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# Disrupting the Deficit Gaze: Equity Work with University Supervisors

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**Maika J. Yeigh<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Teacher candidates commonly experience tensions within their clinical field placement classroom. Recently, candidates have brought forward tensions around the use of a deficit gaze (Dudley-Marling, 2007) on students and their families by their mentor teachers. Where candidates of the past would ignore negative framing, current candidates want to disrupt the status quo. This conceptual article describes one EPP's attempt to support teacher candidates "disruption" of instances where a mentor teacher used a deficit-lens toward students and/or their families. Clinical supervisors were offered professional development to support teacher candidates and guide them to disrupt in ways that maintained the professional relationship with the mentor teacher.

## **Keywords**

clinical supervision; equity; teacher candidates

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## Introduction

The student teaching experience is a time of immense learning. Educator preparation programs (EPPs) commonly provide a support team as one of the structures to increase teacher candidate success. The support team can be comprised of many individuals, but regularly includes at minimum a mentor teacher in whose classroom a candidate completes a practicum experience, and a university supervisor, who provides clinical coaching and evaluation. This team is often the on-the-ground support for the teacher candidate as they enter into a challenging profession. And the profession is changing. Classroom demographics are shifting (Hawkins, 2019; NCES, 2018), resources are decreasing (Leachman et al., 2017), and expectations of teachers are increasing (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Goldhaber, 2015). Additionally, students are coming into schools having experienced (or currently experiencing) trauma (Felitti, et. al, 1998; Center for Disease Control/National Center for Health Statistics, 2013); in turn, teachers themselves are facing increasing levels of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue (Brunzell et al., 2018; Eyal et al., 2019). As a result, EPPs must prepare teachers for an educational landscape with shifting challenges.

In recent years, teacher candidates in our EPP have sought help in ways that have challenged us to change our delivery and support. In our particular program, in addition to learning more about designing trauma-sensitive structures and using restorative practices in the classroom, teacher candidates are asking for specific supports to counter the racist, classist, homophobic, and sexist stances and views they see in the K-12 school systems in which they are engaged as student teachers. While candidates have interest in countering dominant narratives and deficit stances, most do not have the strategies in place or the working capital to do so from their role as teacher candidate. However, field-based university supervisors are in a unique position to coach candidates. This manuscript details one initial method used with university supervisors in an attempt to support teacher candidate interruption and disruption of deficit views in K-12 situations.

Traditional educational structures viewed the languages and cultures of students of color and the communities in which they live as having deficiencies that the larger school system would have to suppress, and students would have to overcome, in order for students to achieve. As such, the dominant language and culture are privileged in classrooms. Dudley-Marling (2007) uses the term *deficit gaze* to describe the lens used to consider poor and minority students and their families as having innate cultural deficiencies that materialize in lack of performance in school. When educators use the deficit gaze in their interactions with students and families, it shifts blame away from the educational system and the teacher's role within it and onto the children and families. Using an asset-lens, versus deficit thinking, positions students' cultural and linguistic differences as strengths upon which teachers can build (Dudley-Marling, 2015; Yosso, 2005); teacher beliefs steeped in asset-framing are connected to expectations of achievement, with higher expectations associated with higher achievement (Lopez, 2017). An important goal of the EPP described in this manuscript is for teachers to work against systems of oppression and operationalize asset pedagogy in their daily interactions and classroom structures.

## Teacher Candidates Working for Equity

Educational Preparation Programs across the country serve a variety of emerging teachers through a range of program structures. Our EPP is the largest in our state and graduates between 90-to-110 teacher candidates at the secondary level each year, divided into five cohorts of approximately 20 candidates. Our public university is located within an urban center, with approximately 25 partnering K-12 school districts nearby. The program highlighted in this article prepares teacher candidates focused on middle and high school in the subject areas of Social Studies, Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, and World Languages. In addition, our secondary-level program serves Art, PE/Health, and Music candidates who earn teaching licenses to teach Kindergarten through grade 12. Our preparation program stretches across one year, beginning in June of one year and ending the following June. Incoming students must have a bachelor's degree as an entrance requirement; graduates leave with a master's degree and a recommendation for a teaching license. In addition to a heavy course load, teacher candidates spend one school year engaged in a school-based practicum. In the fall quarter our candidates spend 14 hours per week at their placement school using a co-teaching model. During winter term, candidates spend 20 hours per week in their practicum classroom taking the lead with one class of students. In the spring term, candidates are full-time in the field placement classroom, take the lead on the full-range of teaching activities, and are responsible for teaching three classes of students. Teacher candidates stay in the same placement classroom for the entire school year.

