

Preparing Preservice English Teachers to Design and Teach
Social Justice-Oriented Literacy Lessons Online

By

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For my family

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	v
I. Introduction	1
II. “Schooling is Never Neutral”: A Review of Three Social Justice-Oriented Teacher Education Programs	8
III. “All of a Sudden I Have These Real Students”: Preservice Teachers Learning to Teach English	31
IV. “If We Could Just See Them Face-to-Face”: Preservice Teachers Learning to Teach in an Online Context.....	58
V. Conclusion	87
References.....	94

ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates how future secondary English teachers construct an understanding of teaching literacy for social justice and how they enact that understanding, particularly with regard for constructing curriculum for and teaching young adult novels online. This research suggests three recommendations for creating strong social-justice oriented teacher education programs. First, these programs should focus on emphasizing multiple dimensions of social justice and preparing preservice teachers for all types of schools. Second, social-justice teacher education programs should include authentic projects (and the uncomfortable moments that come with them) in methods courses to allow preservice teachers to practice teaching for social justice. Third, teacher education programs should afford preservice teachers additional opportunities (in addition to the typical practicum experiences) that allow preservice teachers to apply the theories that they are learning in courses to practice. Using technology can be an effective way to provide these experiences. Using technology in teacher education courses can also encourage preservice teachers to use more educational technology for student engagement in their future classrooms.

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

<i>Table/Figure Number</i>	<i>Page</i>
Figure 1. The “Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs” Scale	14
Figure 2. UCLA Center X Mission Graphic	23
Table 3. Young Adult Novels Read by Preservice Teachers	36
Table 4. Young Adult Novels Taught by Preservice Teachers	66

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Because my belief in the power of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), I believe it is important to begin with a narrative of how I came to be interested in studying education for social justice.

How I Came to Be Interested in Education for Social Justice

I was reading through some poems my high school students had written, when a line from Alex's poem jumped out at me: "All Mexicans do is steal." I stopped in to talk with the Assistant Principal to get her advice on how to approach the conversation that I would have with Alex about the poem. I was a first year teacher, looking for a little guidance. The Assistant Principal asked me, "Did he meet the requirements of the assignment? Did he include the poetic devices that he needed to?" She continued, "This is his opinion. It might not be your opinion, but it is his." I left her office, realizing I was on my own—I was not going to get support in teaching for social justice from her.

I acquired my first teaching job at Birchwood High School¹, which is located in between the rural, farming plains of Illinois and the suburbs of Chicago. One of the larger school districts in the county, Birchwood High School has just over 1,000 students, 89.8% of whom are white (Birchwood High School, 2008). Most families in the school district are middle class—many parents work for the local university. And you won't find this on the school report card, but the majority of the families in the district are conservative Republicans. When I accepted the job at Birchwood, I did not consider how the political orientation of the families in the district would

¹ Names have been changed to pseudonyms.

affect my teaching. And I didn't consider how I, a politically progressive, white woman, would fit in to the school community.

During the four years that I taught at Birchwood, the administration was advocating for an aligned, standardized curriculum. This meant that teachers of different sections of the same course should be teaching the same books and units, and should be using the same assessments. But this policy hadn't yet been implemented in American Literature, which coincidentally or not, was my favorite course to teach. I was able, in that class, to design the units around essential questions, such as, "What does it mean to be an American?" And I planned my own projects and implemented my own assessments. I thrived as a teacher being able to be creative with the curriculum—I came to class excited about the activities that I had planned.

One of these activities was reading Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick*, a story about a boy who goes from rags to riches, achieving the American Dream, through hard work and determination. We followed up the Alger reading by discussing an article by Harlon Dalton, which criticizes the Horatio Alger myth, calling it socially destructive. We talked about the American Dream, what it is, and ways we believed the idea of it might help or hurt our society. And then I told the class that they were going to write their own Horatio Alger rags-to-riches stories—in the form of a children's picture book. I put them in groups and brought around supplies. I gave some groups ample materials—computer paper, markers, colored pencils, hole punchers and ribbon. Other groups I made sit on the floor, and they got torn notebook paper and a dull, stubby pencil with no eraser. The groups on the floor got mad—they asked to sit at the desks, and they demanded better supplies. A few refused to work.

Toward the end of the class period the groups shared the picture books that they created. When a group that had fewer supplies shared, some of students in the audience were confused—

they didn't understand why the book looked so different than their own group's book. The presenters explained that they had limited supplies and wondered how the other groups didn't notice that injustice before, at the time when the supplies were being handed out and the books were being created.

The homework for the night was to write a short essay about the activity and how it related to our class discussions about Horatio Alger's stories and the American Dream. A few days later when the essays had been turned in and I started to read them, I was shocked—some students didn't appear to get it. They talked about how the activity showed that it didn't matter what kind of supplies you got, you could still write a good story. And that is true—but they were missing a big part of the lesson. They didn't notice that some groups were at a disadvantage because they didn't have the materials that allowed them to produce a picture book with features that “American” culture desires—a book with lots of color that is easy to read. I was troubled that the lesson had reinforced many of the students' ideologies rather than challenged them. I began to wonder—how did that happen? Am I doing more harm than good? And should I be trying to change my students' ideology? I feared that maybe I was pushing too much of my “liberal bias” in the classroom. I began to wonder if parents would get mad and start calling. And, even more concerning, I wondered if what I was doing was morally acceptable. I remember my parents not being happy when my middle school social studies teacher presented a lesson on the truth of trickle-down economics. Was I doing the same to my students? I wondered if I shouldn't be trying to tackle these issues in my classroom. And I didn't feel like I had the support of other teachers or administrators to talk through how to discuss these important topics with students.

What I realize now is that I was trying to teach for social justice without having the language, the words, at the time, to know what it was called—I was trying to “help students recognize, understand, and critique current social inequalities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). Teaching is a political act—as Ayers and Quinn discuss, “schooling is never neutral—teaching is always *for* something and *against* something else” (forward in Michie, 2005, p. vii). But I still question the way I went about teaching the lesson. What is the boundary between teaching for social justice and not understanding or appreciating the (largely conservative) culture of my students? And I also hope that in trying to teach about social inequalities that I did not unintentionally reinforce stereotypes or contribute to deficit-model thinking (as I feared that I might have done with the children’s book activity). I did the best job I knew how to do at the time, but I still wonder—did I do the right thing? And was it enough?

Since my experience teaching high school students, I have wondered how I can help prepare the preservice teachers in my classes to be confident in teaching for social justice. Social justice can be difficult to define, as the National Council of Teachers of English position statement on social justice articulates, “social justice is definitionally complex; it ignites controversy, is not neutral, and varies by person, culture, social class, gender, context, space and time” (National Council, 2010); however, I hope to help preservice teachers to learn to use “reading and writing [as] emancipatory acts” (Christensen, 2000, p. vii) and to encourage the preservice teachers to “examine society and try to change it” (Baldwin, 1985, p. 326). I want to be able to support preservice teachers in their journey, making it as rich, meaningful, and transformative as possible.

While teaching the course Young Adult Literature for Schools in the spring of 2011 and spring of 2012, I conducted a qualitative study regarding the education of preservice teachers. The context of the study is discussed in detail in the articles of the dissertation.

The research questions that guide this inquiry include:

- 1) How do preservice secondary English teachers construct an understanding of teaching literacy for social justice?
- 2) And how do they enact that understanding, particularly with regard for constructing curriculum for and teaching young adult novels online?

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is written as three distinct articles (which will be sent for review for publication) that all, in their own way, help teacher educators to understand how preservice secondary English teachers construct an understanding of teaching literacy for social justice. The first article, a literature review of successful social justice-oriented teacher education programs, explores the characteristics of three programs and what teacher educators can learn from them. The second article provides insight into what preservice teachers can learn from participating in authentic projects (projects that ask preservice teachers to teach actual students) and the uncomfortable moments that occur as a result of those projects in methods coursework. The third article discusses the affordances and constraints of using an online project in a teacher education methods course.

Role of Theory in the Study

The theoretical framework of the study is interpretivism. Crotty (2006) explains that interpretivism “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (p. 67). Additionally, Popper defines interpretivism as a theoretical framework “in

which social reality is regarded as the product of processes by which social actors together negotiate the meanings for actions and situations” (as cited in Crotty, 2006, p. 11).

This study uses an interpretivist approach to answer the research questions. These questions can best be understood through a discussion that socially constructs shared meaning between the researcher and the researched. I, the researcher, could not understand the preservice teachers’ understanding of teaching literacy for social justice without participating in discussions with them. Understandings are negotiated and socially constructed through both sets of actors (the researcher and the researched).

The research methods of analyzing interviews, personal reflective journal entries, and documents are compatible with using the theoretical framework of interpretivism. These methods allow, as Popper explains, “social actors together [to] negotiate the meanings for actions and situations” (as cited in Crotty, 2006, p. 11).

In this study, the theoretical framework of interpretivism sits within the epistemology of constructionism, which claims that “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Creswell, 2007, p. 43). As a researcher using a constructionist epistemology, I “recognize that [my] own background shapes [my] interpretation” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 21). I believe that my background as a White female who grew up in a small, conservative town, but in a liberal family that is interested in social justice, impacts the way that I conceptualize and interpret this study.

Relationship of Researcher to Researched

Given the theoretical framework of interpretivism in the study, my role as a researcher was to socially construct an understanding of teaching literacy for social justice with the preservice teachers in my course. There was a status relationship and a thus a power dynamic in

the research to consider, since I was the instructor for the participants in the study (and thus will turned in final grades for the course). In order to minimize this power dynamic and in order to be an ethical researcher, participants in this study were not asked to be interviewed until the course was complete and final grades were turned in. The writing and presentation of the resulting research is a mixture of the participants' and my own perceptions, as Creswell (2007) explains, "we (re)present our data, partly based on our participants' perspectives and partly based on our own interpretation, never clearly escaping our own personal stamp on a study" (p. 43).

CHAPTER TWO

“Schooling is Never Neutral”: A Review of Three Social Justice-Oriented Teacher Education Programs

“Schooling is never neutral—teaching is always for something and against something else. Teaching can be geared, for example, toward obedience or expression, toward conformity or creativity, toward the status quo or change.”

Ayers & Quinn (forward in Michie, 2005, p. vii)

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore three teacher education programs that, as is referenced in the quote above, realize that teaching is never neutral. These three social justice-oriented teacher education programs, recommended by Gloria Ladson-Billings as worthy of study (G. Ladson-Billings, personal communication, February 15, 2011), recognize that all curriculum and all instruction is political. Any text used and discussions had (or not) in the classroom are a political choice. In examining three teacher education programs known for their commitment to social justice—I explore how they define social justice and how they design and implement their programs. In the end, I discuss possible implications for teacher educators by looking at model social justice teacher education programs.

Past Research

Statement of the problem.

Students of color will make up more than 50% of the K-12 public school populations by the middle of this century. Historically, many teacher education programs, which are primarily made up of preservice teachers and instructors who are White and middle class (Gay, 2010;

Hyland, 2010; McDonald, 2005), have done little to infuse diversity into their coursework and program structure. In 1978, the National Council for the Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) required teacher education programs to include content about multicultural education; however, many programs meet this mandate with add-on courses, not an integrated approach with a mission focusing on teaching for social justice (McDonald, 2007). Furthermore, many preservice teachers are resistant to accepting that society is fundamentally unjust, which demonstrates a great need for teacher education programs to focus on education for social justice (Hyland, 2010).

Frameworks for education for social justice.

Leading experts in the field have offered suggestions regarding educating preservice teachers to teach for social justice. Gay (2010) explained that preservice teachers' beliefs about race, ethnicity, and culture are "always present, often problematic, and profoundly significant in shaping teaching conceptions and actions" and that teacher education programs need to help preservice teachers scrutinize these beliefs. Nieto (2005) identified five qualities of teachers that are essential in promoting social justice:

- (a) A sense of mission to serve ethnically diverse children to the best of their abilities
- (b) Solidarity with, empathy for, and value of students' lives, experiences, cultures, and human dignity
- (c) Courage to question mainstream school knowledge and conventional ways of doing things, and beliefs and assumptions about diverse students families, cultures, and communities

(d) Willingness to improvise, to push the envelope, to go beyond established templates and frameworks, and to embrace uncertainty and flexibility

(e) A passion for equality and social justice (p. 145)

Gay (2010) argued that this list could be used to form the core of teacher education programs that are focused on social justice teaching.

Ladson-Billings (2001) explained that preservice teachers working in diverse communities need “the chance to learn about the students in the context of the community,” “an opportunity to apprentice with skilled cooperating teachers,” “an opportunity to ask lots of questions about teachers and teaching,” and “the opportunity to do serious intellectual work” (p. 135-137). Additionally, preservice teachers need to “be aware of their own culture and its role in their lives” to effectively teach students (p. 96). Ladson-Billings (2001) explained, “typically, white middle-class prospective teachers have little or no understanding of their own culture. Notions of whiteness are taken for granted” (p. 96).

McDonald (2010) called on social justice teacher education programs to employ a multitude of approaches in preparing preservice teachers. She addressed the “problem of enactment, which essentially identifies the gap between what teachers envision doing and are prepared to do and what they actually do in the context of practice in classrooms with children” (p. 452). She suggested using the research on culturally relevant pedagogy to inform practices.

Ladson-Billings’ (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy is based on three propositions “about what contributes to success for all students, especially African American students” (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 144):

- Successful teachers focus on students’ academic achievement.
- Successful teachers develop students’ cultural competence.

- Successful teachers foster students' sense of sociopolitical consciousness.
(p. 144)

For example, McDonald (2010) explained that to be effective, preservice teachers must learn how to develop cultural knowledge of students, and preservice teachers must learn how to build relationships with students and their families. Social justice teacher education programs need to investigate how to best teach preservice teachers how to do this by asking questions such as the following:

How do teachers learn about students' cultural knowledge? What strategies do they employ to develop an understanding, how do they engage that knowledge when they are planning instruction and then engaging with students in the classrooms? (p. 453)

McDonald (2010) explained that in teacher education programs, preservice teachers have likely been encouraged to consider the importance of cultural competency, but it is not as likely that they have been given opportunities to develop this knowledge or experience this process. She called on teacher educators to “parse out specifics of practice” and “develop pedagogical strategies that provide prospective teachers with opportunities to learn in assisted contexts the practice of teaching for social justice” (p. 454).

Three Social Justice Teacher Education Programs

In the following section I explore teacher education programs at three colleges that are known for their commitment to social justice—Boston College, Mills College, and UCLA's Center X. Examining these programs allows us to borrow what seems to be working and find ways to apply it in our own teacher education programs. It also allows us to develop our understandings of what it means to prepare preservice teachers to teach for social justice. The

information reviewed about these programs comes from the program websites and articles written about the programs. Without visiting the programs or interviewing stakeholders, the information I provide in the following sections is an incomplete picture, but it is a start.

Boston College

Program structure and definition of social justice.

The Lynch School of Education at Boston College, a Catholic and Jesuit institution with a long history of commitment to social justice, is made up over 25 academic programs and employs 60 full-time faculty members and 35 part-time faculty members. Over 800 undergraduate students and 1,000 graduate students are enrolled. The mission of The Lynch School of Education at Boston College is to “enhance the human condition through education” (Lynch School of Education, 2010). The program places importance on social justice aims, such as understanding “discrimination, poverty, violence, ignorance and social inequity, and their impact in our communities” (Lynch School of Education, 2010). The Lynch School has formed partnerships with the Boston Public Schools and the YMCA of Greater Boston in accordance with their desire to work “in and with the community” (Lynch School of Education, 2010).

