let's get to it!

References

Covey, Stephen R. 2013. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic. 25th Anniversary Edition. New York: Simon and Schuster.   Web link: https://www.franklincovey.com/the-7-habits/habit-5.html

Oppezo, M.; Schwartz, D.; and Dohmen, I. (2018). "Freedom to Fidget." Unpublished paper presented at the American Education Research Association Annual Conference, New York, NY.