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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

A Message from the Editor:

Hello. My name is Dr. Thomas Knestrict. I am the new editor of the Ohio Journal of Teacher Education. I want to take some time to thank our departing editor, Dr. Mark Meyers. Mark took over the journal seven years ago and has faithfully and skillfully produced issue after issue in spite of being extremely busy as the director of the Education Leadership Program here at Xavier University. I want to thank him for mentoring me in my academic career and providing for me a wonderful example of how to be a man for and with others. I miss my friend already. But we all wish him good luck and Godspeed in his new adventure as the Dean of the School of Nursing, Education, and Human Studies at Robert Morris University in Pittsburgh, PA. Let's all pray Mark doesn't turn into a Steelers fan!

There will be some changes to the journal in the coming year. The first will be the solicitation of writing from our students. It is my hope that we all encourage our best student writers to consider writing about their experience in their teacher education programs and field placements. To prepare them to become scholars in their own right and to provide a place that gives them voice and opportunity to add to the discourse. I would also like to encourage people to submit book reviews. These would-be shorter manuscripts 3-5 pages and would provide all of us with a review of a current book in our field.

We have a new email address. It is OJTE@xavier.edu The change was made to facilitate the review process and to centralize the journal's operations. We are also looking for ideas for a possible thematic issue in the journal. Please forward me any ideas you might have. Lastly, we have two students helping with the production of the journal. Tim Ganshirt is a junior English major here at Xavier and he will be assisting me in piecing together the actual digital issues as well as final edits to the accepted manuscripts. I would also like to welcome Baoheng Ke, Bao is an education graduate student in our master's degree program. Bao will assist in the editorial duties including organizing and sending out manuscripts for review. I am very thankful for their help and support.

With this, please enjoy reading the Fall, 2020 edition of the OJTE!

Sincerely,
Thomas Knestrict





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Children's Literature: Learning About our Favorite Books

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Abstract:

The field of children's literature is vast. Teachers and students interact with various authors and illustrators to gain insights about reading, writing, and the world. They are inspired by the stories, recalling when they discovered a favorite character, plot, or lesson learned. We believe that students make a connection to authors and books for enjoyment, insight, and knowledge. And, these awed experiences begin from our earliest interaction with children's literature. Therefore, in this study, we sought feedback from students in two children's literature courses, one in the United States and one in Ireland. Specifically, we asked: Are there commonalities in children's literature book selections and student rationales between the two universities? Using qualitative research data, we identified the students' favorite children's books, why they selected that book, if there were any cultural connections, and then compared students' responses and books from each university.

The field of children's literature is vast. There are numerous books published each year, and teachers and students interact with various authors and illustrators to gain insights about reading, writing, and the world. They are inspired by the stories, recalling when they discovered a favorite character, plot, or lesson learned. We believe that students make a connection to authors and books for enjoyment, insight, and knowledge. And, these awed experiences begin from our earliest interaction with children's literature. The parent/child interaction and the storybook reading time bridge together these lasting memories.

How do we categorize these experiences? How do books shared at an early age become our favorite books? Have favorite book titles changed over time? Have themes and messages in these books transformed our thinking? We realize the field of children's literature has changed. Children's literature often reflected society and what was happening at the time. Since the beginning, books for children were not always available or appropriate in content or format. "Before the 17th century, children's books did not exist because children had not yet been invented. Kids dressed, worked, and lived like their adult counterparts" (Tunnel & Jacobs, 2013, p.80).

As the field of children's literature expanded, awards were created to honor outstanding authors and illustrators and there was an increase in published books, which gave way to the opportunity to put excellent literature into the hands of families and children. These changes have inspired authors and illustrators to continue to write stories that relate to children's experiences, interests, development, concerns, and their inquisitive nature, and often times, to become the new favorite story. Memories created by reading books, stay with us forever. As educators, we realize and embrace the significance of sharing good books with students and the long-lasting impact books make on our lives.

In this article, we will discuss favorite books and memories of students enrolled in a children's literature course at two universities, one in the United States and one in Ireland. This research was an extension of a previous project that examined literature circles and students' responses to reading the same novel from both universities. As part of that project, students from each institution created a video introducing themselves and sharing their favorite children's book. We were intrigued by their responses and formulated a plan to further investigate favorite stories that created favorable memories. Specifically, the research question states: Are there commonalities in children's literature books selections and student rationales between universities in the United States and Ireland? Using qualitative research data, we identified the students' favorite children's book, why they selected that book, if there were any cultural connections, and then compared students' responses and books from each university.

Literature Review

Guided by the research questions, we situated the literature review within three specific perspectives: constructivism, social justice and reader response. We felt it was significant to understand how students' knowledge and their past experiences may have shaped their responses, their identification of cultural connections, and their literary responses to texts.

Constructivism: Sociocultural Perspective

Constructivist theories of learning concentrate on explaining how individuals learn, come to know and understand (Bruner, 1961; Dewey, 1929; Piaget, 1980; Vygotsky, 1962). For constructivists knowledge about the world does not simply exist out there, waiting to be discovered, but is rather constructed by human beings in their interaction with the world (Gordon, 2009). Constructivism construes learning as an interpretive, recursive, non-linear building process by active learners interacting with their surroundings (Fosnot & Perry, 2005) whereby learners are provided

with opportunities and incentives to build on their own understanding and knowledge (von Glasersfeld, 2005). Learning is transferrable as learners create organizing principles that they can take with them to other learning settings and students learn by fitting new information together with what they already know (Olusegun, 2015). Thus, knowledge is not mechanically acquired, but actively constructed within the constraints and offerings of the learning environment (Liu & Matthews, 2005).

Moreover, within a social constructivist perspective, one's development and thinking are strongly influenced by the environment in which they grow up and one's knowledge construction is dependent on the interdependence of social and individual processes. Vygotsky insisted that cognitive growth occurs in a sociocultural context which influences the form it takes, and that many of a child's most noteworthy cognitive skills evolve from social interactions with parents, teachers, and other more competent associates (Vygotsky, 1999). Society is comprised of cultural patterns or social facts such as rules and habits which have a significant influence on individuals as they have the ability of becoming internalized by individuals (Durkheim, 1956). Individual development is derived from social interactions within which cultural meanings are shared by the group and then internalized by the individual (Richardson, 1997). Individual knowing subjects are themselves considered to be constructed out of social interaction and social discourse and the individual is thus him-or herself, a social product (Fox, 2001). It is through these social interactions and social discourses that learners develop their individual understandings and knowledge (Cambourne, 2002).

Social Justice

Social justice focuses on reconstructing society in accordance with principles of equity, recognition and inclusion and aims to achieve full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs (Adams & Bell, 2016). Social justice reconciles individual liberty and our collective identity for healthier interaction (Conklin Frederking, 2013). It requires confronting the ideological frameworks, historical legacies, and institutional patterns and practices that structure social relations unequally so that some groups are

advantaged at the expense of other groups (Adams & Bell, 2016). No pedagogy is neutral, no learning process is value-free, and no curriculum avoids ideology and power relations (Shor, 1996). Schools participate in maintaining unequal social relationships through curricular decisions that reflect particular political and economic interests (Cadiero- Kaplan, 2002). Additionally, literacy practices are part of social, historical, and political traditions privilege certain groups of people at the expense of others (Collins & Blot, 2003; Fairclough, 2003). These practices include choices of text that may reinforce the dominant literary canon, interaction patterns that support mainstream cultural norms, and textual interpretations that sustain dominant cultural ideologies (Comber & Nixon, 1999). Theorists assert that existing patterns of power and control are not fixed but are historical outcomes that can be challenged and changed (Giroux, 1988; Lankshear & Lawler, 1987; McLaren, 1988). Teachers are conceived as cultural workers as they have the potential to assist people to understand how things are organized to benefit the privileged in society (Freire, 2018). Examining and questioning the different imbalances and discriminations that exist at various levels of education can help illuminate the voices of the marginalized within the education system. Educators have an important role to play regarding developing awareness about social justice so as to enable one to acknowledge the differentials of power in society and seek to realize a more equitable, just, and compassionate community (Powell, Chambers Cantrell & Adams, 2001). They can promote social justice and democracy by acknowledging and challenging the influence that issues such as power can have on the education process. Furthermore, educators need to question the extent to which they may communicate hidden messages about their attitudes to different cultures in the classroom (Elton-Chalcraft, 2017).