Program design and implementation.

Boston College seeks to prepare preservice teachers who can succeed in schools driven by tightly aligned standards, but who also can raise questions about the system—questions about whose needs are being taken into account and whose are not (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Faculty conversations.

Members of the teacher education program at Boston College began a collaborative project called Seeking Social Justice to “examine their own understanding of social justice issues as part of the process of helping their students do the same as well as to encourage students to

work for social change and effectively meet the needs of the increasingly diverse K-12 school population” (Cochran-Smith, et al., 2004, p. 229).

As Cochran-Smith, a faculty member in the Education Department at Boston College, et al. (1999) explained, the project was designed:

- (1) to allow [the faculty] to examine [their] own biases and understandings of equity, diversity, access, power and social justice as part of the process of helping [their] students do the same;
- (2) to enhance the research mission of the university; and
- (3) to encourage [the] students to work for social change as part of responding to the increasing diversity of the K-12 school population.” (p. 230).

Members of Seeking Social Justice recognized that one of the most valuable components of the project was the conversations about social justice that were shared between the faculty members in the teacher education program. Deeper understandings were developed, not through consensus, but through uncovering personal biases and hearing perspectives from other individuals. The group discussed the macro (larger-picture beliefs) and micro (body language, word choice, etc.) in teaching for social justice. One participant in the Seeking Social Justice group explained, “I have become more aware of language in texts and more conscious of the way I write. For example I [had written on my syllabus] ‘the way we handle students,’ [and now I’ve] changed it to ‘the way we work with students.’” (Cochran-Smith, et al., 1999 p. 240).

These group conversations helped to center the teacher education program on the goal of education for social justice as well as shape what happens in individual courses. The project served to deepen the instructors’ commitment to social justice and suggests that it is possible to infuse teacher education programs with a commitment to teaching for social justice.

Outcomes of the program.

Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith (2008) created and tested the Learning to Teach for Social Justice—Beliefs scale (LTSJ-B) to measure teacher candidates’ attitudes about teaching for social justice. The Likert-type scale, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree, consists of 12 items and is given to preservice teachers as entry and exit surveys. The LTSJ-B scale demonstrates that it is possible to measure social justice outcomes of teacher education programs. Furthermore, future use of the scale at Boston College will demonstrate the impact of the program on learning to teach for social justice. The scale can be seen in the table below:

Figure 1

The “Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs” Scale (Enterline et al., 2008, p. 275)

Respond to the following statements regarding your beliefs about teaching.^{ab}	
1	An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one’s own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation. (“examine one’s own beliefs”) ^c
2	Issues related to racism and inequity should be openly discussed in the classroom. (“discuss inequity openly”)
3R	For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas, such as social studies and literature. (“multicultural topics are limited”)
4	Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions. (“good teaching incorporates diversity”)
5R	The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society. (“assimilate ELL into society”)
6R	It’s reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who don’t speak English as their first language. (“lower expectations for ELL”)
7	Part of the responsibilities of the teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities. (“challenge inequities”)
8	Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions. (“teach to critically examine government”)
9R	Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less into the classroom. (“economically disadvantaged bring less”)
10R	Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it’s not their job to change society. (“teacher’s job is not to change society”)
11R	Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work. (“success primarily due to student effort”)
12R	Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead. (“prepare students for likely lives”)

^aLikert response categories: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Uncertain = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5.

^bR: denotes the categories were reverse scored.

^cthese abbreviated phrases are used throughout the article.

The Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs scale is one measure of many (including a portfolio) that are used to examine the effects of the teacher education program at Boston College on the process of learning to teach. The LTSJ-B scale has shown that in the four cohorts (about 125 students) who had completed the survey, preservice teachers exiting Boston College's teacher education program scored significantly higher (demonstrating a higher degree of belief in teaching for social justice) than the preservice teachers entering the program. Especially interesting is the finding that while preservice teachers just entering the program express some uncertainty on the LTSJ-B about structural and societal inequities, preservice teachers graduating from the program much more strongly endorse these beliefs. The preservice teachers graduating from the program also demonstrated more understanding of "the role of teachers and teaching in school and social change" (Enterline, Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, & Mitescu, 2008, p. 282).

Enterline, et al. (2008) explained it has been well documented that it is difficult to change preservice teachers' beliefs (see e.g., Wideen, Smith-Mayer, & Moon, 1998) and that even if teacher education programs do succeed in changing preservice teachers' beliefs, it can be especially difficult to maintain these changes once the preservice teachers exit the program to begin working in schools "where the beliefs and values structures are often inconsistent with those of the teacher education program" (p. 284). However, at Boston College, the scores on the LTSJ-B scale of graduates who had been teaching for one year (outside of the social-justice oriented teacher education program) remained roughly comparable to their scores when they graduated from the program. In other words, the graduates maintained their belief in teaching for social justice even after leaving the program (Enterline, et al., 2008).

With rigorous piloting and demonstrating consistent results, the LTSJ-B scale has measured changes in beliefs about teaching for social justice in preservice teachers during their

time enrolled in the teacher education program. Enterline et al. (2008) explained, “The underlying assumption behind the LTSJ-B scale is that teachers’ beliefs matter because they mediate teachers’ practices in schools and classrooms” (p. 286).

In the current climate of accountability, many teacher education programs have been evaluated by measuring the test scores of the students of educators from particular teacher education programs. This controversial initiative has been critiqued (see e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2004), but not many rigorous alternatives for examining the outcomes of teacher education programs have been suggested. The LTSJ-B scale serves as one measure (in a larger evaluation portfolio) of preservice teachers at Boston College (Enterline, et al., 2008).

Mills College

Program structure and definition of social justice.

Mills College is a women’s liberal arts college in Oakland, California, with a total student body of 1,596. The teacher education program is a 4+1 structure, allowing students to obtain teaching certification and a master’s degree. The first four years consist of coursework for teacher certification as well as a master’s degree, and the fifth year consists of student teaching and additional master’s coursework.

The goals of the teacher education program are as follows:

- Provide students with many different theoretical perspectives and scientific and practical knowledge to understand and support human development and learning
- Prepare students to be learners and to take responsibility for their own learning

- Prepare reflective and critical thinkers who examine issues about the development of infants and young children and their relationships in various contexts: school, hospital, family, community, and with an understanding of culture
- Prepare students to work as part of a team and to develop collegial relationships with fellow students and faculty
- Prepare students to integrate theoretical and scientific knowledge in their fieldwork practicum (Mills College, 2011)

Though the specific language of social justice education is not present in these program goals, the third goal in the list reflects themes that emerge from education for social justice, such as students' relationships in various contexts and an understanding of culture. Social justice themes begin to emerge more clearly in the six principles of the education program:

- Working in education is a moral act based on an ethic of care
- Working in education is a collegial act
- Working in education is reflective and inquiry-based
- Working in education is a political act
- Learning is a constructivist and developmental process
- Working in education is acquisition of subject matter and professional knowledge (Mills College, 2011).

In an explanation of the first principle of the education program (working in education is a moral act based on an ethic of care), welcoming diverse experiences is highlighted as is recognizing the importance of creating caring communities. In the third principle of the

education program (working in education is a political act), issues of equity and access are addressed (Mills College, 2011).

Program design and implementation.

McDonald (2007) studied two social justice teacher education programs, the Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools program at Mills College and the Teacher Education Intern Program at San José State University, in a year-long qualitative case study. In this section I will focus on what McDonald reported about Mills College's teacher education program.

Through faculty interviews and a review of program and course documents, McDonald (2007) examined the following questions:

- What conceptions of social justice do teacher educators articulate when aiming to integrate social justice across their programs?
- What factors appear to enable teacher educators to engage in the joint enterprise of social justice teacher education? (p. 2048).

McDonald (2007) explained that at Mills College, faculty view teaching as political and emphasize in teacher education classes the importance of taking on social inequalities and addressing systemic issues such as racism. A faculty member explained:

Being equitable in school is getting rid of as many things as you can that label and make people incompetent and actually create incompetence, and doing everything you can positively to have people have realistic and honest understanding of ways in which they are smart and competent in the world and what their responsibilities are in a democracy...it's related to how schools are structured, what the halls are like, who kids get to have as peers...and a teacher's political beliefs are not irrelevant to what they do in the classrooms (McDonald, 2007, p. 2062).

The faculty agree that they use the six program principles (as discussed in the previous section) to guide their course design and assignments. When hiring new faculty members, decisions are based on the candidate's commitment to social justice both in their research and in their teaching. Mills faculty also felt that opportunities to collaborate, such as weekly faculty meetings and the spring retreat, were a part of their ability to keep social justice education at the heart of their program. This collaborative time also allowed faculty to design assignments that connected to each other (McDonald, 2007).

McDonald (2007) argued that establishing a "cookie-cutter" definition of social justice should not be a goal of teacher education programs (p. 2075). Negotiating a working definition of social justice among colleagues in each individual program provides more benefit in that the collaboration and discussions that result are more important than a standard definition. However, there are common themes that emerge from this successful social justice teacher education programs that are worth considering: collaboration (both formal and informal) is vital to establishing and maintaining a vision for teacher education programs, and a commitment to teaching for social justice requires constant revisioning of beliefs and program structure. Additionally, successful social justice teacher education programs recognize the systemic oppression that can shape people's individual experiences and emphasize the need to commit to alleviating oppression.

Outcomes of the program.

McDonald (2005) examined the preservice teachers' ability at Mills College to "develop conceptual and practical tools related to social justice" (p. 418). By conducting course observations and reviewing course documents, specifically syllabi, McDonald found that the majority of courses in the Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools Program "articulated goals and

purposes related to social justice and to teaching students from diverse backgrounds” (p. 425).

For example, an objective of the course Introduction to Teaching, as listed on the syllabus, read that the preservice teachers should understand how the “gifts of diversity [are] sapped by racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and other forms of oppression” (p. 425).

While the preservice teachers at Mills College had multiple opportunities to work with English Language Learners (ELLs) in field placements, they had few opportunities to work with students with special needs. In coursework, too, the social justice issues surrounding working with students with special needs, such as mainstreaming versus inclusion, were often not addressed. McDonald (2005) argued that this “did not enable prospective teachers to grapple with broader political issues surrounding the teaching of special education students, the kinds of transformative or reconstructionist experiences that many have argued are foundational to learning how to teach” (p. 428).

Furthermore, in the program at Mills College, although courses often discussed conceptual tools relating to teaching ELLs, such as adapting instruction to meet their needs, fewer opportunities were given for the preservice teachers to learn about specific strategies or for gaining experience actually making these adaptations. One course, Teaching English Language Learners, was an exception, and provided the preservice teachers with models for working with ELLs. By the time of graduating from Mills College’s teacher education program, the preservice teachers agreed that “teachers should adapt instruction to meet the needs of ELLs” at 4.83 points on a 5-point, Likert-type scale (up from 4.46 upon entering the program) (McDonald, 2005, p. 429). The preservice teachers also responded confidently on a Likert-type question on the exit survey in their ability to “address the needs of ELLs” (p. 429).

Similarly, the preservice teachers at Mills College were given many opportunities to develop conceptual tools for “thinking about how students’ status in oppressed groups might affect their teaching,” but were given fewer opportunities “to develop actual strategies or practices for working with such students” (McDonald, 2005, p. 430). An example of this was illustrated at the midyear retreat for students, during a discussion of a fictional student named Eric. In class the following week, during a debriefing of the retreat, a preservice teacher explained, “Now we know better than to make so many assumptions,” and another preservice teacher continued, “I think we acknowledged the race factor, but now what do we do? I think we’re tired of theory: Give me some things to do in my classroom that frickin’ work” (p. 430). Feeling inundated with theory, the preservice teachers desired practical strategies to help support students. The preservice teachers at Mills College reported that the clinical placements in schools with diverse students helped them to be prepared in the future to work in culturally diverse schools.

Based on her research at Mills College, McDonald (2005) suggested that programs interested in focusing on education for social justice consider the following questions:

- Do teachers’ opportunities in courses tend to emphasize one dimension of social justice—a focus on individual needs, for example—over others?
- What opportunities do teachers have to appropriate both conceptual and practical tools related to each dimension of social justice?
- Which courses tend to address particular aspects of social justice?
- In what specific ways do teachers’ clinical placements mediate what they learn about social justice? (p. 432).

UCLA Center X

Program structure and definition of social justice.

UCLA Center X, founded by Jeannie Oakes, was first conceived in 1992 and was named to “capture both the intersection of research and practice as well as [their] roots as an activist community” (UC Regents, 2011). The Center aims to “challenge the status quo that perpetuates inequity and poor educational practice” and believes in directly taking on the problems of deep social inequalities (UC Regents, 2011). Though Center X does not believe that these problems can be solved solely by schools, schooling is “one of the best democratic spaces for working to become a better, more just society” (UC Regents, 2011).

Center X has developed several pathways to earn teaching certification or a Master’s in Education degree. My focus will be on the two-year certification and master’s degree that the Teacher Education Program established in 1994. During the first year, the preservice teachers engage in coursework and student teaching; the second year, the preservice teachers teach full-time in a high-poverty, urban partner school. The curriculum consists of research-based, culturally relevant materials, and the program makes an effort to recruit preservice teachers of color.

The mission of UCLA Center X is made visible in a graphic that appears on every page of the website:

Figure 1

UCLA Center X Mission Graphic

UCLA’s Teacher Education Program is guided by eight core principles:

- Embody a social justice agenda
- Foster sustained engagement in teaching and learning
- Attend to the moral, cultural, and political dimensions of teaching
- Blend theory and practice
- Collaborate across institutions and communities
- Participate in collaborative inquiry within communities of practice
- Focus simultaneously on professional education, school reform and reinventing the university's role in K-14 schooling
- Mirror the diverse, caring, anti-racist, socially-responsible learning communities (UC Regents, 2011).

As is illustrated in these eight core principles, words such as “social justice,” “anti-racist,” and “socially-responsible” are used overtly on the UCLA Center X website.

Program design and implementation.

Center X's aim of creating a more just society through change is based on the following three points: embedding teacher education into the context of urban schools and communities, recruiting a diverse group of social justice educators, and supporting social justice educators throughout their careers by providing professional and career development. Preservice teachers in Center X's program are required to have placements in high-poverty, urban schools. Additionally, upon graduating from the program, teachers are required to accept jobs, in pairs, in urban schools to provide peer-support for each other opportunities (Quartz, Priselac, & Frank, 2009).

UCLA actively recruits low-income students, which is in keeping with Center X's goal to recruit a diverse pool of preservice teachers. Over time, and through concerted effort, students enrolled in Center X have become more diverse. The student population in the Teacher Education Program is currently 30% Latino, 30% Asian, 25% White, 5% African American, and 10% mixed race or those who declined to state their ethnicity. This student population comes closer to reflecting the demographics of the students of Los Angeles than previous cohorts' student populations (Quartz et al., 2009).

Outcomes of the program.

A variety of research has been conducted about programs run by Center X. Cooper (2001) analyzed data from interviews and observations regarding Center X's Parent Curriculum Project. This project aims to include parents in their children's education by informing them about various aspects of their children's schooling, including curriculum, standards, and assessment. The program also encourages parents to observe in classrooms and be in contact

with administrators. Another goal of the project is to inform parents about school reform and to encourage them to become leaders within the school and community.