There is much literature in the field that focuses on convincing teacher candidates to enact constructs of equity and inclusion into their teaching (i.e. Cross et al., 2018; Goodwin & Darity, 2019; Riley & Solic, 2017; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). However, in our EPP, many teacher candidates enter with a 'foundational stance' toward social justice and want to learn how to implement strategies and design structures for emancipatory learning. This foundational stance encompasses students who are *interested* in social justice and curious about what that means in the K-12 setting, students who have studied issues of equity and social justice, and students who have lived experiences that have exposed them to equity in action. Additionally, there are other factors that contribute to the difference between the literature and our teacher candidate population:

- All candidates enter the master-level initial licensure program with a bachelor degree that is content-focused (not education focused);
- Teacher candidates tend to be older students. In our elementary program, the average age range is 22-30; In our secondary program, the average age range is 25-32;
- Our university is located within an urban setting in a politically liberal-minded city, within a "blue state" on the west coast of the United States;
- The mission of the university is focused on service and equity, which draws students who are interested in those areas;
- The EPP entrance essays and interview questions focus on issues of equity and inclusion.

That said, in the past, teacher candidates in our EPP were content to consider their practicum classroom as a place of true practice, a setting in which they could build a "toolbox" of strategies to take with them into their future classroom. When problematic issues arose in the practicum

classroom, these candidates-of-the-past were satisfied with our response of, “You can do things differently when you have your own classroom” with the understanding that it was important to get along with the mentor while spending a year in the mentor’s classroom.

In recent years, a few things have changed. First, the research is clear that teacher candidates take their mentor teacher’s views and practices with them into their future classroom—and often use those for the entirety of their career (Bacharach et al., 2010; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Understanding the deep influence of the practicum classroom provides persuasive evidence that our candidates need to experience the practices we truly want then to emulate in their future teaching (NCATE, 2010; Yeigh, 2018; Zeichner, 2010).

Second, the context and personalities of our teacher candidates have also changed; not only does our local context encourage confronting the racist structures in K-12 schools, but our Millennial and Generation Z teacher candidates are ready to lead that confrontation. Additionally, candidates take up what we are preaching and teaching, through both our university mission that brings them in the door as well as twelve weeks of initial coursework focused on equity and inclusion. By the time candidates enter their field placement classroom—around week ten of our program—they are both interested and motivated to use equitable instructional strategies with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, it is not unusual for candidates to ask for help from our EPP to navigate the tensions between their practicum experiences and their developing social justice stance.

Candidates share their experiences in a variety of formats, including through field placement journals and classroom assignments. In addition to documenting learning, electronic placement journals are a forum in which teacher candidates can communicate privately with their cohort leader and university supervisors. Below is a sampling of common student concerns shared through journals during the first weeks in the clinical classroom:

- As a guest in this room, how do I foster a more culturally inclusive and sustaining environment?
- Without upsetting the intrinsic power dynamic between me and my mentor teacher, how can I successfully disrupt their practice and behavior? Though they are open to the content I may be able to offer from the program, there may not be adequate time to discuss or develop buy-in.
- Students’ personal strengths are things that I’m struggling to see in the context of our classroom. They are all intelligent and curious, but I’m not seeing those qualities, nor their unique expression in each child, built on.
- How can I address harmful language in my classroom?

The journal serves as an ongoing “conversation” for individualized problem-solving and celebration; cohort leaders also use the journals as mechanism to understand learning trends across groups of teacher candidates as a way to meet their needs.

Teacher candidates’ one-year practicum is supported by two important support team members: the mentor teacher and the university supervisor. The mentor teacher is the classroom teacher who has opened their classroom to our teacher candidates for the school year. Mentor teachers

share the same content-specific backgrounds as the candidate and have at least three years of teaching experience. In addition, the mentor teacher is the liaison between the teacher candidate and the placement school setting and acts as the on-the-ground coach to provide the candidate with opportunities to take on a variety of work with students, gradually expanding the responsibilities as developmentally appropriate. The mentor collaboratively plans and utilizes a co-teaching structure to prepare the candidate for the full-range of classroom responsibilities (Bacharach et al., 2010; Solis et al., 2012). The EPP operational definition of co-teaching is *two teachers working together (in this case a teacher candidate and a mentor teacher) with groups of students, sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction as well as the physical space*. In this model of co-teaching, both teachers are actively engaged in all aspects of instruction. The co-teaching model holds the potential to increase teacher candidate learning while also increasing K-12 student learning; the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher are encouraged to use co-teaching strategies throughout the year-long practicum experience.