Reader Response Theory

Reader response theory focuses on helping one to learn about their own reading processes and how they relate to particular elements in the texts read, and the life experiences and society in which one lives. The reader response theory questions the traditional notion of texts having a single meaning

for which authority lies with the author (Howard & Allen, 1989). Reader-response approaches have been found to enable students to begin to make personal connections between literature, their own lives and the world so as to help them to make sense of their world. It is premised on the belief that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text; rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature (Tyson, 2006). Thus, it emphasizes that reading is a transaction, a two-way process involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances (Rosenblatt, 1982). It suggests that many possible meanings of texts are constructed through interaction between textual characteristics and characteristics of readers themselves (Howard & Allen, 1989). Furthermore, it highlights the aesthetic aspect of reading whereby the reader draws on past experience with people and the world, and one's past encounters with spoken or written texts (Rosenblatt, 1982). Thus, the meanings or interpretations created by the reader are a reflection of the reader as well as the text (Mart, 2019). As this theory focuses on the individual reader's transaction with the text it argues that different readers come up with different acceptable interpretations of the text. Meaning is constructed as a result of the transaction between the reader and text as learners bridge the gaps in the text employing their previous knowledge and disposition (Iser, 1972).

Literary Elements

What's in a good book? How do readers define a good story? The transaction between the reader and the text can be different as they consider their likes and dislikes, what's appealing, and what sparks an emotional response. They approach a book, consider the story, character, plot, author's meaning, or memorable theme, and use these elements for their evaluation. Will the book's story weave a lasting memory because it was so good or the reader related to the character or the plot? For the reader, it's most likely about all of these elements, but also about the experience. We surmise that a good book works in tandem with the reader's response and the outstanding

literary characteristics. “A good book is one created by a knowledgeable and skilled author in which the elements of literature measure up under critical analysis” (Tunnel, Jacobs, Young, & Bryan, 2016, p.17). The literary elements are commonly used as criteria to evaluate literature.

We have long used a variety of accepted rubrics to evaluate the written word, and the evaluation process is still subjective, operating within the purview of these critical elements gives us common ground for making sounder literary judgements. For instance, style and language, character, plot, pacing, setting, tension, mood, tone, point of view, theme and accuracy are the literary elements most commonly examined in judging excellence in fiction (Tunnel, Jacobs, Young & Bryan, 2016, p.17)

Therefore, we use these criteria when talking about books and use the literary elements to frame how we engage in conversation about stories. Moreover, “the literary elements provide a way to heighten your awareness of literary criticism and provide a shared vocabulary for talking with children about books” (Short, Lynch-Brown, & Tomlinson, 2018, p.25). Readers relate to a character, an event or storyline that may or may not be similar to their own. “Children show what they think of books through their responses, but they are not born critics in the conventional sense” (Kiefer & Tyson, 2010, p. 9) Their experiences help shape their opinions; how the story made them feel, who was sharing in reading the author’s words or examining the illustrators pictures. As the reader interacts with text and reflects on the literary elements to respond to the literature, using the literary elements supports the reader response theory, constructivist perspective and aligns with literacy practices that are part of a social justice lens.

Methodology

This study occurred as part of children's literature courses at a mid-western Jesuit, Catholic university in the United States and a Catholic college in Ireland. The courses were taken during the spring semester 2019. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was any relationship between teacher candidates' favorite childhood books and their personal cultural background. We wanted to specifically investigate if there were commonalities in

children's literature book selections and student rationales between universities in the United States and Ireland.

To conduct this research, we sought Institutional Review Board approval, following the appropriate protocol. We created a survey that was administered using the Qualtrics software. Students were selected to participate in the survey because they were currently enrolled in a Children's Literature course at both institutions. Students were informed of the research project and completed the written and online consent form. Their participation was completely voluntary and did not have any impact on their grade in either course. Using the Qualtrics software, students' demographic information was collected: male/female, age, major; undergraduate or graduate status. The survey research questions included:

- a. What is your favorite children's book?
- b. Why is this your favorite children's book - please explain.
- c. State any cultural connections to your favorite book.

Data were collected from 119 (92 United States and 27 Ireland) students during the fourth and fifth weeks of spring semester. The students completed the question using the Qualtrics survey and then the researchers analyzed the data. First, we coded the responses separately, mining for specific themes. Secondly, we reviewed our codes and categorized responses based on those codes. As early childhood educators and professors in language arts, the themes emerged naturally, as they centered on the field of children's literature. We were interested by the responses made about the literary elements, storybooks, and cultural connections. Therefore, the data underwent content analysis, which can be defined as "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Our goal was to identify the patterns of responses by the participants. This data was triangulated between the researchers. This helped us to practice reflexivity in order to determine the students' responses and connections to children's literature.

Moreover, the data from both institutions were deductively analyzed, a process in which initial coding categories were identified from an established framework (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Data from the survey question number one responses were coded by title of the book. Data from survey question number two were categorized by the three themes that emerged: literary elements, self-to-text connections, and traditional or cultural connections. Data from survey question number three were categorized by using the definition of culture.

Culture is a way of life, the total human-made environment, the values and beliefs, the symbols, the interpretations, and the viewpoints of a given social group (Banks, 2008). Culture determines the way in which each person thinks, feels, and behaves". The culture of a group is evident through values, nonverbal communication, language, interpersonal relationships, dress codes, parenting, gender roles, social customs, and humor of its people. (Seefeldt, Castle, & Falconer, 2014, p. 177)

Specifically using this definition for culture, we labeled the codes as viewpoints and beliefs, values, and symbols. Additionally, some of the responses included more than one of the codes, and were coded thus. For example, students responded, "The characters in the book are at a similar age as that of the primary school child allowing for meaningful and personal relations/connection; I could identify with the children in the book as they were of similar age and social background to me; recommended by my favorite teacher. I loved animals and they were a big part of my childhood." These responses were coded as viewpoint and symbols. Although this caused much questioning and reflecting for us, we coded the responses in this way to be consistent in identifying the particular literary or cultural connections. The categories were indicative of the students' memories of reading children's literature and their interests and experiences.

Findings

Inductive Analysis/Findings

Creswell's (2013) constant comparisons methods was used to analyze the data collected in the open-ended survey questionnaire. Through a systematic process, patterns were discovered in the

participants' responses, organized by coding scheme, with frequencies in the data then coded by theme (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). While most participants were in the 18 to 22-year-old category, it was determined that participant age was statistically insignificant in regards to elements effecting the outcomes of this study.

Direct quotes from the participants are included in the analysis in support of the common themes, giving descriptive validity to the analysis (Mertler & Charles, 2011). The inductive analysis revealed subsequent trending themes for coding participant responses: Textual Connections [Why is this your favorite children's book?]; Traditions/Cultural Connections [State cultural connections to your favorite book]; Literary Elements; Symbols; Values; and Beliefs/Viewpoints.

The Choice of Favorite Literature Book during Childhood

The data collected indicates that "Green Hams by Dr. Seuss" and "Good Night Moon by Margaret Wise Brown" were among the top favorites. An analysis was done to examine the literature content of the top six books that were chosen by the participants. The results in the table below illustrate that finding.

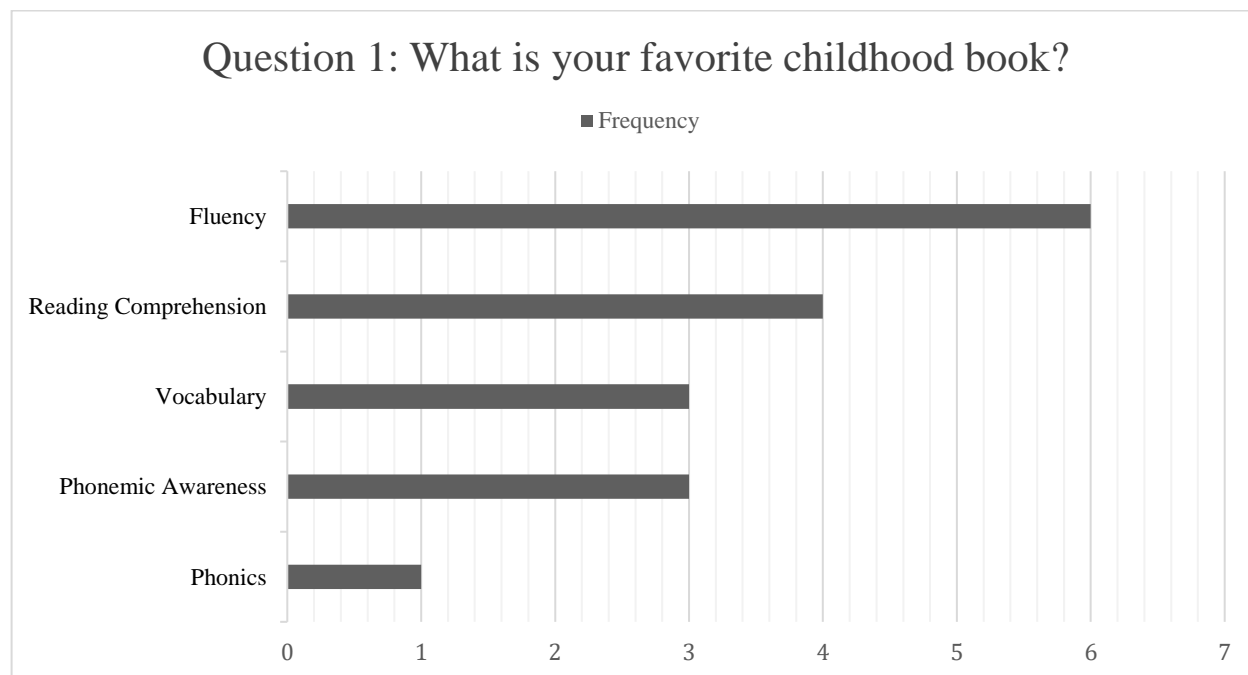


Table 1: Question 1-What is your favorite childhood book?