Cooper (2001) discovered that parents found it especially helpful when they were shown resources that could assist them in helping their children attain academic success. Because of this finding, Center X created more opportunities for parents to learn about academic strategies, such as inviting the parents to participate in seminars with the preservice teachers. This served two purposes: the preservice teachers and the parents could learn together about helping students succeed academically; and the preservice teachers had an opportunity to develop relationships with parents, allowing them to see parents as a part of students' educations.

Center X also has found success developing partnerships with school districts in the Los Angeles area. An experimental study by Jacobs, Franke, Carpenter, Levi, and Battey (2007) found that teachers participating in the professional development opportunities offered by Center X regarding helping students understand algebraic thinking were shown to provide the students more variety in strategies that utilized relational thinking to solve math problems than teachers who did not participate in the professional development. Additionally, the students in the classes of participating teachers demonstrated a better understanding of the math concepts taught.

Retention rates for Center X graduates who remain teaching after five years are slightly lower than average; however, 70% of this attrition is due to role changing (becoming coordinators, administrators, etc.). The graduates were not leaving the profession; they were finding other ways to participate in the educational system. Furthermore, graduates from the program who remain teaching are three times more likely to remain in the same school. This is a benefit to these individual schools because teacher turnover is expensive, in both monetary cost and loss of continuity within the school. The Center believes that their graduates, being more

likely to remain in the same (low-income) schools, demonstrates their motivation to remain teaching in the schools that need them the most and their commitment to teaching for social justice (Quartz et al., 2009).

Most recently UCLA Center X has partnered with the Los Angeles Unified School District and other community organizations to create the UCLA Community School, which is staffed by graduates of Center X and other urban educators (Quartz et al., 2009).

Recommendations for Teaching Social Justice in Teacher Education Programs

Darling-Hammond (2007) explained that “traditional teacher preparation has often been criticized for being overly theoretical, having little connection to practice, offering fragmented and incoherent courses, and lacking in a clear, shared conception of teaching among faculty” (p. 119). However, the teacher education programs at Boston College, Mills College, and UCLA’s Center X all demonstrate there are programs that have a clear vision, connected coursework, and strong ties between courses and practicum placements. These programs also contain many of the elements that Darling-Hammond (2007) lists as features of successful teacher education programs:

- a common core curriculum grounded in knowledge of development, learning, subject-matter pedagogy, and assessment, taught in the context of practice;
- well-defined standards of practice and performance used to guide the design and assessment of course work and clinical work;
- extended clinical experiences (at least thirty weeks) that are interwoven with course work and carefully mentored;
- strong relationships between universities and schools that share standards of good teaching consistent across courses and clinical work;

- use of case-study methods, teacher research, performance assessments, and portfolio examinations that relate teachers' learning to classroom practice. (p. 120)

However, all programs can be improved, even good ones. I offer some recommendations for teaching for social justice in teacher education programs.

Emphasize multiple dimensions of social justice.

Much of the social justice language found on the program websites and in research about the programs focuses primarily on race, leaving out sexual orientation, gender, (dis)ability and other social justice issues. Hyland (2010) explained that in the teacher education course that she instructs, “ironically, the students who were most vocal about teaching for social justice on issues of race were those that were also most vocally against incorporating issues of sexuality” (p. 394). Discussing race is an important component of social justice, but it also is important to examine other issues.

Schieble’s (2010) research, which was conducted in a teacher education program known for its commitment to social justice, found that the preservice teachers in her young adult literature course, who taught a unit on a novel online to high school students, wrote discussion questions in a way that “othered” LGBT people. In reviewing and coding the archived Moodle websites created by the preservice teachers, Schieble found that the assumption in the way the questions were written seemed to be that “adolescents would not be able to draw upon their own experiences of being ‘othered’ to understand LGBT identity—much less share that identity” (p. 379). In the students’ responses they “demonstrate a collective ‘us versus them’ mentality regarding community norms and LGBT issues” (p. 380). For example, a preservice teacher posted the discussion question about the novel *Luna*: “At this point in the story, who do you feel

for more, Regan or Liam/Luna? In your opinion, is Liam/Luna a burden to Regan? Do you believe Regan views him as such? Why or why not?” (p. 380). Two students responded by saying that they feel more for Regan. Elana wrote, “This question is not hard for me to decide on at all! i [sic] feel for Regan, I mean here she is trying to make it through high school which is hard enough but she has a her brother who wants to be a girl or is a girl or whatever” (p. 380).

Schieble’s (2010) and Hyland’s (2010) research suggests the importance of emphasizing multiple dimensions of social justice in teacher education programs. Their work demonstrates that focusing on race alone is not sufficient.

Prepare preservice teachers for all types of schools.

The social justice teacher education programs explored in this chapter emphasize the importance of preparing preservice teachers for placements in diverse schools. This is an important aim, one that should not be abandoned. However, it also is important to consider how we prepare preservice teachers to teach in predominantly White schools. Though it is possible to argue that traditionally this is what teacher education programs have been focused on for a long time, what I mean is that research needs to be conducted on whether there is (or should or should not be) a difference in how we educate for social justice in diverse schools and how we educate for social justice in schools that are not diverse.

De Waal-Lucas (2007) suggested that schools have become more segregated rather than less after *Brown v Board of Education* (1954), so preservice teachers going on to teach in schools in predominantly white suburbs is not uncommon. Additionally, De Waal-Lucas discussed the lack of literature surrounding the teaching of multicultural content to largely white, affluent students and called for more studies to be done in districts with similar demographics. As teacher

educators, we need to prepare preservice teachers to teach for social justice in all types of schools.

Research actual practice in addition to beliefs.

Much of the research about the outcomes of these programs focuses on the beliefs of the preservice teachers. More research needs to be done about the actual practices of social justice educators in K-12 schools. De Waal-Lucas (2007) researched a group of middle school social studies teachers who were teaching multicultural content to largely affluent, white students. She conducted interviews and observations, and analyzed the textbooks, state standards, and the school curriculum's scope and sequence. Three themes emerged from the research:

- a) There is a discrepancy between teachers' perceptions and practices
- b) The teachers' background in multicultural education is limited
- c) Though there is some inclusion of multicultural content, it is not put into practice in any substantial way because it is not seen as applicable to their school environment (p. 1)

In discussing the discrepancy between the teachers' perceptions and practices, De Waal Lucas (2007) explained, "though many teachers include some multicultural issues into their lessons, such inclusion falls short of a transformative level" (p. 10). However, most teachers in the study said during personal interviews that they saw themselves as teaching multicultural content at a transformative level.

It would be informative to see if teachers graduating from programs with strong social-justice backgrounds, such as Boston College, Mills College, and UCLA's Center X are able to teach multicultural lessons that *are* at the transformational level, unlike the teachers in De Wall-Lucas's (2007) study.

Recruit a diverse group of preservice teachers.

Finally, these social justice teacher education programs should continue their efforts to recruit a diverse group of preservice teachers. For example, although Latino teachers are well-represented in the Teacher Education Program at Center X, African American teachers are not. The faculty at Center X are concerned about the lack of African American preservice teachers in the program and have made an effort to study the role of race in education by reading past research, starting conversations, and holding a three-day retreat about race (Quartz et al., 2009). This concerted effort should continue in all programs.

Conclusion

The teacher education programs at Boston College, Mills College, and UCLA's Center X provide us, teacher educators, with ways to teach preservice teachers to teach for social justice. We can emulate these programs' determined focus on social justice as illustrated in their mission statements, the community partnerships they have formed, and their desire to change preservice teachers' beliefs as a means of changing their actions. But most importantly, we must remember what these programs acknowledge so well—that teaching is political—and preservice teachers need to realize that in their every act (from selecting texts to discussion topics), they are making a political choice.

CHAPTER THREE

“All of a Sudden I Have These Real Students”: Preservice Teachers Learning to Teach English

“Experience is a brutal teacher, but you learn. My God, do you learn.”

(often attributed to C.S. Lewis and a favorite quote of Emma’s, a preservice teacher in the study)

In reading the reflections that the preservice teachers in my Young Adult Literature for Schools class wrote after completing the project of teaching a novel online to high school students, almost all of the papers began something like Paige’s:

When this whole project first began I was beyond excited....The idea of teaching was exciting. Added to that excitement was the excitement of moving past the hypothetical and teaching real live students a lesson that I had actual designed. Every part of this project seemed fantastic to me. But that was before we got started.

The tone of the reflections quickly turned to one of disappointment, with the preservice teachers echoing Paige’s thoughts, “This experience was not what I expected it to be. In many ways I was very disappointed.” One of the most common complaints from the preservice teachers was about students not turning in assignments. Paige explains, “I learned how it feels to have students who don’t turn in assignments.” She concedes, “Realistically, I am going to have students in my classroom that do not do every assignment. It’s good to have an idea how I will react to that. Obviously I want to be the kind of teacher that wants my students to succeed....It

was incredibly difficult and painful for me to see my students not turning in their assignments day after day.”

And often the reflections ended with a statement similar to Paige’s, “But I will admit I learned quite a bit, even if it was not the kind of information I anticipated gaining from this project.”

In this article I explore the implications of this instructional project for teacher educators who are invested in the process of how to prepare preservice teachers to become educators. I suggest that authentic projects can help preservice teachers to rethink what it means to teach. And I share themes that arose from the project that are seen through interviews and analysis of documents that the preservice teachers created during the course.

While teaching the course Young Adult Literature for Schools in the spring of 2011 and spring of 2012, I conducted a qualitative study regarding the education of preservice teachers. This course is part of the secondary teacher education program at Lakeshore University², a large Midwestern, predominantly White university. As part of this class, undergraduates teach an online unit to a group of students from two local high schools. They do so via the free course management web application Moodle.

This project builds off of the work about what it means to learn to teach (Britzman, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner, 2010). The research questions that guide this inquiry include:

- 1) How do preservice secondary English teachers construct an understanding of teaching literacy?
- 2) How can teacher educators help prepare secondary English teachers to teach literacy?

² All names of people, places, and institutions are pseudonyms.

Literature Review

Recently teacher education programs have undergone much criticism and many changes. Darling-Hammond (2010) suggests that “for teacher education, this is perhaps the best of times and the worst of times” (p. 35). She explains,

It may be the best of times because so much hard work has been done by many teacher educators over the past two decades to develop more successful program models.... It may equally be the worst of times because there are so many forces in the environment that conspire to undermine these efforts. (p. 35)

A common criticism of teacher education programs by preservice teachers is that the classes are too theoretical—in other words, they are too abstract and general and do not discuss tools that can be used in the classroom. Sometimes coursework in teacher education programs is front-loaded, separating the *theory* (courses) from the *practice* (student teaching), which comes at the end of the program. Ideally, programs would require students to spend many hours in classrooms throughout the program sequence, “examining and applying the concepts and strategies they are simultaneously learning about in their courses” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 40).

Even when teacher education programs include multiple practicum experiences starting from the beginning of the program, often there can be a “disconnect between the campus and school-based components of programs” (Zeichner, 2010). Often preservice teachers do not have the opportunity to implement the practices they are learning in their teacher education courses in their school placements. Cooperating teachers may be unaccustomed to the theories and methods being taught in the education courses on campus, and the university instructors are not familiar with the specific practices being used in the classrooms where the preservice teachers are placed

(Zeichner, 2010). Regarding teacher education programs, Zeichner (2010) proposes that bringing together the university coursework and school-based practicums to create a third space—a hybrid space that rejects the binaries such as “practitioner and academic knowledge” and “theory and practice” in favor of “bringing P-12 teachers and their knowledge into campus courses and field experiences,” by “incorporating representations of teachers’ practices in campus courses,” and “incorporating knowledge from communities into preservice teacher education” (pp. 92-95). The third space becomes a transformative space that crosses the boundaries of traditional teacher education models. This type of third space can be created by, for example, holding teacher education methods courses in a local high school where the preservice teachers can observe high school teachers who are using practices that are being discussed in the methods course (Zeichner, 2010).

A third space, where theory (from teacher education coursework) is intermeshed with practice (working with secondary teachers and high school students), is what I aimed to create in the course *Young Adult Literature for Schools*, which is the subject of this article. This study is designed to explore the connections between theory and practice in this third space.

Context

University

The preservice teachers in this study are enrolled in a large, Midwestern University. This university, in 2010, had over 40,000 students enrolled, approximately 30,000 of whom are undergraduates. Approximately 87% of the student body identifies as White, and the average composite ACT score is 28 (Lakeshore University, 2010). The twenty-nine students who participated in the study ranged in age from 21-26 years old. Twenty-seven of the students identified as White, and two identified as African American.

Course

All of the preservice teachers in this study were enrolled in the course Young Adult Literature for Schools. This course is required in the second semester of the secondary English teacher education program and is an elective for elementary education majors with a language arts minor. The majority of the students in the course were preservice secondary English teachers. The secondary English teacher education program is currently comprised of a cohort-based four-semester sequence of education courses and school-based field experiences (Lakeshore University, 2011). The education programs Lakeshore University emphasize the importance of teaching for social justice. Additionally, the secondary education programs emphasize:

- *Integrated and coordinated course work.* Students engage in a coherent, progressive series of courses and experiences that build on their increasing knowledge and skills.
- *Course work that links directly and immediately to school practice.* Because their courses tie directly to field experiences, students can better relate what they learn in class to the concrete challenges of schools, classrooms, and adolescents. Students have ample opportunities to test, revise, and reflect on their developing teaching and planning skills.
- *Team learning that fosters dialogue and collaboration.* Students are organized into learning communities and learning teams. During the first semester, smaller interdisciplinary learning teams are assigned to the same school and collaborate on projects. These groups offer students the opportunity for dialogue with faculty, peers, and cooperating teachers while preparing them for schools where curriculum is increasingly interconnected and teachers collaborate daily.
- *A commitment to prepare future teachers who can help each child learn.* In course work and field experiences, students explore teaching and learning issues related to ethnic, cultural, and language diversity, social class, and students' special needs and abilities. (Lakeshore University, 2011)

Instructional design. In designing the course Young Adult Literature for Schools, I based the syllabus, assignments, and activities on Schieble's (2009) study regarding exploring multimodality, literacy and learning with young adult fiction and additional articles about effective teacher education (Britzman, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner, 2010). One of

my main goals in organizing the course was to help to connect theory and practice by providing the preservice teachers with opportunities to apply the theory that we were learning in the course to a real-life teaching opportunity (namely the online instructional unit). The course was crafted using the principles of Understanding by Design—that is, the desired outcomes and major assessments were designed first. The rest of the course activities were put in place to give the preservice teachers the experiences they needed to be successful meeting those outcomes (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The main professional text used in the course, *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry out Instructional Units*, helped to provide the preservice teachers with a background in planning units (Smagorinsky, 2008). The chart below lists the young adult novels read by the preservice teachers in the course Young Adult Literature for Schools. It also indicates which of those books the preservice teachers chose to teach to the high school students each year.