The second member of the support team is the university supervisor. In our EPP, teacher candidates are assigned a content-alike supervisor who both coaches and evaluates. Many supervisors are retired teachers, retired administrators, or teachers who are currently out of the classroom to raise children. As the mission of both our university and our college of education has solidified around issues of equity and inclusion, the job-description for university supervisors has also expanded to include helping teacher candidates develop instructional practices that support these goals. At the hiring stage, we have purposefully built in interview questions that focus on our mission; potential supervisors have to articulate their experiences working toward issues of social justice and willingness to learn more about culturally sustaining pedagogy. Supervisors attend professional learning sessions that focus on the mission of the college and ways to operationalize constructs of equity and inclusion in the K-12 classroom. While new supervisors tend to have familiarity with constructs of social justice and equity, the team holds a range of views and a mixture of experiences. Our professional learning sessions (described later in the manuscript) are designed to bring more parity within the group.

As expected, relationships amongst the support team members varies depending on the personalities involved. It is not unusual for the support system to work smoothly, with the mentor teacher coaching on a daily basis and the supervisor coming in regularly for observations and evaluation meetings. However, it is also not surprising when there are tensions within the triad. For example, there are often communication issues that have to be addressed or confusion about professional and program expectations. Many mentor teachers work with our program irregularly and some work with a different EPP each year, both of which contribute to complications with communication. Additionally, our university supervisors are adjunct non-teaching faculty and the least program-connected faculty, which is another complication for communication.

As a public university, our students come to us from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of experiences. We have students who come directly from their undergraduate education, as well as older students who are building on previous work experiences or changing careers. However, the majority of our current teacher candidates identify as part of the Millennial Generation and have many characteristics that are important for our preparation program to consider (Dimock, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2007; Wheeler & Harris, 2006). For example, the generation has

been defined as one of egocentrism, yet Millennials have also demonstrated that while they are interested in “self”, they also carry the value of wanting *others* to have what they have. Additionally, Millennials want to *be* agents for change (Allen et al., 2015; Ruggie & Middleton, 2019) versus waiting for changes to happen on their own. The view of being a change agent is one that is in line with the mission of our college and our vision of providing an equitable and emancipatory education for all learners. We *want* our graduates to make positive transformations in K-12 schools.

### **Equity Issues during Student Teaching**

It is not uncommon for teacher candidates to notice problems in their placement classrooms. And, it is not uncommon for these problems to stem from disagreements between the mentor teacher and the teacher candidates around actions towards students and the language used to describe students. For example, teacher candidates report at times asking their mentor how to work with a student who is disengaged or even sleeping during class. The mentor teacher may respond by using deficit-language to describe the student, such as “he is not going to do anything anyway, so don’t bother” or “I’d call home but his family doesn’t care”. In their journals, teacher candidates anecdotally report deficit-focused language being used more frequently toward adolescents of color and/or those from lower-income homes, and problematize what they are witnessing in the field placement classroom:

- There is something about students who struggle that my MT [mentor teacher] really doesn’t like, and I think it is their inability to understand direction or content immediately. It irritates her so much and I think she perceives their “incompetence” as defiance.
- Dynamics of power and oppression persist in the classroom microcosm of the unjust world unless teachers trouble themselves to put restorative expectations, procedures, patterns, and structures into place.

However, while many candidates have the motivation and interest to disrupt problematic viewpoints and language, they lack the working capital and expertise to do so.

As stated previously, when previous generations of teacher candidates brought up their discomfort and disdain for the overt and covert use of deficit views toward students, teacher educators could assuage them with the understanding that in the future, they could adjust accordingly. However, it is increasingly apparent that current teacher candidates want to disrupt deficit views *now*. As a result, they turn to the university—specifically the university supervisor—to help make these disruptions in a way that maintains their relationships with the mentor teacher in whose classroom they are placed. Since the mission of our college is focused on equitable opportunities for all, we welcome the challenge to support disruptions of pedagogy and practices that foster inequalities. Where the university supervisor and the placement classroom intersect seem like an obvious place to offer guidance in this area.