Fluency was the most common of six essential components for reading comprehension among the favorite literature books. Studies continue to support a social context associated with reading comprehension (Beck & McKeown, 2009). Reading comprehension is best developed as a dynamic social activity in which children read a text together with a teacher, parent, or adult, where they cooperatively construct meaning through conversation, which is often referred to as dialogic instruction. The participants shared their enjoyment of reading with their parents-for example- "My mom would read it to me every night before I went to bed when I was a child." National Reading Panel (2000) found that this seems to be the optimal situational context to enhance students' reading comprehension.

The Impact of Literary Elements on Participants' Section of Children's Literature

Amongst 119 participants, 54% shared that their favorite childhood book was impacted by the literary elements, 25% traditions/cultural connections, and 22% textual connections.

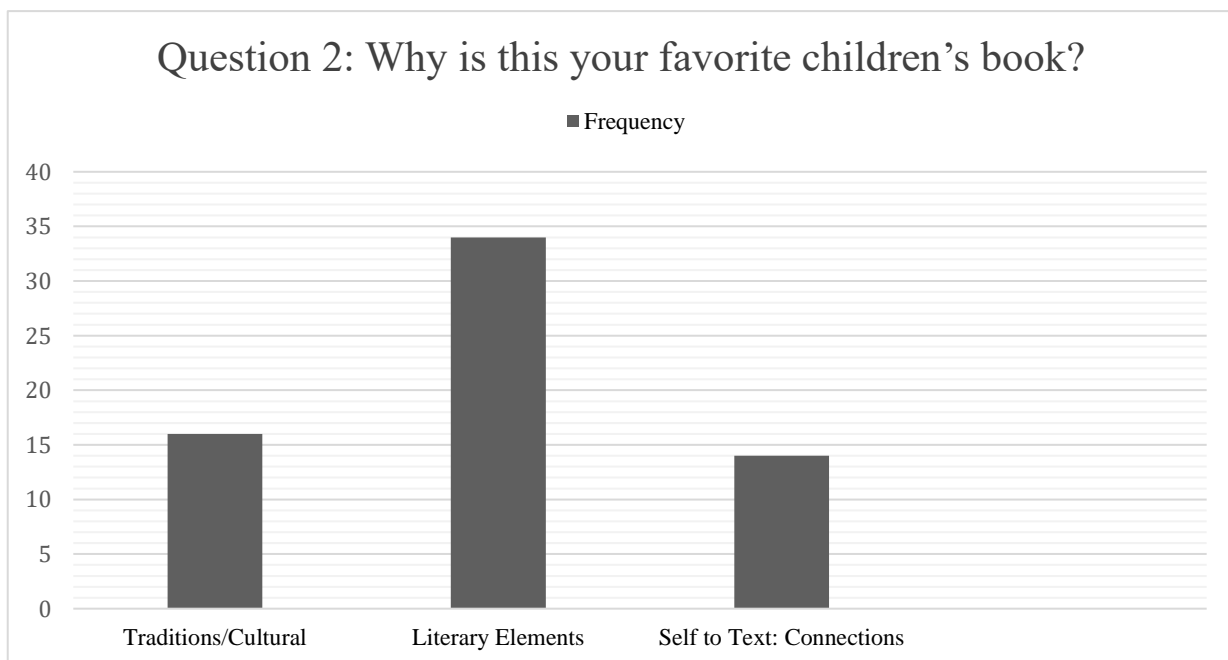


FIGURE 1 Question 2: Inductive analysis charts

Literary elements of character, plot, setting, point of view, and tone serve as the foundation of reading, which allow children to engage in the critical analysis of a story. Examining children's literature through literary elements equips the reader with deep understanding of the author's message and theme (Martinez & Harmon, 2012). Participants made specific references to their connections with the tone, characters, and plot.

"...a similar, predictable plot in each one, with many books in the series"

"...the plot was interesting and engaging for me"

"... This was my favorite children's book because I felt as if I really related to the character and humor in the book really entertained me."

"... My favorite books always featured Black girls as the main characters"

"...The problems that the main character was facing was very relatable"

"...it allowed me to use my imagination and felt as if I could relate to the characters"

"It was really interesting with well-developed characters, emotions and plot"

Cultural Connections to Children's Literature

"State culture connections to your favorite book's" data analysis presented some interesting high trending themes as it relates to the importance of symbolic connections with text by majority of participants.

Symbolic representation is defined in this study as an entangled web of meanings and values that include aspects of language, cultural and socio-historical references, processes of sense perceptions and cognition, and a politics of display (Minkov, 2013). The symbolic representation captured the themes of age, family, and location among the participants. Culture is defined as a group of people who share a common program which consist of symbols, language, beliefs, values, and artifacts (material objects) that are part of a society through a systems of communication (Minkov, Hofstede, & SAGE, 2013).

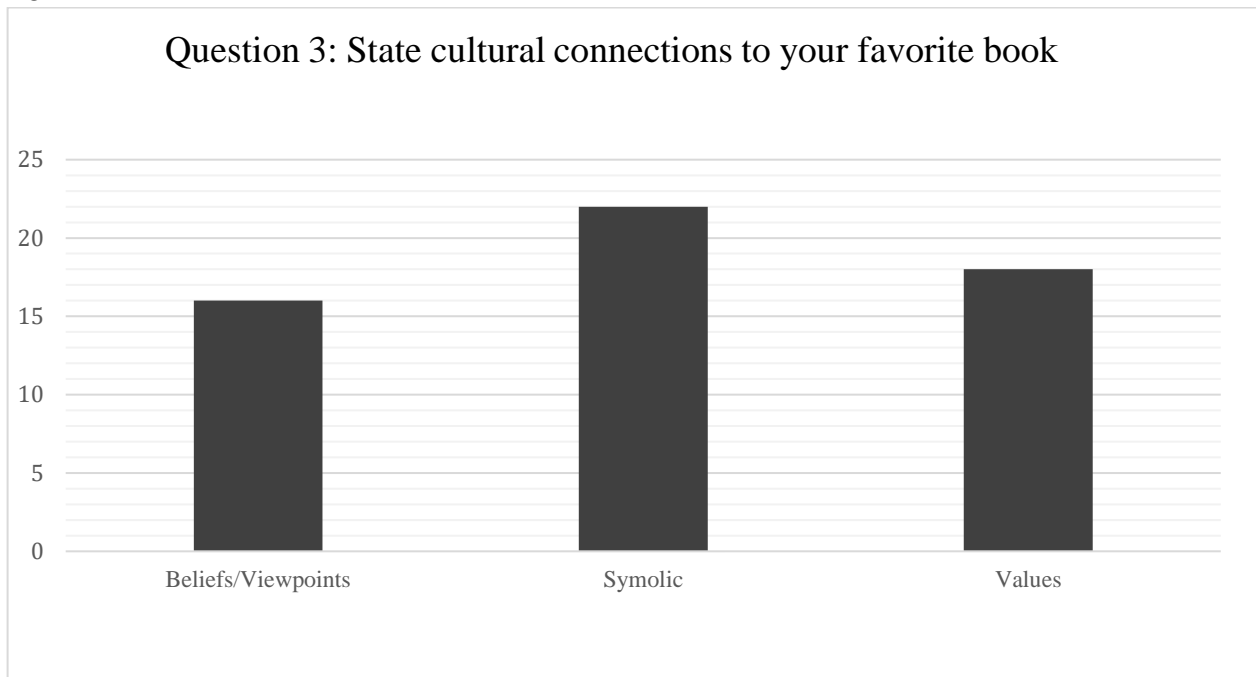


FIGURE 2 Question 3: Inductive analysis charts

According to recent sociology studies, symbols make up one of the five key elements of culture, the others being language, values, beliefs, and norms. Culture plays an essential role in influencing people's beliefs and behaviors, culture is a key concept to the sociological perspective (Minkov, 2013). Current studies in sociology suggest that structural components of our societal norms impact how our perceptions and how we define culture (Patterson, 2014). How do these findings impact cultural connections perceptions among higher education students in this survey? Do the structural components of our societal norms influence our thoughts and perceptions about culture?