Table 3

Young Adult Novels Read by Preservice Teachers

Title	Author	Year on Syllabus for Young Adult Lit.	Year Taught to High School Students
<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>	Alexie, S	2011 & 2012	2011 & 2012
<i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>	Asher, J.	2012	2012
<i>The Hunger Games</i>	Collins, S.	2011 & 2012	2011 & 2012
<i>Will Grayson Will Grayson</i>	Green, J.	2012	
<i>The First Part Last</i>	Johnson, A.	2011 & 2012	
<i>Guardian</i>	Lester, J.	2011 & 2012	2012
<i>Sold</i>	McCormick, P.	2012	2012
<i>The Arrival</i>	Tan, S.	2011 & 2012	2011 & 2012
<i>Leftovers</i>	Weiss, L.	2011 & 2012	2011
<i>Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	Chbosky, S	2011	2011

<i>Breathing Underwater</i>	Flinn, A.	2011
<i>Red Glass</i>	Resau, L.	2011
<i>Keeping Corner</i>	Sheth, K.	2011
<i>I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This</i>	Woodson, J.	2011

Online instructional unit. A major project in the Young Adult Literature for Schools course is writing lesson plans for and teaching a three-week online unit focused on a young adult novel with social justice themes. One of the most important reasons for the online unit assignment is to have an authentic project as part of the course. Often methods and literature courses in teacher education programs include an assignment to design a hypothetical unit plan. However, as Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) have explained, “contemporary research suggests that learning about teaching best develops when prospective teachers encounter content in contexts in which it can be applied” (p. 122).

The preservice teachers work in groups of three to plan for and teach the online unit. Working together allows the preservice teachers to “work with other students who [are] at the same stage of teaching practice,” which preservice teachers have found valuable in their development as professionals (Talvitie, Peltokallio & Mannisto, 2000, p. 87). Occasionally the preservice teachers in the study by Talvitie, et al. (2000) and the preservice teachers in my own class expressed that tension arose because of peers not stating comments tactfully or peers not contributing equally to group projects. Overall, however, the frustrations that arose from working in groups were outweighed by the benefits of the conversations that took place regarding planning instruction together.

The three-week units were structured so on the first day of the unit the preservice teachers met with the high school students in person to introduce the units and familiarize the high school students with using Moodle (an open-source e-learning software platform) to learn

online. The preservice teachers taught two online lessons per week for three weeks. On the days of online lessons, the high students went to a computer lab, logged into Moodle, and completed lesson and activities that the preservice teachers posted for the day. The high school students' regular English teacher was in the room to answer questions and facilitate learning.

The units taught by the preservice teachers all concluded with the creation of multigenre projects, which are “composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic” (Romano, 2000, x-xi). The high school students and preservice teachers in each book group contributed one unique piece to their group's multigenre project. Each person's contribution was meant to answer the essential question(s) of the unit (Burke, 2010). Essential questions are used to “understand the big ideas in a course” and allow students and teachers to “grapple with” and explore these ideas through “discussions, written responses, and ongoing investigations and research—all of which might culminate in a paper, a presentation, or some appropriate project or artifact” (Burke, 2010, p. 2). The multigenre projects were presented on the last day of the unit when the preservice teachers went to the local high school in person to conclude the unit.

High school partnership. The online unit in the course was taught by the preservice teachers to high school students from a local school. The first semester of this study, we formed a partnership with Leigh Hills High School. The second semester of this study, due to a schedule change, we could no longer partner with Leigh Hills High School, so we formed a partnership with Caryville High School.

Leigh Hills High School is located in a Midwestern village of over 7,000 people. The village website boasts “while maintaining a friendly, small-town atmosphere, [Leigh Hills] also offers all the advantages of proximity to a large metropolitan area” (Village of [Leigh Hills],

2010). During the 2010-2011 school year, during which this study takes place, 87% of the student population of Leigh Hills High School was White, and 82% of the school population was not economically disadvantaged (Department of Public Instruction, 2011). The preservice teachers taught their online units to a college literature course at Leigh Hills High School that was primarily composed of college-bound juniors and seniors, but was an elective course open to all students. The majority of the students in the class were White.

Caryville High School is located in a Midwestern city of over 15,000 people. During the 2011-2012 school year, during which this study took place, 83% of the student population of Caryville High School was White, and 87% of the school population was not economically disadvantaged (Department of Public Instruction, 2012). The preservice teachers taught their online units within a required freshman English course at Caryville High School. The majority of the students in the class were White.

The regular education teachers (whom I refer to as cooperating teachers) of the courses that we formed a partnership with at each high school were integral to the project. The preservice teachers sent them the units that would be taught ahead of time, and the cooperating teachers came to our Young Adult Literature for Schools class on campus to give us background about their courses and students and answered questions that the preservice teachers had regarding their pedagogies, curricula, and students.

Methodology

The methodology of the study is case study, which allows for investigation of the “*local particulars* of [an] abstract social phenomenon” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 3). More specifically, the methodology is a *collective* case study, because “one issue or concern is selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue” (Creswell, 2007, p.

74). These multiple case studies selected to illustrate the issue will be the cases of the individual students in the course (Creswell, 2007). In other words, each preservice teacher individually is considered a bounded case.

Data Generation, Collection, and Analysis

I used multiple methods for gathering data: preservice teacher interviews, my personal reflective journal entries, and preservice teacher course documents. The varied data sources allowed me to look for themes across and within each source. The first semester that I taught this course, twelve students participated in the study, and in the second semester seventeen students participated. Including myself as a participant, there were a total of thirty study participants.

Preservice teacher interviews. I interviewed the preservice teachers after they created unit plans for a young adult novel that they have taught online to local high school students. During these interviews, I asked the preservice teachers to explain why they designed the unit plans the way they did, and we discussed the teaching of the unit. Additionally, I asked the preservice teachers about our course assignments, prompting them with questions about the ways in which course content, discussions, and assignments helped (or did not help) them to think about teaching literacy for social justice.

To analyze this data, I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews and then coded and analyzed them in NVivo. Although I come into the research with some constructs to apply to data (such as looking for benefits and drawbacks of online teaching), I also looked for themes that came up (such as “characteristics of good teaching” as identified by the preservice teachers and the preservice teachers’ perceptions about their “role as a teacher”) using an inductive approach to data analysis, which is “grounded in particular pieces of data that are sorted and interrelated in order to understand the dimensions and dynamics of [a] phenomenon” (Dyson &

Genishi, 2005, p. 82). After the first round of coding, which resulted in twenty codes used (such as “turning points” and “uncomfortable moments”), I completed secondary coding collapsed codes, which resulted in ten codes used (such as “benefits of authentic teaching experience,” “drawbacks of authentic teaching experience,” and “views of assessment”). I then wrote process and analytic memos about the emerging themes. These memos helped me to think through and make sense of the codes. Through process of memo writing, my understandings of the data became more visible (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

My personal reflective journal entries. Throughout the two semesters, I wrote reflective journal entries after each class period. These discussed my perceptions of how my instruction in the Young Adult Literature for Schools course was effective in encouraging the preservice teachers to design curriculum for and teach units about literacy for social justice. Looking back on these journal entries reminded me of events and conversations that occurred in class. Some of these events and conversations were later summarized or discussed in my research.

Preservice teacher course documents. I collected documents created by the preservice teachers (unit plans, lesson plans, reflections, and other projects). These documents helped to illustrate examples of points that the preservice teachers talked about in their interviews. Many preservice teachers referenced parts of the unit plans that they created and other projects that they completed. I coded the preservice teachers’ course documents with the same codes used for the interviews.

Looking at data from preservice teachers’ interviews, my personal reflective journal entries, and the preservice teachers’ course documents allowed me to triangulate the data to verify themes across sources.

Findings

Through analyzing the data from both semesters that I taught the course, I found that two main topics emerged—the affordances of authentic teaching experiences and the role that uncomfortable moments play in these teaching experiences. In the following sections, I explore each of these topics, drawing out themes from each.

Affordances of Authentic Teaching Experiences

In interviews conducted after the course was completed, many of the preservice teachers discussed the affordances of participating in an authentic teaching experience in a methods course. The following themes emerged: the authentic teaching experience 1) gave the preservice teachers agency in their teaching and made them more accountable, 2) gave the preservice teachers the opportunity to practice skills beyond planning lessons 3) encouraged preservice teachers to be more reflective about their practice.

Authentic projects and agency/accountability. In interviews with the preservice teachers, although I frequently asked questions about teaching for social justice, interestingly the preservice teachers were not as interested in talking about social justice as they were discussing topics like their own (and their students') agency and accountability.

The preservice teachers explained that in their two semesters thus far in the teacher education program, they had planned approximately five hypothetical units. And they understood why those were assigned—Marcus, whose group designed a unit about societal gender expectations in the novel *The Leftovers*, explained, “[Hypothetical units] are useful for learning how to build lessons. They’re useful for learning how to rally what you know, building it into a conceptual hierarchy.” But the preservice teachers also noted the constraints of not actually teaching the hypothetical units. Marcus continued, “hypothetical units are a lot easier [than

teaching actual units], because you don't have to actually do them. You don't have to make them work. You just have to *say* that everything is going to work.”

The authenticity of the assignment led to more accountability. Karly, whose group designed a unit about race and culture in the book *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* commented, “I think the online unit was a pretty safe way to kind of experiment with how to [teach]...I felt way more accountable, because all of a sudden I have these real students that have to, like, learn something, and that I have to grade, and that are real, instead of these weird faceless nothing students that you just make up.” This quote vividly shows how Karly realizes her students are real people with individual backgrounds and identities. For Karly, and many other preservice teachers, with the accountability came agency. Karly expressed, “I really liked the agency that I felt with the unit. ... I felt like I was a teacher – a real teacher.” Teaching this unit helped Karly to begin to identify as a teacher rather than as a student.

Often a school practicum site is where preservice teachers gain real-life teaching experiences, but practicum experiences vary widely. Many preservice teachers discussed that they had much more ownership and agency in teaching the online unit in the methods course than they had at their practicum sites. Josh, whose group taught a unit about identity through the book *Thirteen Reasons Why*, explained that in his practicum site, in the last two semesters combined, he was only able to “get in front of the classroom” two or three times, and in these cases his cooperating teacher had already planned the lesson. So he appreciated the opportunity to gain experience with planning and teaching an entire unit in the young adult literature course. Nicole, whose group taught a unit about the effects of poverty on people through the novel *Sold*, felt like she “didn't really make much of a difference” at her practicum site. But in teaching the online unit, “even though it was just three weeks,” after seeing the students' multi-genre final

projects and their final thoughts on the book, she came away from the experience thinking, “Yeah, they learned what I wanted them to learn.” She explained that at her practicum site she “just taught two separate lessons,” but in teaching the online unit she valued “seeing how [everything] works together to create this final product of understanding,” which, she says, “was really cool to see, and it was a lot more rewarding.” Emma, who taught about immigration via the graphic novel *The Arrival*, admitted that though she found it exciting that she was given a lot of responsibility and flexibility in teaching at her practicum site, “at the same time [it was] very scary.” On the other hand she found that “[The project for the methods class] was a good way to ease into [teaching students], and less scary, because you’re not there in person, which can be a good or a bad thing. But I think it was a good kind of transition, and a good way to start thinking about teaching real students and not just creating random lesson plans that really have no effect on students’ lives.” Emma sees herself as not just accountable for creating lessons, but also for affecting students’ lives. She wants her teaching to have a lasting impact.

Julie, who was a part of the group teaching *The Leftovers*, discussed that when teaching hypothetical units, it is easier to not fully think lesson plans through, explaining “If it looks good on paper it will be fine.” But she explained in teaching the online unit, “We [preservice teachers] were held way more accountable to having a good lesson that worked and flowed and that students could do.” She continued, “So [planning and teaching the unit] took more time and we thought about it way more. It wasn’t just like slapping it on a piece of paper and saying, ‘Oh, this looks good.’” Julie explained that she knew that actual students were going to be participating in the unit, so her group “had to put more time and effort into actually making it work.”

Overall, the authentic teaching experience allowed the preservice teachers to have more agency and be more accountable in their teaching. As Marcus (a member of *The Leftovers* group)

described it, he had “a more constant state of awareness” when working on this project because he was teaching real subject matter to real students. John, whose group taught about morality and civil disobedience in *The Hunger Games*, described the authentic teaching experience as being “a lot more serious” than teaching hypothetical units, “and a much more valuable learning experience.”

Although the preservice teachers had been accountable for designing lessons before this unit, they did not count the experience as “real” until they were accountable to and for students. This shift of responsibility from the preservice teachers’ own personal learning to others’ (their students’) learning provides a more intense experience.

Authentic projects and practicing multiple skills. Participating in authentic teaching experiences also allows preservice teachers to practice multiple skills. Planning lessons is just one piece of being a teacher. Teaching an authentic project to real students gave the preservice teachers the opportunity to practice assessment, motivating students who do not turn in assignments, and working with English Language Learners (ELLs), among other skills. Another skill that does not get practiced in planning hypothetical lessons is revising future lessons based on what happened with previous lessons. Julie (a member of *The Leftovers* group) explained this value of authentic teaching experiences, “And that’s the thing, you never know how [the lesson plan] is gonna to turn out. It might look good on paper, [but when we got half way through our unit] the students were saying that it was just too much work. We had to revise it then. [But with] hypothetical [units] you never go back to it.”

Additionally, through the authentic teaching experience, the preservice teachers also were able to collaborate in their lesson planning and instruction. They valued this opportunity to work together and learn from each other. Emma (a member of *The Arrival* group) noted, “I think [in

the future] collaboration between teachers will be really, really important, and I think the way education's going, that's going to just be an essential skill to have.”

Many preservice teachers were surprised by students who did not turn in assignments or who turned in assignments late. Nicole (a member of *Sold* group) said, “Even though it was disappointing when students didn't fill out certain work, it was realistic.” She outlined steps she took when students were missing work, including contacting the student, figuring out how and when the student would turn in the assignment, and deciding how it would be graded. “And I think that that's teaching— you're going to have students who don't turn in work when you're a teacher. So I think it was good to have that experience with them and learn how to talk about how their grades are going and stuff like that.” It was surprising for me, as Nicole's teacher, to hear her describe the challenge of student nonparticipation this way. I remember clearly how upset she was when she first faced the struggles of students not turning in assignments during the online unit. This growth illustrated to me that, for Nicole, when she first faced the challenge, it was a transformational moment—it was uncomfortable and she didn't know what to do. Having come through the experience, she is now ready to approach situations like this as a teacher. Nichole's growth in this situation is a good example of how transformational moments help preservice teachers shape their idea of what it means to be a teacher.

Ann (a member of *Sold* group) was, overall, impressed with the effort that many students showed during the online unit, but found it hard to understand students who did not turn in assignments: “I think that all of us at [this university] were probably on the end where we did more than we had to, so it's hard for me to be like, ‘Why would you just not do it? Like, how can you do that? How can you not turn something in?’ So that was frustrating to me.” In this quote Ann admits that she has trouble sometimes understanding why students would not be like her. If

Ann were planning a hypothetical unit, her hypothetical students would all do the work, but here they didn't. In this instance, Ann hasn't yet had that transformational moment in which she understands that students are unlike her or that not all students do what teachers say. Ann's expectation of (or preference for) similarity between herself and her students is shared by many preservice teachers.

Evan, whose group taught about racial oppression in the novel *Guardian*, realized from teaching the online unit that he should be more careful in giving clear directions. He explained that providing clear directions is “hands down, something that I will make sure that I revisit again and again (double-triple check) before I [give] them to the students.” Sydney (a member of the *Thirteen Reasons Why* group) learned that having patience (such as when students did not turn in assignments), being creative, and keeping lessons fun are important in teaching. These learning moments occurred for the preservice teacher because they were given the opportunity to teach real lessons to real students.

Authentic projects and reflective practice. The authentic teaching experience gave the preservice teachers an opportunity and the motivation to reflect on their practice. At the end of the online unit, the preservice teachers wrote reflection papers that answered questions such as:

- What did you learn as a teacher by planning and teaching this unit?
- How did you grow as a teacher?
- What did you learn about teaching for social justice?
- And what did the high school students learn about social justice?
- What did the high school students learn from your unit?
- And how do you know they learned that?

Nicole (a member of the *Sold* group) noticed that writing the reflection at the end of the unit was helpful for her. She explained, “I think it was good that we wrote those reflections afterwards, because during the unit, I just felt frustrated all the time, but I think that was because I was stressed with a lot of other stuff that was going on. But, looking back, I think I gained a lot

more out of [teaching this unit] than I thought I did. I think it was beneficial for us to write those reflections. And I think a lot of other people felt the same way.” The act of writing the reflections helped the preservice teachers to process teaching of the unit and their growth as teachers.

Not only did many students find writing the reflection helpful, but Emma (a member of *The Arrival* group) argued that, “If we’re supposed to be learning how to be reflective practitioners, it’s important that we’re actually teaching units. I think it’s really important to think about what you would change for the unit and [to think] about how you can connect with students.”

Marcus (a member of *The Leftovers* group) explained that he was able to reflect on parts of his instruction that did not work: “For [my group], it was [that] we probably [assigned] too much work. We probably didn’t pace it well.... That’s all stuff that you’re not necessarily going to see if it’s just a hypothetical [unit].”

Julie (a member of *The Leftovers* group) noted that the project “solidified [her] teaching philosophy.” She added that teaching this unit made her realize what she wants her classroom to be like—what things are non-negotiables.

Implications. Using authentic projects in methods courses that allow preservice teachers to teach real students, while still being closely supported by their instructors, allows us as teacher educators to get one step closer to what Zeichner (2010) calls a third space—a hybrid space that rejects the binaries such as “practitioner and academic knowledge” and “theory and practice” (p. 92-95), a space that serves as a *connection* between theory and practice.

In this teacher education course about teaching young adult literature, using a collaborative online environment is a useful way to create a third space in which preservice English teachers can practice designing and teaching units for high school students. This online

project is particularly useful at bridging the so-called gap between theory and practice—it allows the preservice teachers to implement the theory from coursework into their practice all within the structure and with the support of a teacher education course (Zeichner, 2010). The realness of designing curriculum for teaching an online unit raises the bar for the preservice teachers, encouraging them to design more thoughtful lessons and to be more reflective about their practice.

Next I will discuss the uncomfortable moments (which often took the form of conversations) that came up during authentic project. I suggest that the authenticity of the project led students to be more invested in it, leading to more hard decisions and self-doubt.

Uncomfortable Moments in the Classroom

The preservice teachers in the course were having a heated discussion about the Race Implicit Association Test they had just taken online. This online test, created by researchers at the University of Washington, Harvard University, and University of Virginia, “measures implicit attitudes and beliefs that people are either unwilling or unable to report” (Project Implicit, 2011). In taking the Implicit Association Test about race in class, I was hoping to prompt discussion about assumptions held by some people in society (and possibly in our classroom) that race is no longer an important issue in today’s culture. It was my goal to challenge the preservice teachers in the class to heighten their awareness regarding the importance of teaching for social justice.

Having done this online test with high school students, I knew that it could cause students some discomfort. Although the test was anonymous and students never reported their scores, when some students saw their results, they were upset. This unease usually turned into anger or dismissal of the test, arguing that it was not valid. I expected that preservice teachers in a social-

justice oriented teacher education program might have a different reaction to the test, but many of them also spent a good deal of our discussion about racism in society questioning the validity of the test and not considering ways in which racism may still be present in society. At first I questioned the helpfulness of this activity, as many of the preservice teachers appeared uncomfortable throughout it, and many spent much of the discussion arguing against the validity of the activity rather than examining what we could learn from the experience or the implications that the activity points to. But, I later realized that though this discomfort and disbelief was the preservice teachers' first reaction, given more time in the course and more distance from taking the Race Implicit Association Test, they could reflect on the discomfort that they felt, making sense of it. From my research on this course, I have come to believe and hope that the experience of taking this test and the uncomfortable moments that came with it in class will prompt deeper reflection about the topic from the preservice teachers and that it will impact them more and stick with them longer than perhaps a less memorable activity might have.

Jakubowski (2001) addressed teaching uncomfortable topics in the classroom. She draws on Freire's conceptions of what it means to be educated and explained that the traditional, banking model of education "promotes dependency"—"students learn to become dependent on teachers to tell them how to think, what to think, and how to act in order to effectively function within...society" (p. 64). Freire viewed education as promoting independence through encouragement of critical thought, allowing education to become "a practice of freedom rather than domination" (p. 64). In this type of education, the role of the teacher shifts from that of depositor of information to facilitator of critical thought.

My experiences with using the Race Implicit Association Test to generate a transformative discomfort in preservice teachers piqued my interest in the role discomfort plays

in a preservice teachers' development. I found that the teaching of the online unit provided more uncomfortable moments for the preservice teachers, which allowed them to grow in ways that a more traditional, hypothetical unit plan may not have.

Authentic Teaching Experiences and Uncomfortable Moments

Although the preservice teachers valued teaching a real unit, the realness of the experience was also challenging. Nicole (a member of the *Sold* group) explained, "For this [unit] we were held way more accountable to having a good lesson that worked and flowed and that students could do.... So it took more time, and we thought about it way more—it wasn't just like slapping it on a piece of paper and saying, 'Oh this looks good.'" This increased accountability that Nicole discussed led to some moments of frustration in our college classroom. Lisa (a member of *The Hunger Games* (A) group) explained her take on these tense moments, "Ultimately, I just want[ed] to make sure that these kids [got] something out of this [experience]." She continued, "So I think that was a big part of why we were all freaking out all the time about everything, because it was like, actual kids are going to be doing this....I want to look semi-competent [for instance, if the students] have arguments about their grades or something."

We aren't real teachers. The preservice teachers were uncomfortable with their roles in the online classroom—they expressed frustration that they were not the students' "real" classroom teachers, yet they were not really just university students either. They found themselves in a middle ground between student and teacher. Hallman and Burdick (2011) explain (in their context, in regards to preservice teachers participating in service learning) that, "this location of being a 'not-yet' teacher placed them at an identity point difficult for them to define. Not only were they asking, 'Who are the students I am working with...?' but they were

also asking, ‘Who am I...?’” (p. 357). I saw evidence of this in my study as well. It seems that the preservice teachers’ voiced frustrations about not being “real” teachers showed that they were at a point of growth where they are being asked to think of themselves in a new way.

Discomfort with assessment. Discomfort was also apparent when it came time to assess the high school students’ online responses and final multigenre projects—the in-class discussion regarding how the preservice teachers were going to assess the students was passionate. The cooperating high school teachers requested that the preservice teachers grade each student with narrative comments as well as a total unit score out of 100 points. Some preservice teachers argued that the only assessment they should provide was a narrative—they did not want to assign a number to the students’ work. Other preservice teachers explained that a single-spaced, page-long narrative for each student (as had been proposed by a few of the preservice teachers), was not realistic, especially given that it was the end of the semester and the preservice teachers had many term papers to write. Yet others proposed that a rubric should be used. While the arguing was heated and passionate, it was not -spirited, so I let the conversation continue. The preservice teachers began to feel uncomfortable—no consensus was being reached, and it didn’t seem as though it was likely to happen, at least not soon. When the tension in the room rose enough to become very uncomfortable, I proposed that we split into five groups, each come up with a proposal for the assessment, and then each group would present their ideas to the class. At the end of the presentations, we had five extremely different conceptions of what the assessment should look like, so we proposed combining the two voted-on favorites. Eventually, one person volunteered to take on the task of combining the two selected assessments into one.

This challenging, yet productive, discussion about assessment effectively conveyed how many different pedagogical opinions exist regarding assessment and teaching in general. Because

this instructional unit was one that was actually being taught, the preservice teachers were forced to face some of the realities of teaching—ideology vs. time, etc. And they resisted, often blaming the situation (of teaching online) rather than realizing that no decision they make would be a perfect one. Perhaps at this early stage in their teaching careers (their second semester in the education program), it is easier to say “this [online teaching situation] isn’t real” than to accept that the daily decisions will be difficult when they are teaching in their own classrooms, too. It seems probable, though, that they were expressing frustration because they *were* in a real environment, and they cared more about this unit than if they just had to turn in a unit plan that they would not teach. They were frustrated because they wanted to do a good job teaching their students, and thus they were thinking more critically about the project—they had more at stake than if they were turning in a hypothetical unit plan. The class discussion also revealed the challenge of co-teaching and working to come to a consensus with a group.

In interviews after the semester, some of the preservice teachers brought up this in-class discussion regarding assessment—they explained that it was an uncomfortable discussion, but they found it to be helpful in furthering their understanding of what it means to be a teacher. Dowler (2002) addressed this “uncomfortable transition students undergo when teachers disrupt and destabilize their understandings of how the world works” (p. 68). She clarified that the uncomfortable classroom still provides for the psychological and emotional safety of the students—“the uncomfortable and comfortable classroom are not necessarily antithetical to each other” (p. 68). A high level of trust needs to be developed between everyone in the classroom so that important conversations and learning can take place.

The next semester that I taught the class, because of time constraints, I created a rubric for the preservice teachers to use to assess the students’ online responses. I gave the preservice

teachers flexibility to modify it, but I gave them the basic structure. After the online project was completed, in his interview, Josh (a member of the *Thirteen Reasons Why* group) said about assessment, “I thought it went okay. We had the rubric that you had handed out, and we had pretty much just followed it from there.” His lack of reflection or struggle with the process of assessment reinforced my belief in the power that uncomfortable conversation in the classroom can have on learning. From Josh’s comment, I realized that I should have had his class design their own assessments—they needed to experience the struggle of deciding how and what to grade. Time is a common tension in courses in teacher education programs. With pressure to fit in more concepts, ideas, and assignments into the coursework, instructors must make choices about how much time to devote to each element of the course. In my situation regarding the creation of the rubric, I ended up cutting out an activity that likely could have led to a valuable student discussion.

Implications. Although uncomfortable moments can cause discomfort for both instructors and students, instructors should not immediately try to end or relieve these instances in the classroom, but should examine what can be learned from them. Much like after learning about providing appropriate wait time after asking questions, instructors also can learn to be more conscious of not backing away from uncomfortable moments just because they might not be pleasant. If there is much to be gained from the moment, then instructors can be mindful of letting that transformative moment happen.

Conclusion

In teaching this course and in writing this article, I laid out a framework for using an online instructional unit in a preservice teacher education course to help to connect theory and practice. The project allowed the preservice teachers to apply the theory they learned in the

course to a real project (with actual students) in which they were invested in. As Britzman (2003) explains, "...the deeply held myth that one learns to teach solely by experience works against teacher education, because if teachers learn by experience, why should they attend classes in schools of education?" (p. 55). Teacher education courses must exist for a reason—if they were not needed, we would just send teachers right into the field to be educated there. It seems possible that if preservice teachers learned their craft solely (or at least mostly) by being placed with a practicing teacher in an apprenticeship model, one caution is that this may just reinforce current norms of teaching. The preservice teachers might become encultured in schooling as it exists now, but may not be able to envision what education could be. Preservice teachers need to understand both how to work within the current educational system and how to envision and work toward a better system. A problem that remains with theoretical coursework is that preservice teachers can have ideals based on the theory they are presented with in their courses, but sometimes much of this theory seems to be abandoned upon stepping foot into the classroom. The looming dilemma is how to most effectively translate theory into practice (Zeichner, 2010).

In examining the first question that guides this research, (How do preservice secondary English teachers construct an understanding of teaching literacy?), one way that preservice secondary English teachers construct an understanding of teaching literacy is through authentic projects in methods courses that allow for and encourage uncomfortable, authentic discussions about pressing topics that are interesting and pertinent to the preservice teachers at the time. Being uncomfortable can be a means for growth and learning. The preservice teachers in the course often expressed feeling uncomfortable with certain aspects of teaching the unit—especially assessment. Teaching real students online pushed the preservice teachers to think critically about their actions. Their discomfort created opportunities for deeper reflection about

teaching practices. The realness of this project forced the preservice teachers to confront situations that may not have seemed as urgent otherwise (such as assessment, motivating students who are not turning in assignments, and working with English Language Learners (ELLs)).

Regarding the second question that guides this research (How can teacher educators help prepare secondary English teachers to teach literacy?), Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) call for a bridge between theory and practice in teacher education, explaining that we need to find ways for “teachers to learn about practice *in* practice, so that concrete applications can be made and problems of practice can be raised, analyzed, and addressed” (p. 115). We need to create teacher education programs that ensure preservice teachers develop “the knowledge, skills, and dispositions” that will allow them to be successful in the classroom with all students (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007, p. 114). This calls for the content in teacher education programs to be designed in a fashion that allow preservice teachers to learn about the components of effective teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007).

In my research, the authentic teaching experience: 1) gave the preservice teachers agency in their teaching and made them more accountable, 2) gave them the opportunity practice skills beyond planning lessons 3) encouraged preservice teachers to be more reflective about their practice. Overall, the authentic project furthered along the process of the preservice teachers’ identities shifting from student to teacher. This identity shifting reminds me from a scene from *Toy Story* in which Buzz Lightyear watches an advertisement for himself on the television and he begins to realize that he is just a toy. He is disheartened by this realization, this identity shift. Like the commercial is a transformational moment for Buzz in this scene, the authentic project was a transformational moment for the preservice teachers in my class. Although in the clip Buzz

was devastated by this transformation, the preservice teachers were surprised and sometimes frustrated with aspects of teaching, but they were able to learn from their experiences, growing as educators as their identities shifted from student to teacher.

The implications for teacher education are as follows: we must design authentic experiences that allow our students to experience the discomfort that goes along with making hard decisions and reshaping their beliefs about what it means to teach. I believe that close partnerships with K-12 schools can help facilitate these types of experiences. This leads to additional questions that are worth further research: How can teacher education programs effectively form partnerships with local schools that benefit both the local school and the teacher education program? What do those partnerships look like? And how can those partnerships affect students' (both preservice teachers' and K-12 students') learning?

CHAPTER FOUR

“If We Could Just See Them Face-to-Face”: Preservice Teachers Learning to Teach in an Online Context

Technology Skills Taught in Teacher Education Programs

As an undergraduate in the teacher education program at a small, private Midwestern college, I was required to take an educational technology class. Learning how to effectively use technology in my future high school English classroom interested me, so I was excited about the course. When I found out that we would be learning HyperStudio, an educational program that allows creation of multimedia content, primarily used by elementary teachers and students, for the entire term, my enthusiasm for the class quickly faded. We spent the first half of the term learning how to use the various tools found within the program, and during the second half of the term we spent countless hours in the Macintosh computer lab in the education building creating our own HyperStudio project. I got an A on the project and an A in the class, but I never used my project or HyperStudio again.

Teaching HyperStudio to a group of K-12 preservice teachers from all content areas seemed like a misguided curriculum choice to me. Not only did many of us have no desire to use the program because it was not suited for our students' ages, had we wanted to use HyperStudio, many of us went on to teach in school districts that did not own it. Even if the districts we taught in had owned the program, it takes students a considerable amount of time to learn how to use it, and our instructional time would have been devoted to teaching the students how to use certain features within HyperStudio, instead of using HyperStudio as a tool for students to develop and show their understanding of the subject area.