Interestingly, 42 of 119 participants stated there were no cultural connections to their favorite children's book. When the data is disaggregated by participants' location -in the United States of America or Ireland, it displays a rather significant difference in response. 40% of Americans participants noted no cultural connections to their favorite children's book whereas 27% of participants in Ireland had no response regarding the relevance of cultural connections. The chart

below reveals that USA higher education students and students in Ireland viewed cultural connections differently.

Cultural Connections to Children's Literature

USA Higher Education Participants	Ireland Higher Education Participants
<i>"I'm Black and the book is a Zimbabwean version of Cinderella."</i>	<i>"Immigration in family"</i>
<i>"Dr. Seuss has been a very popular American author and I have read a lot of his books!"</i>	<i>"La Bella figure is set in Italy where my mother is from, it's nice to read about a place with which you are familiar. The little house in the prairie is set in rural America, and growing up I had an interest in how people from rural Ireland grew up."</i>
<i>"I grew up in the suburbs of California and my mom said she liked the book when she was a kid as well"</i>	<i>"My favourite children's book was given to me by my Grandmother and reminds me of my own childhood with my cousins and contained elements of my own childhood and I enjoyed reading about family."</i>
<i>"I don't think I have a cultural connection; my parents just knew I like animals."</i>	<i>"I could identify with the children in the book as they were of similar age and social background to me."</i>
<i>"No cultural connections but the main character and I were the same age."</i>	<i>"The story is based on a family's story during the Great Irish Famine. Which is a big part 'my of' Irish history and therefore, relates to my culture as an Irish person?"</i>
<i>"I have no cultural connections to this book."</i>	<i>"Think this may have a connection to America but I cannot think of any other cultural connection."</i>

Table 2 Cultural Connections: Inductive analysis charts

In the roots of Ireland's history lies religious division and ferocious conflict among Protestants and Catholics. There is evidence in the recent psychological research studies that show children growing up in Northern Ireland acquiring knowledge about cultural differences at a very young age (Marriott, 1998). Likewise, in the United States, children are conscious of differences and, by pre-school, they have started absorbing the spoken and unspoken messages of racism,

sexism, classism, homophobia (Derman-Sparks, Edwards, & Goins, 2020). By age three, American children begin to develop "artificial blindness" which keeps them from recognizing, acknowledging, and appreciating important differences (Derman-Sparks, 2020).

The results provide insight into the relationship between participants' favorite books and the personal cultural background. There was only one similar book chosen among both universities, which were Dr. Seuss' books. In examining question 2 - "Why is this your favorite book?" the similarities were more prominent and visible in the data that illustrates the literary elements among the top themes to emerge. Our findings indicate that there were some connections between literary elements and participants' favorite books. When investigating the cultural connections, the participants in Ireland showed a higher percentage of interrelatedness between their favorite book and cultural connections. The interrelatedness was much lower among United States participants. This study suggests that among Americans, participants were more evasive and made less cultural connections. More research is needed to determine how social class, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion might impact their understanding of cultural context and the role literacy plays in different family types in the United States and Ireland.

Conclusion

The primary goal of the present study was to determine commonalities in children's literature books selections and student rationales between universities in the United States and Ireland. We know that books have the distinct ability to enact our senses and create lasting memories. And, books come alive because of our experiences. It was evident from the participants' responses that those lived through experiences were lasting ones. As the Reader Response theory purports, participants' reflections about books, being there, feeling the book and the calling up those memories were because of their transactions with the book. The rationale for calling up those memories often related to the social experience. As educators we recognize the importance of this

engagement as a significant aspect of reading. We acknowledge the social nature of reading and how the memories of being read to or with sparked responses from our participants.

Moreover, we were awed that students spoke of the literary elements as a way to frame their experiences. How their memories of the stories' characters, plots, themes were the elements they remembered. For example, "*it allowed me to use my imagination and felt as if I could relate to the characters*" and "*It was really interesting with well-developed characters, emotions and plot*". Sipe (2002) states,

Children respond to stories in various ways. They may seek to understand a story through analyzing its plot, setting, characters, or theme—the commonly called "narrative elements" of the story. To understand a story, they may also compare or contrast it to other stories they know; other cultural products like movies, TV programs, and commercials; or visual "texts" like paintings (p. 476).

We recognized the dialogic discourse that occurred and how the recognition of the literary elements deepened the lasting effect of the experience on the reader. Teachers can use this knowledge in selecting books that appeal to students and promote before, during and after discussions that focus on the literary elements. These interactions are key to enhancing comprehension and promoting that love of reading. Teachers can have a significant influence regarding pupils' expression of response as a result of their ability to manipulate the classroom context (Hickman, 1981) and as a result can have a strong influence on pupils' response (Mart, 2019). Consequently, teachers have a profound effect upon assisting or hampering reader response in discussions of literature as a result of the instructional approaches employed and literature selection which impinge upon the quality of learner response (Mart, 2019).

Furthermore, choosing high-quality children's books, ones that expand students' experiences and broaden their cultural understandings, is a critical undertaking for teachers. Students need to see themselves in the books and stories that they read. However, a most

interesting finding of this study was the differences between the participants' responses and their recognition of cultural connections with their favorite stories. It was evident to us that educators need to be cognizant of the culture, values and/or beliefs that are being transmitted and available to children in the classroom and acknowledge that students come from differing cultural and social backgrounds. Educators also need to be mindful that children bring differing previous knowledge and prior experiences to the classroom many of which can be in conflict to that communicated in the classroom or through the texts used. For us as literacy educators, we want to delve more deeply into these favorite storybook memories, explore the cultural connections and possibly also have a lasting impact on our students through the books we share.

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Teacher Education During the Pandemic: Developing Meaningful Assignment

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Abstract:

Just as education preparation programs were getting set to re-imagine their early childhood programs to accommodate the license band change, the unimaginable occurred. In this article we discuss how one pedagogy team of professors developed an online pandemic portfolio assignment in place of a clinical experience that was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The assignment components are broken down and explained in terms of what teacher candidates were required to complete, including a student sample. Implications are discussed that include further development of a teacher toolkit and learning the value of collaboration.

Teacher Education during the Pandemic: Developing Meaningful Assignments

Teacher education preparation is currently in an era where calls are urging for “education of teachers in the United States to be turned upside down” (NCATE, 2010, p. ii). As NCATE and CAEP found common ground advocating for change, it is safe to say something as erratic as a pandemic was not what they had in mind. Preparing undergraduate students to take on the challenges of assuming the responsibilities of becoming the primary classroom teacher is a monumental task at any time. As educators, we must strategically consider ways to help candidates participate and respond to obstacles they may encounter (Fairbanks et al., 2010; Young et al., 2017), as those obstacles tend to arise on what seems like a daily basis.

Yet, attempting to prepare them for what may lie ahead in something as challenging and unexpected as a world crisis, in this case the COVID-19 pandemic, seemed to be incomprehensible. Like every university around the nation, our university chose to complete the Spring 2020 semester virtually. While the shift required a lot of re-thinking and re-imagining of courses, for most of our courses the shift seemed manageable for “traditional” face-to-face courses. However, at the heart of many of our courses is a significant clinical experience that allows our candidates to find strong connections between theory and practice (AACTE, 2018; CAEP, 2015; Lipp & Helfrich, 2016; NCATE, 2010). We quickly found ourselves perplexed and struggling to find a comparable meaningful experience that would allow our teacher candidates to get the same opportunity they could no longer have.

Teaching is complex because it’s unpredictable (Young et al., 2017). That notion could not be more authentically real than now. As we assume many schools did the same, we immediately thought of utilizing instructional videos as the alternative to our clinical experience component. While we did in fact choose to use that as one instructional approach, we knew that candidates needed something more authentic, timely, and useful. Moreso, we acknowledge the very

challenging time this had on our mentor classroom teachers and wanted to create something to support them in this unprecedented time.

As a result, we chose to develop and create a pandemic portfolio that required our teacher candidates to take on the role of classroom teacher. Effective teachers must realize almost every situation is different and they must apply professional knowledge differently (Fairbanks et al., 2010). With this assignment, our teacher candidates were challenged to think outside the box and develop a resource that could benefit many.

The purpose of this article is to describe how an early childhood collaborative team of professors adapted coursework to ensure continued professional development and strong pedagogy for their teacher candidates in place of a field experience that was abruptly halted. In what follows we briefly describe the context and clinical experience, breakdown the assignment, and describe a few of the outcomes.

Understanding the Pedagogy Blocked Courses

Capital University's Elementary Childhood Education [ECE] licensure program consists of a pedagogy block typically taken in the student's junior or senior year of classes. During this semester, teacher candidates enroll in four distinct pedagogy classes for the semester, focusing on the core content areas: language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. Each class is worth four credit hours and candidates spend one hour and forty minutes of face-to-face time in each section two days a week. A candidate has no other classes that semester unless they occur in the evening, so that when their field placement begins, they can stay the entire day at their elementary placement schools. The schedule was purposefully made and seen as advantageous for many reasons. It reinforces the goals and objectives for teacher candidates set forth by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards [InTASC], and clearly aligns with the instructional goals of the pedagogy block set by the Capital University Teacher Education Program Goals [TEPG]. Many similar

themes can be seen among these three organizations' goals for future teachers. Content knowledge, instructional knowledge, partnerships, and professionalism are a few areas obvious at first glance.

Another reason this type of schedule and assignment is advantageous for teacher candidates is because of the many areas of collaboration that take place within this model. The *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* defines collaboration as working “jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor.” In this schedule, four different professors teach each content-specific pedagogy. These professors meet on a regular basis throughout the semester to integrate instruction, coordinate assignments and due dates, and to grade common assessments in the pedagogy block, such as the candidate collaborated Unit Plans, and each teacher candidate's individual research project. One of the core theories of the ECE education is interdisciplinary learning [IL], teaching that draws from two or more disciplines (Strober, 2010). The professors of each content model IL for the candidates in the pedagogy block with integrated assignments, field trips, and activities, and expect candidates to exhibit IL in projects like the Unit Plan, where they use multiple contents to connect to the same topic/theme. In return, this benefit both candidates and teachers. Research has shown the connection between quality teacher collaboration to improve student learning (Ronfelt et al., 2015).

Clinical Experience

As discussed above, teacher candidates spend the first eight weeks of the semester in the university setting, in order to gain the necessary pedagogical skills and tools to enter the teaching community of practice (Bouchamma & Michaud, 2011; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The remaining weeks of the semester, teacher candidates are immersed in a clinical experience (AACTE, 2018; CAEP, 2015; NCATE, 2010). This clinical experience, the prelude to a semester long student teaching placement, supports the teacher candidates as they learn to apply, connect, and understand the knowledge gained to the authentic and in-the-moment practice of everyday teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Lipp & Helfich, 2016). Paired course and field experiences allow candidates to

better explain, defend the importance of, and feel confident teaching skills while developing a base of knowledge (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016)

We operate the clinical experience under the clinical practice definition offered by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2018): “Teacher candidates’ work in authentic educational settings and engagement in the pedagogical work of the profession of teaching, closely integrated with educator preparation course work and supported by a formal school-university partnership. Clinical practice is a specific form of what is traditionally known as field work” (p. 11). While the elementary program as a whole provides candidates with several opportunities to engage in clinical practice, this particular experience is seen as the steppingstone for formal student teaching. Moreso, we strategically place candidates in an urban placement, as other experiences provide them opportunities in a variety of contextual settings. This urban setting, which many of our candidates would not choose on their own, allows our teacher candidates to begin developing skills, strategies, and differentiation techniques when it comes to working with students from diverse populations (Lave & Wenger, 1991; NCATE, 2010).

Teacher candidates are placed in an urban elementary classroom five days a week, Monday through Friday, for at least six weeks. During this time, candidate’s work closely with the CT (CAEP, 2015; NCATE, 2010), who has agreed to mentor and support the learning of the candidate throughout the experience. Each pedagogy course professor is responsible for supervising several of the teacher candidates during their placement, the number fluctuates with the enrollment during any given semester. Therefore, the clinical experience is navigated by a triad: the teacher candidate, cooperating teacher, and the university-based teacher educator (AACTE, 2018), which mirrors the student teaching experience.

The university-based teacher educator works closely with the members of the triad to provide the candidate with more opportunities to lead instruction, other than during the action research. Most often, teacher candidates take part in weekly instruction, do daily read alouds, take

over a small group, and work one-on-one with students during their time. The university-based teacher educator along with staying in constant communication with candidates, observes the candidate teaching at least two times. As AACTE suggests, “clinical practice offers a lens through which to understand the problems of practice that currently face the profession stemming from factors such as demographic changes, poverty, and teacher shortages” (p. 8).

The Assignment

As a team we designed the assignment entitled, *Pandemic Portfolio*. For the assignment, teacher candidates were required to develop an online resource portfolio, utilizing the G-suite applications (i.e. Google Docs, Google Sheets, etc.) and other available technology. Using this outlet allowed for all stakeholders- professors, teacher candidates, and cooperating teachers- to have access to the compiled resources. Each candidate was to find and develop activities, resources, and technology games that met standards for all four content areas. Five components were required: (1) activities and skill practice, (2), technology resources, (3) read aloud, (4) take home letter, and (5) reference page (the full description of the assignment can be accessed at: <https://rb.gy/xpnhm9>).

Along with the handout, teacher candidates received video instructions that walked through, step-by-step, the requirements of each component and the expectations. A rubric was also included for full transparency of expectations. Teacher candidates were given two weeks to complete the assignment and develop quality work. Below we discuss the key components of the assignment and the expectations for teacher candidates (sample student portfolio can be accessed at: <https://rb.gy/xxp3g8>).

Activity Descriptions

For this part of the portfolio, teacher candidates were asked to find five activities for each content area for a total of twenty activities in all. These could be but are not limited to online laboratory activities, investigations, mysteries, or WebQuests. Several requirements ensured relevance and rigor of the activities. As seen in Appendix A, teacher candidates must align content

standards to each activity, and great emphasis is placed on why the teacher candidate selected each activity and what skills it reinforces. In addition, teacher candidates must list differentiations needed for gifted students and students with special needs to ensure that learning is tailored and rigorous for all students. Finally, teacher candidates must discuss assessment, and how they could measure their students' improvements from this activity, and what documentation they could show to administration and families of students justifying the use of the activity.

Technology Resources

With the new technology demands of the 21st century (Karchmer-Klien & Shinas, 2012), along with the unique pandemic situation, learning how to utilize technology resources was an important component that needed to be included. For the purposes of the portfolio, teacher candidates were asked to locate five to seven (free, no cost) online activities, games, or practice pages for students to complete while at home. Candidates needed to ensure that the resources they found not only had students work on various skills but needed to include resources across the four main content areas. Teacher candidates need to find different resources that introduce a variety of activities for students to complete that are both age-appropriate and support increasing amounts of rigor. Once compiled, candidates organized their resources into a chart in which they not only shared the links, but also explained the rationale for choosing the activity, listing the target skills, and a brief summary of what students must do. Teacher candidates must include directions for each activity in student-centered language that students could read and understand or that could be read to students.

Read Aloud

Read alouds are a staple in every elementary classroom and is known to be one of the components of balanced literacy instruction (National Reading Research Center, 1997). For this component of the assignment, teacher candidates were required to choose a picture book, in a content area other than language arts. This was purposefully selected again to reinforce the concept

of IL discussed earlier. Candidates were asked to develop authentic and meaningful discussion questions that would require students to really think deeply about the text and topic before, during, and after the reading. Once they had written a brief lesson plan, teacher candidates were asked to record themselves doing the read aloud and pausing to have students thoughtfully reflect on their discussion questions. This recording and lesson plan were uploaded to their Google Drive portfolio.

Take Home Letter

Once the resources for the portfolio had been compiled, teacher candidates were asked to write a letter that thoroughly explained the contents of the portfolio. This letter, aimed at supporting parents, guardians, and families, was to support successful completion of the assignments and activities of each individual. Additionally, the letter allowed candidates to share a bit of comfort with families and remind those students that they would continue to be a comfort and support during such a challenging time.

Reference Page

As with anything we ask our candidates to do, a running list of references was required. While necessary, it also provided an easier way for candidates to share the resources with each other and begin developing a repertoire for their future teacher toolbox. Each candidate finished the semester with access to their own pandemic portfolio, plus that of eleven other portfolios.

Implications

As education preparation programs develop courses and experiences, supporting teacher candidates as they learn to deal with the challenges that come with every day teaching is foundational. More importantly, and timely, we found ourselves authentically applying the notion that every teaching day is different and effective teachers must learn how to apply their content and pedagogical knowledge effectively in order for learning to occur, no matter what (Fairbanks et al., 2010).

As Heredia (2011) proposes, methods courses are critical for developing competency, so in the midst of a pandemic, we realized that we quickly had to develop activities and assignments that were authentic, meaningful, and appropriate. With the implementation of the pandemic portfolio, we found that it was well received by teacher candidates and they were appreciative for the opportunity. Below we discuss the two main outcomes: (1) teacher candidates were able to develop and add to their teacher toolbox; and (2) teacher candidates learned the value of collaboration and gave back to their CTs

Developing a Teacher Toolkit

Research suggests that coursework and experiences must provide a teacher-centered approach in order for candidates to take charge of their own learning (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000). At the heart of the pandemic portfolio was candidates becoming classroom teachers who were also trying to navigate the challenges and newness of doing virtual learning. While being critical of video teaching moments can be beneficial, we wanted something that allowed candidates to go beyond that and put themselves in the role of the teacher.