This experience that I had of learning about one particular technology in a teacher education program led me to consider how I use technology in the courses that I now teach in a secondary teacher education program. The following questions guide my research of an online project that I implemented in the teacher education course *Young Adult Literature for Schools*:

1. What technology skills are being taught in education programs that teachers find valuable?
2. How can teacher educators improve educating preservice teachers in how to incorporate technology into their classrooms?

Related Literature

In a speech given at Columbia University's Teachers College, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan accused, "By almost any standard, many if not most of the nation's 1,450 schools, colleges and departments of education are doing a mediocre job of preparing teachers for the realities of the 21st century classroom" (as cited in Cruz, 2009, para. 2). Does the research confirm or dispute Duncan's claim? Are our teacher education programs preparing preservice teachers to integrate technology into their classrooms?

The majority of preservice teachers enrolled in teacher education programs now are what Prensky calls digital natives—people who have grown up using digital technology, such as the Internet, computers, mp3 players, and cell phones. Their generation is known for being comprised of "enthusiastic users of technology" (Lei, 2009, p. 87). How does this enthusiasm for technology manifest itself in teacher education programs?

Lei (2009) studied the 2007 freshman starting the teacher education program at a large northeastern university. These digital natives were positive about technology—some declaring it "an essential part of our daily lives" and "a necessity in society" (p. 90). They believed that

technology could help them teach better and that it could help students learn better. However, the students' confidence levels with technology were moderate—lower than expected for digital natives. Lei (2009) reported that “about half (48.2%) of participants felt that they did well with computer technologies. One third of them reported they were ‘neutral’ about this statement, and 22.5% of them did not think that they did well with computer technologies.... Only 13.8% felt confident that they could solve most of the problems with their computers.” (p. 90). Furthermore, although the preservice teachers had strong positive beliefs about technology, they only expressed moderate interest in computers and related technologies—54% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am interested in computers and related technologies,” but 45.5% were neutral to the statement (p. 90). As Lei (2009) pointed out, “To them, technology was more a fact of life than something to like or dislike” (p. 90).

Additionally, despite their strong positive beliefs about technology in general, the preservice teachers in Lei's (2009) study had some reservations about using technology in the classroom. The participants believed that technology should be used in moderation. One preservice teacher explained that it was possible to, “rely too heavily on technology, that everyday tasks may seem unimaginable without the technology that [students] have become adapted to” (Lei, 2009, p. 90). Another preservice teacher commented, “Technology should be used as a helpful tool but not something that people depend on” (Lei, 2009, p. 90-91). Some participants noted that technology could be unreliable, and that using technology in classrooms had “both its plusses and minuses” (Lei, 2009, p. 91). The preservice teachers also thought that teaching with technology should be limited at the lower grades because young students should be focusing on acquiring other skills, rather than technology skills.

Despite being proficient in some uses of technology (such as social networking), the preservice teachers “lacked experiences and expertise in using classroom technologies such as interactive whiteboards, idea processors, content-related technology, and assistive technologies” (Lei, 2009, p. 91). This study suggested that the digital native generation will not merely naturally integrate technology into their classrooms—they need to be exposed to and explicitly taught how utilize educational technologies throughout their teacher education programs.

In another study, which was comprised of forty-three preservice teachers from a mid-sized university in the south-central United States, Hardy (2003) explained that “although [the preservice teachers] generally perceived themselves as capable of teaching through technology” (83% agree or strongly agree), only 18.6% were able to list one specific title or website when asked to “identify three specific technological resources for each of the disciplines of mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies” (p. 5-7). When asked about “the extent to which [the] university prepared them to use technology as an instructional tool,” only 7% of the preservice teachers responded that they strongly agreed and 28% agreed that they were well prepared (p. 12-13). Similarly, the preservice teachers did not agree strongly (only 7% strongly agree, 39.5% agree) when asked “if their instructors had modeled the effective use of technology” (Hardy, 2003, p. 13). This study suggested that preservice teachers are lacking knowledge of how to effectively use teaching technologies and that they need their instructors to model technology use in classrooms.

Baldwin and Sheppard (2003) argued that for preservice teachers “there is a strong disconnect between the perceived value of teaching with computers and reported self-efficacy of teaching with computers” (p. 11). Therefore, teachers must be exposed to and comfortable with technological tools before they will be willing to teach with them. Teacher education programs

are one logical place to help raise teachers' confidence levels of using technology. This means that instructors in teacher education programs should not only be modeling the use of technology, but they should also be crafting assignments that require the preservice teachers to use technology.

Carlson and Gooden (1999) also studied technology modeling by undergraduate teachers and preservice educators' cooperating teachers. In a sample of 410 student teachers who completed a Likert scale survey, few indicated frequent use of technology by their cooperating teachers, more than two-thirds indicating that their cooperating teacher "never used any of the technologies except for wordprocessing" (p. 5). The study suggested that when possible student teachers should be placed with cooperating teachers that use technology effectively in the classroom.

Vannatta and Fordham (2004) suggested that technology use among K-12 teachers and students was quite low, and teacher use of "digital cameras, database, spreadsheets, and presentation software slightly exceeded once or twice per semester" (p. 258). Students only used the Internet and word processing more than once or twice per semester. The teachers who participated in the study "had slightly above average self-efficacy, leaned slightly toward a student-centered and constructivist environment, and quite surprisingly were fairly open to change" (Vannatta and Fordham, 2004, p. 260). These teachers averaged 44 hours of professional development and 19 hours of technology training in the prior two years.

The study suggested that "the teacher attributes of time commitment to teaching and openness to change *combined with* the amount of technology training best predict classroom technology use" (Vannatta and Fordham, 2004, p. 261). The study suggested that time is an important variable in teachers using technology in the classroom. Because the teachers in the

study had an average of 16 years of experience, they could conceivably devote more of their extra time to technology, whereas beginning teachers are perhaps using that time to survive—to plan lessons, grade, do paperwork, etc. Vannatta and Fordham (2004) suggested that additional studies should explore how teacher education programs could “facilitate teacher attributes such as openness to change and time commitment to teaching” (p. 262).

In an article about how to effectively support teachers who are implementing technology in their classrooms, Owens (2009) called for “a paradigm shift away from the train-the-trainer approach to more of a ‘personal trainer’ method” (p. 14). She implemented a program in which volunteer preservice teachers were paired with practicing teachers to help the veterans better utilize technology in their classrooms. First, though, the preservice teachers were trained to develop technology-integrated lessons that meet the state and national standards in their teacher education coursework at the university. Then the instructional technology coordinator at the school where preservice teachers are placed further trained the preservice teachers on technologies that are specific to the district.

Additionally, the preservice teachers presented their technology-infused lessons to a panel of teachers that gave input on how the lessons could fit into the district’s existing curriculum. The preservice teachers tweaked the lessons and then posted them on the district server as part of a technology-infused lesson library for teachers. The lessons also were available on a wiki (a website which allows its users to add or modify content) so that they can be shared with teachers outside of the district.

Owens (2009) viewed the program as a success on all levels: the teachers received help implementing technology, the students received quality technology-infused lessons, and the preservice teachers gained experience working with technology in classrooms. Furthermore, the

program was cost effective. The assistance from the preservice teachers expanded the district's technology support by three- or four-fold.

Overall, this seems to be a beneficial program, although it does not give *all* preservice teachers at the university an opportunity to integrate technology into lessons in actual schools—it only helps the preservice teachers who volunteer (presumably ones who are the most comfortable with technology already). Potentially, the program does little to develop the technology skills of the non-volunteers who may need more training and support themselves to become comfortable with teaching with technology.

In the course Young Adult Literature for Schools that I taught in a secondary teacher education program, I aimed to give *all* of the preservice teachers in the class experiences using technology to enhance their teaching. Consistent with the literature, the preservice teachers came into the course with varying comfort levels in using and teaching with technology. Some were excited to incorporate technology into their teaching, and others were apprehensive.

Context

University

The preservice teachers in this study are enrolled in a large, Midwestern University. This university, in 2010, had over 40,000 students enrolled, approximately 30,000 of whom are undergraduates. Approximately 87% of the student body identifies as White, and the average composite ACT score is 28 (Lakeshore University, 2010). The twenty-nine students who participated in the study ranged in age from 21-26 years old. Twenty-seven of the students identified as White, and two identified as African American.

Course

All of the preservice teachers in this study were enrolled in the course Young Adult Literature for Schools. This course is required in the second semester of the secondary English teacher education program and is an elective for elementary education majors with a language arts minor. The majority of the students in the course were preservice secondary English teachers. The secondary English teacher education program is currently comprised of a cohort-based four-semester sequence of education courses and school-based field experiences (Lakeshore University, 2011). The education programs Lakeshore University emphasize the importance of teaching for social justice. Additionally, the secondary education programs emphasize:

- *Integrated and coordinated course work.* Students engage in a coherent, progressive series of courses and experiences that build on their increasing knowledge and skills.
- *Course work that links directly and immediately to school practice.* Because their courses tie directly to field experiences, students can better relate what they learn in class to the concrete challenges of schools, classrooms, and adolescents. Students have ample opportunities to test, revise, and reflect on their developing teaching and planning skills.
- *Team learning that fosters dialogue and collaboration.* Students are organized into learning communities and learning teams. During the first semester, smaller interdisciplinary learning teams are assigned to the same school and collaborate on projects. These groups offer students the opportunity for dialogue with faculty, peers, and cooperating teachers while preparing them for schools where curriculum is increasingly interconnected and teachers collaborate daily.
- *A commitment to prepare future teachers who can help each child learn.* In course work and field experiences, students explore teaching and learning issues related to ethnic, cultural, and language diversity, social class, and students' special needs and abilities. (Lakeshore University, 2011)

Instructional design. In designing the course Young Adult Literature for Schools, I based the syllabus, assignments, and activities on Schieble's (2009) study regarding exploring multimodality, literacy and learning with young adult fiction and additional articles about effective teacher education (Britzman, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Zeichner, 2010). One of

my main goals in organizing the course was to help to connect theory and practice by providing the preservice teachers with opportunities to apply the theory that we were learning in the course to a real-life teaching opportunity (namely the online instructional unit). The course was crafted using the principles of Understanding by Design—that is, the desired outcomes and major assessments were designed first. The rest of the course activities were put in place to give the preservice teachers the experiences they needed to be successful meeting those outcomes (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The main professional text used in the course, *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry out Instructional Units*, helped to provide the preservice teachers with a background in planning units (Smagorinsky, 2008). The chart below lists the young adult novels read by the preservice teachers in the course Young Adult Literature for Schools. It also indicates which of those books the preservice teachers chose to teach to the high school students each year.

Table 4

Young Adult Novels Taught by Preservice Teachers

Title	Author	Year on Syllabus for Young Adult Lit.	Year Taught to High School Students
<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i>	Alexie, S.	2011 & 2012	2011 & 2012
<i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>	Asher, J.	2012	2012
<i>The Hunger Games</i>	Collins, S.	2011 & 2012	2011 & 2012
<i>Will Grayson Will Grayson</i>	Green, J.	2012	
<i>The First Part Last</i>	Johnson, A.	2011 & 2012	
<i>Guardian</i>	Lester, J.	2011 & 2012	2012
<i>Sold</i>	McCormick, P.	2012	2012
<i>The Arrival</i>	Tan, S.	2011 & 2012	2011 & 2012
<i>Leftovers</i>	Weiss, L.	2011 & 2012	2011
<i>Perks of Being a Wallflower</i>	Chbosky, S.	2011	2011

<i>Breathing Underwater</i>	Flinn, A.	2011
<i>Red Glass</i>	Resau, L.	2011
<i>Keeping Corner</i>	Sheth, K.	2011
<i>I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This</i>	Woodson, J.	2011

Online instructional unit. A major project in the Young Adult Literature for Schools course is writing lesson plans for and teaching a three-week online unit focused on a young adult novel with social justice themes. The preservice teachers work in groups of three to plan for and teach the online unit. Working together allows the preservice teachers to “work with other students who [are] at the same stage of teaching practice,” which preservice teachers have found valuable in their development as professionals (Talvitie, Peltokallio & Mannisto, 2000, p. 87). Occasionally the preservice teachers in the study by Talvitie, et al. (2000) and the preservice teachers in my own class expressed that tension arose because of peers not stating comments tactfully or peers not contributing equally to group projects. Overall, however, the frustrations that arose from working in groups seemed to be outweighed by the benefits of the conversations that took place regarding planning instruction together.

The three-week units were structured so on the first day of the unit the preservice teachers met with the high school students in person to introduce the units and familiarize the high school students with using Moodle (an open-source e-learning software platform) to learn online. The preservice teachers taught two online lessons per week for three weeks. On the days of online lessons, the high school students went to a computer lab, logged into Moodle, and completed lesson and activities that the preservice teachers posted for the day. The high school students' regular English teacher was in the room to answer questions and facilitate learning.

The units taught by the preservice teachers all concluded with the creation of multigenre projects, which are “composed of many genres and subgenres, each piece self-contained, making

a point of its own, yet connected by theme or topic” (Romano, 2000, x-xi). The high school students and preservice teachers in each book group contributed one unique piece to their group’s multigenre project. Each person’s contribution was meant to answer the essential question(s) of the unit (Burke, 2010). Essential questions are used to “understand the big ideas in a course” and allow students and teachers to “grapple with” and explore these ideas through “discussions, written responses, and ongoing investigations and research—all of which might culminate in a paper, a presentation, or some appropriate project or artifact” (Burke, 2010, p. 2). The multigenre projects were presented on the last day of the unit when the preservice teachers went to the local high school in person to conclude the unit.

High school partnership. The online unit in the course was taught by the preservice teachers to high school students from a local school. The first semester of this study, we formed a partnership with Leigh Hills High School. The second semester of this study, due to a schedule change, we could no longer partner with Leigh Hills High School, so we formed a partnership with Caryville High School.

Leigh Hills High School is located in a Midwestern village of over 7,000 people. The village website boasts “while maintaining a friendly, small-town atmosphere, [Leigh Hills] also offers all the advantages of proximity to a large metropolitan area” (Village of [Leigh Hills], 2010). During the 2010-2011 school year, during which this study takes place, 87% of the student population of Leigh Hills High School was White, and 82% of the school population was not economically disadvantaged (Department of Public Instruction, 2011). The preservice teachers taught their online units to a college literature course at Leigh Hills High School that was primarily composed of primarily White college-bound juniors and seniors, but was an elective course open to all students.

Caryville High School is located in a Midwestern city of over 15,000 people. During the 2011-2012 school year, during which this study takes place, 83% of the student population of Caryville High School was White, and 87% of the school population was not economically disadvantaged (Department of Public Instruction, 2012). The preservice teachers taught their online units within a required freshman English course at Caryville High School. The majority of the students in the class were White.

The regular education teachers (whom I refer to as cooperating teachers) of the courses that we formed a partnership with at each high school were integral to the project. The preservice teachers sent them the units that would be taught ahead of time, and the cooperating teachers came to our Young Adult Literature for Schools class on campus to give us background about their courses and students and answered questions that the preservice teachers had regarding their pedagogies, curricula, and students.