Zeichner (2005) suggests that exposure to varying instructional strategies and activities supports the development of a “teacher toolkit” candidates can use in the future and when they begin teaching. These opportunities, as with the pandemic portfolio development, allow candidates to learn how to plan instruction, implement effective practices, and analyze student learning. The work candidates created, although very specific to the current climate of online education, was indeed beneficial resources and material they could apply to their future classroom nonetheless. Through the hands-on experience candidates received, they continued the development of a framework to reference in the future (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

As Putnam and Borko (2000) suggest, learning is situated in practice and the more experiences candidates get to try out lessons, the more opportunities to learn and become more

effective. Since candidates could not be in the classroom for the hands-on experience they would have otherwise partaken in, this seemed to be the next best thing.

Collaborating and Giving Back

John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) stated that successful learning relies on the interactions of a learner with someone who has more expertise. With all our clinical experiences our teacher candidates get time to work with their cooperating teachers, who have more experience and expertise, to support their skills and development. Additionally, co-teaching, which we encourage, has arisen as an instructional format that allows for differentiation for learners and consistent support for teachers (Daoud & Frank, 2015). Unfortunately, with the move to online learning, we found that our teacher candidates were no longer able to observe and work with those experts. Through the portfolio, candidates were able to do a version of co-teaching by creating resources for their CT to use right away. The work they did, including finding activities and a read aloud, were easily accessible and ready to use.

Furthermore, the pandemic portfolio assignment supported the development of teachers who can successfully problem solve (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) and work collaboratively with their cooperating teachers (Singh & Richards, 2006). Despite being virtual, teacher candidates learned the value of co-teaching and collaboration with each other. By utilizing the G-suite format, not only were teacher candidates working with their CTs, but they also learned the value of working with each other- by providing resources all could use in the future.

Lastly, the use of the portfolio allowed for us to continue our partnerships with individual teachers, schools, and districts. As our partners often give us the time and opportunity to place our teacher candidates, we found this resource as a way to give back. This interaction created an avenue for communication and collaboration and helped build stronger, reciprocal relationships (Parsons et al., 2016). As often referenced, strong communication and collaboration are vital for resiliency of

partnerships (AACTE, 2018) and we hoped the pandemic portfolio was a small token of our appreciation in a time of challenge and difficulty for our partners.

Conclusion

As we reflected upon the results of the graded Pandemic Portfolios, there was a group consensus about potential changes to assignment in the future. First, teacher candidates could create a general theme or focus on given standards. Themes could be situation-based, such as “A Day at the Circus” or centered around a particular subject, like “Maps” in order to integrate all content areas. Second, teacher candidates could meet online with their peers in groups and present their portfolios to each other for peer review. Looking at this assignment from both a student view and a teacher view could help them reflect more fully upon improvements. Lastly, you could set up a “teaching moment” between the teacher candidate, the university supervisor, and the CT to teach to the students during. Based on this lesson, both the US and the CT synchronous class time. This gives the teacher candidates experience teaching a lesson online, which as online education grows, would only be an asset.

Knowledge happens over a continuum, therefore developing highly effective teachers in short preparation programs can be quite challenging (Scales et al., 2014). Furthermore, teaching is multifaceted and very complex (Young et al., 2017). Oftentimes as a program we reflect on the experiences that will be most meaningful and impactful for future teachers. While teaching during a pandemic may be a once in a lifetime occurrence, the development of assignments that are authentic and purposeful will always be a focus. Through the pandemic portfolio assignment, we were able to provide our teacher candidates with an experience, though no match for the clinical experience, that closely mirrored the practice-based opportunity they would have received had they been in the classroom.

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Walking Alongside Our Students: Renewing Our Teaching Commitments

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Abstract:

This essay is an exercise in renewing one’s teaching values and commitments using texts that promote anti-racism, teacher activism, and listening and learning to and from our students. Using the scholarship of William Ayers (2020), Bettina Love (2019), Crystal T. Laura (2014), Margaret Wheatley (2002), and others, the author narrates the process of re-affirming the values and commitments that govern her “teaching life” (Ayers, 2020). Through the sharing of a recent conversation with a novice teacher, the author recounts her own lessons learned through experience and literature. In turn, she encourages teacher and teacher educators to do the same.

I recently had a conversation with a young teacher in her second week of teaching. She is a recent college graduate, and I had the pleasure of getting to know her during her student teaching experience. I asked her how it was going, bracing myself for her answer. After all, we are in the midst of a global pandemic and are experiencing social and civil unrest. Teaching is hard in any year, but being a first-year teacher in 2020 has proven to be a daunting task.

Her response was that it was the hardest thing she had ever done, *but the most worthy thing she had ever done*. She continued by sharing what a privilege it is to work with students and *to walk alongside them in life*.

To walk alongside one's students in life is a privilege. What struck me about the way this young teacher phrased her answer was the brilliant intuitiveness of knowing that we, as teachers or teacher educators, must walk *alongside* our students. We must create a space where the power dynamic does not tilt in our favor, but rather a space where we can learn and grow *alongside* our students. I am constantly reminded of Freire's (1998) found "there is no teaching without learning" (p. 29). He says, "To teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge" (p. 30). This production or construction of knowledge is an endeavor that is accomplished *with* and not *for* one's students.

So how do we, teacher educators, emphasize the idea of *walking alongside our students in life*? How do we emphasize that teaching is "ethical and intellectual work" (Ayers, 2020, p. 4) and that there is a *worthiness* in our pursuits as teachers, a worthiness that calls us to rise to the occasion, even in the midst of a global pandemic and racial strife? One important factor for motivation is finding *purpose* (Pink, 2009). Finding purpose and knowing that the work of teachers is an ethical pursuit can help us find clarity in our ever-changing profession and world.

Williams Ayers (2020) asks us, "How [will] you... live your teaching life?" (p. 5). His advice is this:

Name as clearly as possible your commitments, spell them out so that you have a handy list to post on the bathroom mirror, a list to consult each morning as you prepare to dive once more into the everyday classroom contradictions. (p. 5) In making this list, he tells us “to think deeply, reflect fully” (p. 5).

In all of my years of teaching high school students, I have created a yearlong value or theme, one that I would post on the wall for the school year. I chose the value or theme for varying reasons each year. Sometimes the value matched the societal climate, urging me to remember that my students are *a part of* our community and experiencing the world in different and unique ways; other times the value would be an attempt to hone my pedagogy, reminding me to keep the students at the center of my practice. Regardless of the catalyst for my yearlong theme, I tried to stick to it, returning to it after a tough day or week, an attempt to center my intentions. After reading William Ayers’s (2020) words earlier this year, I wanted to revisit my practice of selecting a value or theme. Selecting a single value, though, is not enough. I believe that an exercise of uncovering our *purpose*, of verbalizing our commitments, of remembering that teaching is “ethical and intellectual work” (p. 4) is essential as we work to impact pre-service teachers and *walk alongside them* on their journeys. Using the work of scholars Bettina Love (2019), Crystal T. Laura (2014), and Margaret Wheatley (2002), I recently spent time articulating my own teaching values and commitments; through this, I hope to model to my pre-service teachers the ethical and intellectual work of a life in teaching.

Showing Up

Teachers are called, in big and small ways, to *walk alongside* their students. This requires teachers and teacher educators to engage in allyship, to value their students, and to show them that they matter. As I began this exercise, honing my teaching values and commitments, I couldn’t help but think about the young, first year teacher, and all teachers, and how they might rise to the

occasion of teaching in the middle of a global pandemic and polarizing racial strife. I thought about the big and small situations that occur both inside and outside of our classroom walls that require teachers to *show up* for their students.

In the spring of 2018, I read about an incident in a downtown Philadelphia Starbucks where an employee called the police because two black men were sitting in the coffee shop without having ordered anything; they were waiting for a friend. The men were handcuffed and arrested. A bystander took a cell phone video of the scene, and it instantly went viral. The incident was one of many “While Black” occurrences that year, incidents that highlighted the implicit biases so many white Americans hold. Brandon Griggs (2018) catalogued many of these events in his article “Living While Black.” Each time a “Living While Black” incident unfolded, the value of allyship became more and more clear to me. I liken being an ally to the idea of “showing up.” We can walk alongside our students when we *show up* for them, when we emphasize that they *matter*, that they are important, that they each deserve joy and love.

As teachers and teacher educators, we must show up against racism and injustice; it is our ethical obligation to show up in this way for our students. In her book *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, Bettina Love (2018) teaches us that abolitionist teaching calls us to work “in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools” (p. 2). One way to practice abolitionist teaching and to show up for our students is to speak and act in ways that assure students that they matter (Love, 2018). Mattering buoys the essential need we all have to feel seen, heard, and loved. And when we see, hear, and love our students, we are showing up for them and showing them, they matter.