Methodology

The methodology of the study is case study, which allows for investigation of the “*local particulars* of [an] abstract social phenomenon” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 3). More specifically, the methodology is a *collective* case study, because “one issue or concern is selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue” (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). These multiple case studies selected to illustrate the issue will be the cases of the individual students in the course (Creswell, 2007). In other words, each preservice teacher individually is considered a bounded case.

Data Generation, Collection, and Analysis

I used multiple methods for gathering data: preservice teacher interviews, my personal reflective journal entries, and preservice teacher course documents. The varied data sources

allowed me to look for themes across and within each source. The first semester that I taught this course, twelve students participated in the study, and in the second semester seventeen students participated. Including myself as a participant, there were a total of thirty study participants.

Preservice teacher interviews. I interviewed the preservice teachers after they created unit plans for a young adult novel that they have taught online to local high school students. During these interviews, I asked the preservice teachers to explain why they designed the online unit plans the way they did, and we discussed the teaching of the unit. Additionally, I asked the preservice teachers how they felt about teaching online, what was beneficial, and what was difficult.

To analyze this data, I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews and then coded and analyzed them in NVivo. Although I come into the research with some constructs to apply to data (such as looking for benefits and drawbacks of online teaching), I also looked for themes that came up (such as “characteristics of good teaching” as identified by the preservice teachers and the preservice teachers’ perceptions about their “role as a teacher”) using an inductive approach to data analysis, which is “grounded in particular pieces of data that are sorted and interrelated in order to understand the dimensions and dynamics of [a] phenomenon” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 82). After the first round of coding, which resulted in twenty codes used (such as “turning points” and “uncomfortable moments”), I completed secondary coding collapsed codes, which resulted in ten codes used (such as “benefits of online teaching,” “drawbacks of online teaching,” and “views of assessment”). I then wrote process and analytic memos about the emerging themes. These memos helped me to think through and make sense of the codes. Through process of memo writing, my understandings of the data became more visible (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

My personal reflective journal entries. Throughout the two semesters, I wrote reflective journal entries after each class period. These discussed my perceptions of how my instruction in the Young Adult Literature for Schools course was effective in encouraging the preservice teachers to design curriculum for and teach online units about literacy for social justice. Looking back on these journal entries reminded me of events and conversations that occurred in class. Some of these events and conversations were later summarized or discussed in my research.

Preservice teacher course documents. I collected documents created by the preservice teachers (unit plans, lesson plans, reflections, and other projects). These documents helped to illustrate examples of points that the preservice teachers talked about in their interviews. Many preservice teachers referenced parts of the unit plans that they created and other projects that they completed. I coded the preservice teachers' course documents with the same codes used for the interviews.

Looking at data from preservice teachers' interviews, my personal reflective journal entries, and the preservice teachers' course documents allowed me to triangulate the data to verify themes across sources.

Designing effective online instruction

Because one of the main assignments in the course was to teach the online instructional unit via Moodle, I wanted give the preservice teachers practice with using Moodle's interface. I wanted them to get a feel for what it is like to be a learner in an online space. This was one reason that the Young Adult Literature Reader Responses (creative, mini-project responses to the week's young adult novel) were required to be posted online for peers to provide online responses. I also posted handouts, activities, and website links to require the preservice teachers

to rely on our class Moodle page to get course content. The class became a hybrid—we met in person, but some of our course content and activities took place online.

Why Practice Teaching Online?

The instructional unit that the students designed in the course was an online unit for a number of reasons. First, the preservice teachers already teach in face-to-face practicum sites, so teaching online gives them a different type of experience. Second, the chances of these students eventually teaching a course online are growing (Miller & Ribble, 2010). Third, research suggests that teaching online can have a positive impact on face-to-face instruction (Roblyer, Porter, Bielefeldt, & Donaldson, 2009; Scagnoli, Buki, & Johnson, 2009).

Roblyer et al. (2009) researched practicing teachers attending an educational technology conference that was required for all virtual school instructors in the state. The survey indicated that 75% of the teachers in the study “believed virtual teaching did have a positive impact on their in-person instruction” (p. 122). Data gathered through both the survey and focus groups uncovered three categories of the positive impacts that virtual teaching had on face-to-face teaching:

- Increased use/integration of technologies into traditional teaching (mentioned by 50% of the teachers in survey)
- More effective, student-focused teaching methods and techniques (mentioned by 50% of teachers in survey)
- Increased empathy and communication with students (mentioned by 10% of teachers in survey) (Roblyer et al., 2009, p. 123).

One foreign language teacher in the study commented:

I am more actively considering opportunities to incorporate...technology into my traditional course. Electronic submission of assignments and using Wimba (a digital voice application) for speaking opportunities in the foreign language classroom increases the efficiency of my traditional classroom activities. I knew these options were available, but I had not pushed myself to incorporate them. Now I realize how valuable they are and I am more excited about using them. (Roblyer et al., 2009, p. 123)

In teaching *Young Adult Literature for Schools*, I discussed with the preservice teachers the positive impact that teaching online can have on face-to-face instruction (Roblyer et al., 2009; Scagnoli et al., 2009). In class, we also discussed that more and more teaching opportunities are taking place online (or in hybrid face-to-face and online contexts), and we examined how to translate face-to-face instruction to an online environment.

Draw Your Ideal Classroom Activity

To help the preservice teachers understand how to transfer their teaching philosophies and ideas into an online space, I first had them draw their ideal classroom. Computer paper, markers, crayons, and colored pencils are provided to make the drawings, and once it is complete the preservice teachers are asked to write a narrative on the back of the paper explaining why they included the elements that they did in the drawing. I used this activity to begin a discussion about what we, as a class, believe effective teaching looks like. We create a class list on the interactive white board of characteristics of effective teaching, with each preservice teacher contributing and discussing their ideas.

All of the drawings made by the preservice teachers both semesters were of physical (not virtual) spaces. Some students chose to draw an outdoor classroom, and many drew indoor

classrooms, but no one drew a virtual classroom, which was not altogether surprising—much of their teacher education has focused on teaching in face-to-face environments. Since in this course we would be teaching an online unit, we took the list of the characteristics of effective teaching that were generated from the drawings and discussed how each characteristic could be achieved in an online environment. It served as a bridge between using what the preservice teachers already knew about effective teaching and extending that to what we can learn about teaching effectively online.

Incorporating Technology into Teaching

Because one desired outcome of having the preservice teachers design and teach an online instructional unit was to improve their use of technology in both online and face-to-face teaching, during most class sessions I presented a technology mini-lesson. These mini-lessons ranged from an introduction to Prezi (a cloud-based presentation software), to how to use Wordle (a word-cloud generator) to analyze word choice in writing, to ideas for integrating TED talks (their slogan: riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world) into lessons. One technology mini-lesson highlighted how to use Jing (screenshot and screencast software) to share computer screen capture recordings. During the lesson, I emphasized to the preservice teachers that Jing might be particularly useful when teaching the online instructional unit—it could be helpful for them to make a Jing video to post online to show the high school students how to navigate Moodle.

Designing Effective Online Programs

Roblyer (2006) discussed five common strategies for making online high school programs effective: prepare students for success; prepare teachers for success; use interactive, flexible course designs; monitor and support teachers; and monitor and support students.

Although Roblyer's research is about designing effective online high school programs, many of the strategies also can be applied to designing a positive learning environment for both the preservice teachers in my course and the high school students they teach during the online unit.

Prepare students for success. Roblyer's (2006) first strategy—prepare students for success—emphasized that misconceptions about virtual courses being easier than face-to-face courses need to be cleared up, oftentimes through an orientation program that previews the workload of online courses. In the orientation program, the students practice using discussion forums and completing activities.

In the course Teaching Young Adult Literature, we held a session at the beginning of the instructional unit in which the high school students came to visit our university for a field trip. During this time the preservice teachers got to know the students, oriented them to Moodle, and established their expectations for the unit.

Prepare teachers for success. The second strategy for creating an effective online high school program that Roblyer (2006) discussed is preparing teachers for success. Effective teachers in face-to-face classrooms do not always make effective teachers in virtual ones. Future online teachers need to be given extensive training, which includes mentoring during the teaching of the course. Face-to-face conferences for instructors can help teachers collaborate about instruction.

In our course, the preservice teachers met weekly in their groups during—and often outside of—class to discuss methods of instruction. In interviews after the course, they noted that working together was helpful because they came up with better ideas than if they had worked independently. This data regarding the benefits of collaboration in teaching is supported by much previous research (see e.g., Hattie, 2009; Odden and Archibald, 2009).

Use interactive, flexible course designs. The third strategy used by effective online high school programs, according to Roblyer (2006) is using interactive, flexible course designs. Good virtual programs emphasize project-based cooperative group work. President of Florida Virtual School, Julie Young explained:

One of the goals of each of our courses is to make sure a student cannot complete it just by sitting at a computer. They always have away-from computer activities; some require experiments or project development, and some involve them in interaction with their local community. (Roblyer, 2006, p. 60)

In our course, when the preservice teachers wrote first drafts of their instructional unit plans, many groups initially planned on providing two discussion questions that the students respond to for each day of instruction. I quickly realized that I needed to encourage the preservice teachers to employ the type of interactive, flexible course design that Roblyer (2006) discussed. After discussing as a class the importance of including activities that encourage the students to interact with others, go outside (or at least beyond the computer), and to explore their communities, radical revisions were made to many groups' lesson plans.

For example, the group teaching the novel *Leftovers*, by Laura Wiess, included an assignment that asked the high school students to do a "school and community observation" about how gender is constructed. They provided the following directions to the high school students: "take the time to observe behavior in your community or school asking the question, 'How do boys act? How do girls act? How are they supposed to act? What happens if they don't?'" The assignment also asked for students to analyze "How did this [event/observation] convey particular gender expectations, or did it defy/break them down?" This group

demonstrated how even in an online course, students can be asked to go beyond their computer screens to interact with their world.

Monitor and support teachers. The fourth strategy used by effective online high school programs, according to Roblyer (2006), is to monitor and support teachers. In a more traditional online school setting, site facilitators (also called curriculum coordinators, instructional leaders, online principals, etc.) organize registration and other administrative tasks so the teachers are not burdened with them. Additionally, many online programs have pre-written program design, objectives, projects, and assignments so that teachers can concentrate on teaching. Typically, teachers must log in to the course page almost daily and must respond to student questions within 24 hours. Some schools require teachers to call students and parents once a month. Teachers log the calls, and facilitators monitor the phone log database (Roblyer, 2006).

In the case of the course that I was teaching, it was my responsibility to monitor and support the preservice teachers. I used weekly online discussion posts on our course website, where the preservice teachers posted comments regarding the challenges and successes of teaching the online instructional unit, to get a sense of what type of assistance they needed. After reading their comments we would spend the first part of class addressing frustrations and questions. Sometimes this was a concern about a student not uploading assignments, which led to us emailing the high school cooperating teacher. Other times, this was a celebration of an insightful response from a student that was posted on the Moodle discussion board.

Monitor and support students. The fifth strategy used by effective online high school programs, according to Roblyer (2006), is to monitor and support students. In traditional online school settings, welcome e-mails and intake interviews help to acclimate students to the online

environment. Once students are participating in courses, monitoring and progress reporting systems are in place to help students who fall behind (Roblyer, 2006).

In our course, the preservice teachers monitored and supported students by posting reminders on Moodle and also by private messaging individual students who were falling behind. If these techniques were not effective, the preservice teachers would email the high school cooperating teacher, who would talk to the students in person.

Findings

Constraints of Online Teaching Experience

Although the preservice teachers felt that they learned a lot from the experience, overall, they did not find that they enjoyed online teaching. Three themes emerged about constraints of online teaching. The preservice teachers felt that teaching online lacked in the following areas:

- 1) Accountability (both for themselves and the students)
- 2) Effective communication
- 3) Community building

In addition to these three broader concerns about online learning, the preservice teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with the Moodle interface and functionality. One preservice teacher, Lisa complained, "Moodle was difficult to navigate." Katie called Moodle, "kind of boring to look at." Many other preservice teachers echoed these sentiments.

Accountability. Many preservice teachers were frustrated that the students did not do all of the online activities and turn in all of the assignments. Nicole talked about an instance of this: "I had this whole activity planned out for them to do, and nobody responded to it so I don't even think that they did it. And it was just kind of frustrating, because that was one of the most important activities in my lesson, and they just kind of skipped over it." Karly explained, "I feel

like students would feel more accountable, too, if they see you and see that you are also invested in this process.” The word “see” came up in many of the complaints about teaching online. The preservice teachers often felt that if they could just see the students and the students could see them, that it would solve many of the problems that came up.

Effective communication. The preservice teachers sometimes struggled to effectively communicate with the students. Nicole explained that her group struggled with communicating with students in that if they had a problem, that “it was hard to contact [the students], because some of them don’t check their e-mail at home, so they’re only checking it when they’re at the computer [at school] and by then it’s kind of too late.” She said that her group was frustrated “Because we wanted these kids to do well, but they [were] not turning stuff in. Emma also commented that often the students would not respond to her group’s postings and emails. She said, “It was weird, because then when we met [the students] in person, they all seemed to really like the unit.” Emma was confused that the students expressed that they thought Emma’s group did a good job teaching the unit, and they gave them almost all positive feedback, but online many students often did not respond to the groups’ communications. John felt bad that as teachers they were not present for the students to answer questions and provide real-time clarifications. Sydney again brought up the idea of seeing students face-to-face, “I like the face-to-face interaction. I didn’t like that we couldn’t be there for their reactions to the book, or couldn’t really visually see their reactions.”

Community building. The preservice teachers were frustrated that it was difficult to form relationships online. In an online discussion post on our course website about the challenges and successes of teaching the online instructional unit, Marcus, a preservice teacher in the course, said, “I feel like I work better as a teacher when I can see the students I’m working

with and gauge their needs and understandings.” Paige posted, “because of the disconnect/distance that the online class space creates, I won’t be able to tell that students don’t understand until they submit the assignment.” Jamal provided the most strongly worded critique of teaching online, “I have never been one for internet discussions myself, even these moodle [sic] post [sic] that we have to do are difficult for me because I like faces and voices and all that cool stuff.... Moodle isn’t that great to look at, so I understand the feeling of being unmotivated when staring at these site. Internet is no place for a classroom, there, I said it!”

Almost all of the preservice teachers called Moodle “impersonal.” Julie said, “[Moodle] wasn’t very personal ‘cause we didn’t see [the students] face-to-face.” She explained that with the School of Education’s focus on social justice and multicultural education, she wanted “interaction with [the students] face-to-face and it seemed like they wanted that too.” Kristen wanted to get to know her students better than she felt she was able to do online. “We didn’t get to know our students—we got to see their work and know what they’re interested in, but we didn’t really get to know them as people.” She further explained, “Part of the reason I’m going into teaching is because I want to be a coach, or go to the kids’ school plays and stuff. And through online teaching, you really don’t get that sort of connection.”

Cerniglia (2011) discussed this fear and dislike for teaching online. She explained that creating videos to post as part of the online course can help to build relationships and to add back in the desired human characteristics of “facial expressions, tone of voice, and other nonverbal communication cues” (p. 54). Although Jamal’s group (and a few other groups) did use videos to introduce themselves online to the high school students, I would encourage all groups to use video on their Moodle sites. I would also encourage all groups to make forming relationships

with their student a top priority, perhaps brainstorming additional ways to accomplish this in an online environment.