Making the commitment that we will *show up* for our students in the face of racism and injustice is important; it is also important to show up in small ways for our students. I began the

practice of giving my preservice teachers and graduate students verbal feedback on their assignments.

I use an audio recording feature after I read their reflections or listen to their recorded discussions and tell them what resonated with me, what I want to know more about, or how they might extend their thinking. Recently, a group of my graduate students was discussing the work of bell hooks. bell hooks (1994) writes that “a professor must genuinely *value* everyone’s presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes” (p. 8). In my students’ conversation about value, they discussed the verbal feedback I leave for their reflections. One of the students said that she felt, for the first time in her “graduate life” that her work was valued and that she, in turn, was valued because she was able to listen to specific feedback. How simple is that? We can spend time reading our students’ reflections and leaving them a one-minute audio recording of our feedback, and this act can give students a sense of value. This simple act of showing up, of showing students they matter and are valued, is one way that I *walk alongside my students* in life.

Standing Up

When we practice teaching as an ethical and intellectual endeavor, we are taking on the role of teacher activist. The word “activist” often causes a polarity. *Activism* gives some a vision of burning bras and picket lines. But I have learned as a teacher and a teacher educator, that being a teacher activist can be as simple as asking a question in a staff meeting or putting pen to paper when it is time to *show up* for our students. Crystal T. Laura (2014) says that teacher activists “do not see a neat split between their work and their lives. They take both too seriously to allow such separation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other” (p. 82). She says that “what teacher activists are after is social justice” (p. 82). Teacher activists are constantly working for

“equity in outcomes for students, schools, and the wider community” (p. 81). So, along with my commitment to *showing up* for students, I also want to make sure that I *stand up* for them.

When I was growing up, an unspoken rule of our house was to not talk about money, religion, or politics at the dinner table. We just didn’t talk about it. Because of my upbringing, it took me a long time to be able to voice a concern, any concern, as an adult, as a woman, as a teacher. I am what many would refer to as a *rule follower*. I was a successful student, and my early teaching years followed in the same vein. I followed the rules, and I didn’t ask questions; I didn’t make others uncomfortable. In

her book *Being Bad: My Baby Brother and The School-to-Prison Pipeline*, Laura (2014) shares her “vision of love, justice, and joy in education” (p. 75) to give the reader a sense of her values and of her commitments as a scholar and teacher educator. When I read Laura’s (2014) book several years ago, it was as if there was an awakening that shattered my idea of simply following the rules, of closing my door and just teaching my students. I realized that I was missing out on the opportunity to give my students a sense of love, justice, and joy when I did not challenge the systems all around us that perpetuate inequity.

Walking alongside my students as a teacher activist means that when a new policy or a new program is introduced at my school, I think immediately of what that might mean for student learning and well-being, for our school community, or for those in our community who are most marginalized. It means that when I am selecting texts and materials for my classes, I am intentional about being “responsive to their identity and cultural backgrounds” (Laura, 2014, p. 83). It means that I should follow the same adage I tell my students: “when I see something, I should say something.”

Let me share a contemporary example that a fellow teacher activist recently shared with me: at a recent staff meeting at her high school in which guidelines for remote learning were being reviewed, she made a decision to ask questions and to draw attention to elements of the guidelines

that might be inequitable for many of her students. There was a “remote learning day” quickly approaching, and the district wanted to make sure all policies and procedures were disseminated and understood by the staff. Much of what is happening in schools right now is constantly changing and is being created on the fly; there is no precedent. So, as my friend listened to the meeting (via Zoom), the school directives for remote learning were of particular concern to all involved. The first directive from her school was that all students needed to be logged into Zoom at the synchronous start time of all their class periods or else students would be marked absent. The teacher activist immediately took to the chat feature to ask questions. She asked questions like, “How can we assume that all of our students are going to be able to access Zoom all throughout the day?” (She pointed out that this assumption is deeply rooted in privilege.) She asked, “If our policy in our district is that older siblings (in grades 7 and higher) are to share devices with younger siblings (in grades 6 and lower), how can we expect them to be the sole user of that device all day?” She commented further, “How can we be assured that all the households in our district have access to Wi-Fi that can appropriately support multiple family members?” Finally, she asked, “How will teachers who also have young children in the district manage the requirement of supporting their own children online?”

In the world of “no money, religion, or politics at the dinner table,” this teacher activist’s courage is especially notable. But when we commit to this ethical and intellectual endeavor, the commitment to value, *standing up* for our students in big and small ways is how we provide love, justice, and joy. The questions that the teacher activist posed to her school administration caused them to take pause. They began to critically assess the guidelines they created, making adjustments and doubling back. This teacher activist was not rude; she was not polarizing. She showed up and she stood up, prompting more equitable policies and decisions. I wonder how the world might be different if teachers consistently did these things, and, in turn, students consistently experienced and

benefitted from this kind of activism. What if students consistently had someone showing up and standing up for them? Imagine how empowered they would be.

Listening and Learning

In articulating my teaching values and commitments and reflecting on my “teacher life,” I can’t help but acknowledge how much I have to learn, and how I can learn so much through listening. In her well-known essay “Willing to be Disturbed,” Margaret Wheatley (2002) teaches us that we have to engage with a “new and strange ally—our willingness to be disturbed. Our willingness to have our beliefs and our ideas challenged by what others think” (p. 34). She tells us that this can be accomplished through curiosity and listening. She says:

We have the opportunity many times a day, every day, to be the one who listens to others, curious rather than certain. But the greatest benefit of all is that listening moves us closer. When we listen with less judgment, we always develop better relationships with each other. It’s not differences that divide us. It’s our judgments about each other that do. Curiosity and good listening bring us back together. (p. 36)

I was a part of a book club in the fall of 2019 at my university. We read *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi (2016). I opted to listen to the book on my daily commute. Each day as I embarked on my 25-minute commute, I became more and more cognizant of how much that I didn’t know, of how much that I didn’t understand, of how much that I had blindly accepted. The events of the spring and summer of 2020 only serve to reinforce my awareness that there is an incalculable amount I simply cannot fully comprehend, and that listening is the most poignant remedy. It has become increasingly clear that it is vital that I continue to listen and learn, on a daily basis, and that I must embrace a “willingness to be disturbed.”

When I engage with my pre-service teachers, who will engage with their own students and learn about their lives, about their cultures, about what gives them joy, and about what feeds their spirits, it is important that I *listen and learn*. Walking *alongside my students* requires curiosity: “Curiosity is what we need... We [do] need to acknowledge that their way of interpreting the world might be essential to our survival” (Wheatley, 2002, p. 35). As I consider the ethical and intellectual pursuits of teaching, I feel compelled to acknowledge that holding on too tightly to one’s beliefs and limiting one’s perspectives to only one’s own, can be damaging. Crenshaw (1989) teaches us about intersectionality and about acknowledging the intersections of our students’ cultural identities. Learning about how our students’ cultures and identities, and their intersections, might influence their lives, experiences, and perspectives is paramount in our attempts to co-construct knowledge in our classroom environment, *walking alongside them*.

In my recent efforts to renew the values that guide my teaching life, I was reaffirmed, through various experiences and texts, that the ethical and intellectual work of teaching is an incredibly worthy path, but to blindly follow this path without the constant examination of context, environments, communities, curriculum, and self can lead to a dead end. *Walking alongside* our students—showing up for them, standing up for them, listening and learning from them—is a worthy endeavor. I invite all my pre-service teachers to engage in this exercise of articulating their commitments and values, of finding their purpose.

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A Portrait of Faculty Associated with TESOL Programs in Ohio

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Abstract:

The purpose of this report is to paint a portrait of faculty associated with TESOL programs at universities in Ohio, using publicly available data. The research question is: “Who are faculty associated with TESOL programs at Ohio universities in terms of gender, multilingualism, international and/or domestic studies and/or work experience?” The findings suggest that TESOL faculty are predominately female, monolingual, with master’s and doctoral degrees obtained from domestic universities and with domestic work experience. All faculty who have international or international and domestic degrees work at public universities and faculty who are bilingual also work mostly at public universities.

Keywords: faculty, TESOL, Ohio, universities

The number of English learners (ELs) in U.S. schools have dramatically increased in the last decades (U.S. Department of Education, 2014) and in Ohio (Ohio Department of Education, 2012). U.S. and Ohio public school teachers are predominantly white females (Taie & Goldring, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2012) and not representative of the U.S. student population. Colleges of education in Ohio struggle to recruit diverse teacher candidates for their programs (Andrei, et al., 2018) and nationwide data show that college faculty are not very diverse either, being mostly white (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

We know that teachers can have an impact on whether their students will choose a career in teaching (Bianco, Leech, & Mitchell, 2011; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Scott & Rodriguez, 2015). A large number of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) teachers worldwide are “non-native” speakers of English (Braine, 2018), but there is no state or nationwide data on who the faculty associated with TESOL programs at universities are. Anecdotal evidence suggests that TESOL faculty are diverse in terms of language and country of origin.

This study is part of a larger study of faculty associated with TESOL programs at U.S. universities. The purpose of this report is to paint a portrait of faculty associated with TESOL programs at universities in Ohio using publicly available data. Names of specific universities and faculty are not shared to protect their identities.

The research question is: “Who are faculty associated with TESOL programs at Ohio universities in terms of gender, multilingualism, international and/or domestic studies and/or work experience?”

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected from publicly available sources from June to August 2019. Data was collected from all the universities in Ohio that fit our specific criterion: randomly selected 4-year institutions. The researchers created a code book and coded each of the variables in an Excel spreadsheet. The variables identified, such as type of university or faculty work experience, are categorical, and each of the categorical variables contains at least one level. The codebook was refined as needed to better capture the characteristics of faculty and/or universities. The data was analyzed using R (The R Project for Statistical Computing), a free statistical software.

Results

The data collected includes 22 universities, specifically 11 public and 11 private. The number of faculty and/or instructors identified from the 22 institutions was 41. The findings suggest that the probability of TESOL/bilingual programs to be housed in a college or department of education is 1.75 times higher than the probability of being in any other college or department (14 out of the 22 universities or the equivalent of 63.64%). Being in a college of education allows faculty and instructors affiliated with the TESOL/bilingual program to interact with other education faculty.

A large number of faculty associated with TESOL programs are at the assistant professor level (41.46%) with an additional 24.39% being assistant professors and directors; 12.20% are full professors, 4.88% are instructors, and 2.44% are both professors and chairs.

Table 1 shows the gender count of faculty at public and private universities. At the 0.05 significance level, it is statistically significant ($*p < .05$, one-tailed) that TESOL faculty are primarily female. Moreover, we are 95% confident that the true proportion of female TESOL faculty is between 0.66 and 0.90. The conditional distribution of female TESOL

faculty in public universities (57.58%) is lower than the conditional distribution of male TESOL faculty in public universities (75.00%); however, the conditional distribution of female TESOL faculty in private universities (42.42%) is higher than the conditional distribution of male TESOL faculty in private universities (25.00%) (Table 1). Female TESOL faculty have a higher proportion in private universities than in public universities. In contrast, male TESOL faculty have a higher proportion in public universities than in private universities (Table 2).

Category Levels	Current Work University Type					
	Private		Public		All	
Female	14	42.42%	19	57.58%	33	100%
Male	2	25.00%	6	75.00%	8	100%
Total Count	16	39.02%	25	60.98%	41	100%

Category Levels	Current Work University Type		
	Conditional Distribution		
	Private	Public	All
Female	87.50%	76.00%	80.49%
Male	12.50%	24.00%	19.51%
Total Percent	100%	100%	100%

Note. Percents are calculated column-wise; with respect to current work university type.

Related to advanced and terminal degrees, with the exclusion of the *Unspecified* level of TESOL faculty master's and doctoral degrees, it is statistically significant ($*p < .05$, one-tailed) that the faculty master's and doctoral degrees are domestically obtained (Table 3, Table 4).

Category Levels	Current Work University Type					
	Private		Public		All	
Domestic	10	62.50%	6	37.50%	16	100%
International	0	0.00%	2	100.00%	2	100%
International & Domestic	0	0.00%	1	100.00%	1	100%
Unspecified	6	27.27%	16	72.73%	22	100%

Total Count	16	39.02%	25	60.98%	41	100%
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Category Levels	Current Work University Type					
	Private		Public		All	
Domestic	8	32.00%	17	68.00%	25	100%
International	0	0.00%	2	100.00%	2	100%
International & Domestic	1	100.00%	0	0.00%	1	100%
Unspecified	7	53.85%	6	46.15%	13	100%
Total Count	16	39.02%	25	60.98%	41	100%

All the TESOL faculty who have international or international and domestic master's degrees work at public universities (Table 3). Table 4 shows that for TESOL faculty who have domestic doctoral degrees, the proportion of those who work at public universities is nearly twice as high as those who work at private universities.

The ratio of bilingual TESOL faculty to non-bilingual TESOL faculty is 6:1 (Table 5). However, we are unable to determine the statistical significance of the bilingualism due to having 34 TESOL faculty with *Unspecified* bilingualism statuses.

Category Levels	Current Work University Type					
	Private		Public		All	
No	0	0.00%	1	100.00%	1	100%
Unspecified	14	41.18%	20	58.82%	34	100%
Yes	2	33.33%	4	66.67%	6	100%
Total Count	16	39.02%	25	60.98%	41	100%

Table 6 shows that 82.93% of TESOL faculty only speak English, while the next proportion is Spanish (7.32%). At the 0.05 significance level, it is statistically significant ($*p < .05$, one-tailed) that TESOL faculty are monolingual (specifically English).

Language	Faculty Count	Percent (Count/41)
English	34	82.93%
Other languages	5	12.20%
Spanish	3	7.32%

Note. Languages and combinations of languages are counted. For example, if someone spoke French and German, then he/she will be counted in three levels; French, German, and the combination French and German. Data is reported in alphabetical order.

At the 0.05 significance level, it is statistically significant ($*p < 0.05$, one-tailed) that the working experience of the TESOL faculty is Domestic and/or Unspecified, according to Table 7.

Category Levels	Current Work University Type				
	Private		Public		All
Domestic &/or Unspecified	12	36.36%	21	63.64%	33
International & Domestic	4	50.00%	4	50.00%	8
Total Count	16	39.02%	25	60.98%	41

Limitations

Data for this study was publicly available on university websites and on faculty bios and/or resumes. The details included in faculty bios and websites could differ from university to university, and there was no standard description that included, for example, studies, bilingualism, or work experience. In addition, some faculty websites included only a name and contact information, in which case a new faculty member was identified to be included in the data. The list of universities used for the study, which were randomly identified, were chosen from a list of universities from Ohio on Wikipedia. Universities and colleges which offered only associate degrees or which

focused on technical or arts fields only were excluded.

Conclusion and Future Research

Currently, there is no research that investigates who faculty associated with TESOL programs in the US or in Ohio are. The data we looked at suggests that TESOL faculty at universities in Ohio are predominately female, monolingual, with master's and doctoral degrees obtained from domestic universities and with domestic work experience. All faculty who have international or international and domestic degrees work at public universities in Ohio and faculty who are bilingual work mostly likely at a public university.

This study and its findings paint a picture of who the faculty associated with TESOL programs in Ohio are. Future studies should focus on surveying and interviewing faculty for a clearer picture of who they are.

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PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

for the OHIO Journal
of Teacher Education

The following guidelines are presented for publication opportunities for OJTE (the OHIO Journal of Teacher Education).

The OHIO Journal of Teacher Education provides a forum for the exchange of information and ideas concerning the improvement of teaching and teacher education. Articles submitted should reflect this mission. Their focus should concern concepts, practices, and/or results of research that have practical dimensions, implications, or applicability for practitioners involved with teacher education. The journal is regional in scope and is sent as a benefit of membership in the Ohio Association of Teacher Education.

Manuscripts are subject to review of the Professional Journal Committee (co-editors and editor consultants). Points of view are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of either Association. Permission to reproduce journal articles must be requested from the editors.

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES

Content: Journal issues may be “thematic” or “open.” Currently, all future issues are designated “open.”

Length: Manuscripts, including all references, bibliographies, charts, figures, and tables, generally should not exceed 15 pages.

Style: For writing and editorial style, follow directions in the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Omit the author’s name from the title page. Include an 80-100-word abstract.

Please do not use auto-formatting when preparing the manuscript!

Cover page: Include the following information on a separate sheet attached to the manuscript: title of the article; date of submission; author's name, author's terminal degree; mailing address, e-mail address, business and home phone numbers, institutional affiliation; and short biographical sketch, including background and areas of specialization.

Submission: Submissions must be word processed using Microsoft Office Word (Microsoft Excel tables are permitted). Submit the manuscript as an attachment to an e-mail to OJTE@xavier.edu

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

Authors will be notified of the receipt of the manuscript. After an initial review by the editors, those manuscripts which meet specifications will be sent to reviewers. Notification of the status of the manuscript will take place after the deadline date for each issue. The journal editors will make minor editorial changes; major changes will be made by the author prior to publication.

Manuscripts, editorial correspondence, and questions can be directed to Dr. Thomas Knestrict at OJTE@xavier.edu

IMPORTANT DATES OF NOTE:

February 1, 2021 Closing date for acceptance of manuscripts for Spring Journal 2021

Publication date: April 1, 2021

August 1, 2021 Closing date for acceptance of manuscripts for Fall Journal 2021

Publication Date: October, 2021 at OCTEO Conference

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