Affordances of Online Teaching Experience

While the preservice teachers overall were not impressed with teaching online via Moodle, they did recognize some affordances of online teaching for themselves and for the high school students.

Affordances for high school students. Some of the preservice teachers mentioned that teaching online seemed more naturally constructivist in nature to them than in-person teaching. Julie said, “It wasn’t about us pouring knowledge into them.” She continued, “[As teachers we] were setting these [activities] up for them to [complete],” but the students came up with their own understandings by “picking things out of the novel we didn’t even talk about.” Nicole also commented on the constructivist nature of online teaching, “We tried to present things kind of in a way that made [the students] take the lead, so it wasn’t us saying ‘here is what you need to know—now respond.’” She said that they designed activities that let the students do research about human trafficking and then report back what they found. She emphasized that their unit was “a lot of student-led activities.”

Lisa noted that online assignments make sure that “No one gets put on the spot...[The students] have time to articulate their thoughts.” John also noted that the students getting to go at their own pace was a great benefit, adding “not everybody learns or reads at the same rate.”

Nicole thought that students respond in different ways to material that is discussed online versus in person. Her group taught the book *Sold* by Patricia McCormick, which is about a female child who is sold into prostitution. An excerpt from Nicole’s reflection paper illustrates her thoughts on completeness and authenticity of student responses online versus in-person:

Students were unreceptive of all activities that required group or partner work. Activities that asked students to discuss and collaborate with one another, such as “Take My Perspective, Please” were ignored completely and received no student submissions.... [However] students turned out work of a much higher quality when working alone. In fact, I was surprised by the level of thoughtfulness and personality displayed in their written work, specifically their Forgiveness Poems. Given the choice between writing from the perspective of the main character or themselves, every single student chose to write a Forgiveness Poem to a person in their own life. Each one touched on serious issues similar to those discussed in the novel, and exemplified a strong, unique voice that I did not expect from freshman writers....

It appears that online discussion feels more comfortable for students because it is less personal. Especially when teaching a social justice unit that involves taboo subjects like prostitution and human trafficking, students are likely to be much more willing to open up through online postings.

Nicole explained in an interview, “I think we tried to make [the students] feel comfortable, because [children being sold into prostitution] is kind of an uncomfortable issue to talk about, especially with freshmen in high school.” She conjectured, “But I think that the fact that [the unit was taught] online and that [the students] were typing discussion instead of saying it to each other kind of helped them feel more comfortable.” Because of the discussion taking place online, Nicole thought that her group “got more thoughtful, accurate responses from [the students] than if we would have taught this in a class, because I don’t think that students would have raised their hands and said a lot of those things.”

Nicole also felt that in an online unit that it might be easier for students to write more. She explained that “Writing is so important, and students don’t get enough practice with that. And they don’t feel like it’s writing [because] they’re not sitting and writing in a notebook; they’re typing, which is a lot easier.” She thinks that typing is not only easier for the high school students, but it also produces a different type of writing: “I think that we got a lot of personality in their writing that I am not sure that we would have seen if it was handwritten. I feel like students think that handwriting is a lot more formal and it needs to be perfect, but when they’re typing, it’s just, like, messaging their friend on Facebook.” She found the personality that came through in the writing to be refreshing and she noted that “[the students] were thinking in-depth about things, and they were thinking more about what they were saying than how they were saying it.”

Affordances for preservice teacher development. The preservice teachers shared many ways they believed teaching the online unit helped them to develop as teachers. These affordances fell into three main categories. The online unit helped preservice teacher to:

- 1) Be more reflective practitioners
- 2) Incorporate more technology into their teaching
- 3) Be more likely to use Moodle as a classroom supplement

Many preservice teachers also appreciated some of Moodle’s functionalities. Ann liked that using Moodle reduced paper waste and helped with organization: “I like that [the students] didn’t have to print out everything, because, like, going through the semester, just printing out so much stuff, I hate, like, wasting all of that paper. So it was really nice getting things online and, like, just having them right there, than having a million pieces of paper everywhere.”

Reflective practitioners. Teaching online helped the preservice teachers be more reflective practitioners. Karly suggested that teaching online made her more reflective about “what [she] was doing and why [she] was doing it, and if it was really important to do it [that] way.” She explained that having such a limited medium (postings via Moodle), having to “sit and write down what you want students to hear,” made her “have to be more strategic and thoughtful about what the point of the activities is.” This increased purposefulness and intentionality in designing lessons helped her to develop as a teacher. Nicole explained her surprise that “planning an online unit takes as much, if not more planning than a regular instructional unit,” as she reflected on everything she did to teach the online unit.

Increased technology usage. Teaching online encouraged the preservice teachers to use additional types of technology in their units and likely more than they might have used if they taught the units in person. Nicole discussed that her group used Prezi (cloud-based presentation software) and YouTube often in the unit, and that some of the students ended up using Prezi in their final multi-genre projects.

Use of Moodle. Many preservice teachers expressed that they can now see themselves using Moodle as a supplementary tool in their classrooms. Nicole explained, “I think that it was really cool to have a different outlet for discussing books.” Nicole hypothesized that online spaces might be more comfortable places for the students because many students “spend a lot of their time at home [on] their computer[s].” She also felt that Moodle allows easier access to using technology in the classroom “If you want them to watch a YouTube video, they’re already sitting right there, and they can just pull it up and watch it and then respond right away.”

Implications

Overall, the online teaching experience accomplished many of the goals that I had for the preservice teachers: 1) It helped the preservice teachers develop their understanding of how to teach with technology, 2) It made the preservice teachers more likely to incorporate technology in their future classrooms, and 3) The online project required the teachers to plan carefully and to reflect on their teaching.

However, too often in teacher education we just assume that integrating technology into the curriculum is desirable, helpful, and makes for better education. Gruenewald (2002) disagrees with this lack of critical reflection, explaining, “Thoreau’s skepticism about progress speaks directly to my own discomfort with the glut of attention that educators shower on our latest methods and tools at the expense of more thoughtfulness about our purposes and possibilities” (p. 518). It is important to critically reflect on the affordances and constraints of using specific technologies in teacher education programs. As teacher educators we need to be thoughtful and intentional in how and why we use technologies, and we should teach our students to do the same.

My research also confirms what Lei (2009) has argued—despite preservice teachers having generally positive views of technology in general, they have some reservations about using technology in the classroom. In order to help them become comfortable using educational technology, preservice teachers need to be exposed to and explicitly taught how these technologies throughout their teacher education programs.

Although in this study teaching online helped the preservice teachers’ development as teachers, the preservice teachers voiced concerns that perhaps the high school students did not get as much out of the project as they did themselves. The preservice teachers did not, overall

(though they did cite some advantages of teaching online) believe that primarily online instruction is best for most students. This serves as an important caution against just adopting the most current educational technology. With all types of decisions made regarding curriculum or instruction, as teachers we must be purposeful about our choices. Similarly, as teacher educators, we need to rethink how we in teacher education programs prepare preservice teachers to use educational technology. We need to be both mindful of the benefits and cautions of using specific educational technology in classrooms. And we need to discuss these benefits and cautions with our preservice teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

Limitations

All research has limitations, and this study is no different. One limitation of this study is the perceived lack of generalizability of case study research. While case study research has been seen as less generalizable than other forms of research, I argue that though the study discusses the practices that I used in one specific course, the findings can be applied to wider contexts. For example, the implications regarding how teacher education programs create strong social-justice orientations by emphasizing multiple dimensions of social justice and preparing preservice teachers for all types of schools can be applied to a broad context of teacher education programs. Additionally, implications regarding including authentic projects (and the uncomfortable moments that come with them) in methods courses to allow preservice teachers to practice teaching for social justice, have a wide scope as well. And implications regarding teacher education programs affording preservice teachers additional opportunities (in addition to the typical practicum experiences) that allow preservice teachers to apply the theory that they are learning to practice, can be applied to many teacher education programs.

Another limitation of the study is that studying an online environment might not be seen as generalizable to a face-to-face classroom. Although the preservice teachers planned and taught lessons delivered in an online format, I suggest that many of the types of thinking about, planning for, and delivery of instruction apply to face-to-face classroom contexts.

Modifications and Additions to Course Design

Although the method of this research project was not technically action research, as a teacher, I cannot research a course that I have taught without thinking of ways to make it better.

The following are activities that, based on my research and teaching of the course, would be worth incorporating into the curriculum.

Modeling

Modeling is important in teacher education—it is not enough to merely tell teachers about strategies that could be used in instruction. Teaching without using models and examples “does not typically lead to deep understanding or enactment” (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007, p. 119). Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) proposed that effective teacher education programs use “examples of student work, artifacts from the classroom, videotapes of teaching and learning, and cases of teaching to help teachers relate their course work to real problems of practice in classrooms” (p. 123).

In teaching Young Adult Literature for Schools, I modeled effective practices by integrating technology into the course, using group work, and trying out activities in class that the preservice teachers could use in their middle and high school classrooms—like Socratic seminars. However, it would be useful to have even more opportunities to use models, specifically student-created ones. It would be helpful for the preservice teachers to share, discuss, and critique the unit plans and Moodle sites created by the preservice teachers from the previous year. This type of analysis of previous preservice teachers’ projects could give a sense of what the online instructional unit looks like before the preservice teachers plan their own, giving them the opportunity to focus more on possibilities for being creative with the unit, rather than spending a significant amount of time trying to imagine what a unit might look like.

Cases

Another activity that would be helpful to include in the course is the use of case studies. Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) encouraged the use of case studies to pose

dilemmas through careful descriptions of sample teaching and learning contexts. They suggested that preservice teachers can use cases to “reason through dilemmas” and “propose strategies to respond to problems” (p. 128). Additionally, preservice teachers can write cases “to represent their experiences and analyze them through the lens of theory, so that they and others can learn from these examples” (p. 128).

Wright and Grenier (2009) also argued for the use of case study methodology in effective social constructivist teaching. They explain that “constructivism contends that learners construct knowledge, based on their own experiences, in an active process ‘facilitated’ by a teacher, rather than being lectured to about predetermined knowledge” (p. 255). Historically, business and law schools—and more recently schools of education—have used cases as a means to connect theory and practice.

Wright and Grenier (2009) listed sample discussion questions that can help the preservice teachers to think about the cases:

- What organizational issues occurred in this lesson?
- What instructional issues impacted this lesson?
- Is pupil enjoyment important, if so, why? What about pupil learning? Are enjoyment and learning mutually explosive? How can you teach in a way that enables both to occur? (p. 261)

Wright and Grenier also advocated for the instructor to facilitate a discussion surrounding the case that “require[s] students to reflect, think and problem solve” (p. 262). In *Young Adult Literature for Schools*, the cases could be used to prepare the preservice teachers for teaching online. Cases could be written loosely based on scenarios that occurred during the last semester

the course was offered. This could help prepare the preservice teachers for online teaching by deepening their thinking about such issues before they encounter them.

What Is Good Teaching?

Another activity that would be beneficial to include in the course is “What is good teaching?” Walker (2008) researched how students described their favorite teacher. The students were asked “to write an essay on their most memorable teacherTo describe the one educator who had the greatest impact on their lives, was successful (effective) in teaching them the subject matter, was the teacher they most wanted to emulate, and was the individual who had the greatest impact on their decision to become a teacher” (p. 145). Their responses—“She was always prepared.” “He was very positive.” “She had high expectations for me”—were about personal qualities (p. 147). Walker identified 12 qualities of an effective teacher by finding patterns in essays students wrote about their most effective teacher: “(1) Prepared, (2) Positive, (3) High Expectations, (4) Creative, (5) Fair, (6) Personal Touch, (7) Develops a Sense of Belonging, (8) Admits Mistakes, (9) Sense of Humor, (10) Gives Respect to Students, (11) Forgiving, and (12) Compassionate” (p. 147-148).

This research suggests that in teacher education programs we should find ways to draw preservice teachers’ attention to the importance of these qualities, and we should find ways to promote the development of these characteristics. In *Young Adult Literature for Schools*, on the first day of class, the preservice teachers uploaded their answers to the questions, “What is good teaching: what does it look like? what do good teachers do? what do students do in their classrooms?” This activity could be followed up with reading and discussing Walker’s (2008) article. The article could also guide the types of feedback given on the preservice teachers’ unit

plans and papers, purposefully encouraging them to illustrate the qualities of an effective teacher that are discussed in the article.

Draw Your Relationship to Society Activity

Another activity called “Draw Your Relationship to Society” helps preservice teachers to “examine their beliefs about teaching and learning so that they may affirm, modify, or consider alternatives” through creating drawings (Armstrong, 2007, p. 2).

Reed (2009) discussed the use of a metaphorical imagining activity used to help preservice teachers engage as “teacher-activists in a collective movement for social change” (p. 51). For the activity, the preservice teachers were provided with drawing paper, crayons, and markers and were asked to “draw an image to represent how you see your relationship to those in the world around you, or to the larger society” (p. 51). When they finished the drawing, the preservice teachers were asked to title the image and to describe what it means on the back of the paper. Then they showed and explained their drawings in a small group and later in a larger group. This facilitated discussions about “how one’s role as educator is connected with this perception of one’s relationship with society” (p. 51).

Though the activity is primarily meant to be a teaching tool, Reed (2009) wondered if it might be used as an assessment piece that could measure changes in how a person perceives his or her relationship with society. To test this idea, Reed conducted the drawing activity in August and then again in May. The following themes of a preservice teachers’ “progressive orientation” emerged from studying the drawings and the written narratives:

- *Connectedness*: a feeling for the interconnections between self and others, and among all humanity.

- *Impact*: a sense of one's ability to have impact in the world, to make a difference.
- *Self-transformation*: an understanding of the need for inner preparation in order to transform society.
- *Social activism*: a moral imperative to actively foster equity and social justice.
- *Collectivity*: an understanding of the need to act collectively in order to be effective. (p. 51-52)

Reed (2009) found the metaphorical drawings to be “a fruitful way to access some highly abstract but very crucial components in a transformative process that members of the dominant group must undergo in order to enable them to participate in meaningful social-economic change” (p. 54). This drawing activity could serve as an introduction to a discussion about one's role in society as a teacher, which would lead to talking about how systems of education often reproduce dominant social values (Apple, 2003). This assignment could also be used at the beginning and end of the course to measure growth in the preservice teachers' understanding of their role in education.

Implications

In this dissertation I aimed to explore the following research questions:

- 1) How do preservice secondary English teachers construct an understanding of teaching literacy for social justice?
- 2) And how do they enact that understanding, particularly with regard for constructing curriculum for and teaching young adult novels online?

My research suggests three recommendations for creating strong social-justice oriented teacher education programs. First, these programs should focus on emphasizing multiple

dimensions of social justice and prepares preservice teachers for all types of schools. Second, social-justice teacher education programs should include authentic projects (and the uncomfortable moments that come with them) in methods courses to allow preservice teachers to practice teaching for social justice. Third, teacher education programs should afford preservice teachers additional opportunities (in addition to the typical practicum experiences) that allow preservice teachers to apply the theory that they are learning to practice. Using technology can be an effective way to provide this experience as well as encourage preservice teachers to use more educational technology for student engagement in their classrooms.

This research helps teacher educators to expand our knowledge of how preservice secondary English teachers develop an understanding of teaching literacy for social justice. I hope that sharing my own teaching experiences of working with the preservice teachers in *Young Adult Literature for Schools* provides insight for other teacher educators looking to improve their practice.

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