Willey and Magee (2018) advocate for those in supervisory positions connected to the field placement to be the ones to address issues of equity with teacher candidates. These teacher educators considered the strategies their teacher candidates subconsciously used to avoid

disrupting inequities which inadvertently maintained negative views toward the behaviors of students of color. The researchers worked to address their teacher candidates' default stance, which blamed students and families for perceived negative behaviors or lack of engagement. Clinical faculty used activities to create a counter-default stance that looked to students, families, and their communities as strengths and assets. The goal was to produce teachers who viewed families as invaluable resources for the school; yet, the findings revealed an underlying willingness to maintain the status quo and encouraged supervisors to "... develop the skills necessary to facilitate these discussions and support preservice teachers to recognize and address racial inequities and oppressions when they occur in schools" (Willey & Magee, 2018, p 46).

### **Teacher Candidates Ready to Disrupt**

University supervision is a complex role that involves navigating classrooms of K-12 mentor teachers, supporting the development of teacher candidate learning, and utilizing evaluation materials adopted by their sending institution, among other tasks. And yet, research suggests that supervisors receive limited training (Jacobs et al., 2017; McCormack et al., 2019). Additionally, research indicates that while supervisors have a complex role in supporting the development of teachers, they are often adjunct faculty with limited connectivity with the institutions they serve (Baum et al., 2011; Cuenca et al., 2011).

While problematizing the stance that many candidates naturally take, Willey and Magee (2018) position the university supervisor as a guide to help make important shifts in teacher candidate thinking, since the university supervisors are often the main professionals who cross between the university and practicum settings. Gürsoy and colleagues (2016) posit that while supervisors have many roles, those include "acting as active agents in conflict resolution and problem-solving in the practicum" (p. 61). However, preparation for the work of supervision is often lacking (Bates, et al., 2011; Elfer, 2012). In a study of the effects of training, Elfer (2012) noted that both teacher candidates and mentor teachers were more satisfied with supervisors who had received trainings provided by the university; in addition, they were also more willing to talk through issues and positively receive feedback. Supervisors can have a positive effect on the identity, self-perceptions of, and the quality of future teachers, especially when those supervisors are responsive to the needs of their supervisee teacher candidates (Bates et al., 2011).

Teacher preparation programs design the role of university supervisor in different ways. In our EPP, at minimum the university supervisor makes nine field-based observations of the teacher candidate between September and June; six of these observations also include a meeting with the mentor teacher and teacher candidate to determine advancement toward proficiency. The supervisor is responsible for keeping the candidate's faculty advisor apprised of progress and development. In our program, the supervisor is the bridge between the preparation program and the K-12 school setting, a persistent tension in our partnering with teachers and schools.

In 2015, our EPP made the decision to provide structured professional development to university supervisors as a program improvement opportunity. Initially, the professional learning sessions were used for logistical communications about timelines, evaluation form calibration, and electronic reporting platforms, which were important to improve articulation. More recently, professional learning sessions have focused on elements of coaching teacher candidates,



including how to foster productive conversations between mentor teachers and candidates, specifically to increase candidate knowledge and application of asset-based pedagogy (Lopez, 2017; Paris, 2012; Young et al., 2019).

### **Professional Learning as a Mechanism for Change**

Three university-based faculty members are responsible for matching supervisors with teacher candidates and providing professional development for the team of approximately 40 supervisors. To address the issue of countering deficit language, we decided to build on professional development initiatives already in place. As stated previously, our college positions issues of equity and inclusion at the forefront of our work. Additionally, we are a large institution, and as such we have an office devoted to K-12 and university partnerships. The work of professionals from the partnership office includes building and maintaining relationships between our partner organizations. In addition, we also have an Equity Team, which is made up of a variety of stakeholders from across the college. Both the partnership office and the Equity Team have provided professional development opportunities for all faculty, including our university supervision team, that are focused on equity and inclusion.

Before 2015, our supervisors received limited professional development. Instead, our supervisors were brought together to “network”, which involved casual meetings focused on community-building and the year-long supervision cycle. More recently, we have committed to professionalizing the role of supervision by funding eleven additional hours of professional development for our supervisors. When our teacher candidates brought us their request for support in disrupting deficit views in their placement classrooms, we turned to these professional learning sessions as a mechanism to work on the issue. Many supervisors have indicated interest in equity work and take advantage of the variety of opportunities to engage with topics of social justice offered throughout the larger university and within our college. For example, several supervisors have engaged in a college-wide book group focused on race and intersectionality. Supervisors are expected to “take up” equity work in their work with candidates in the clinical placement.

Prior to our first professional learning session of the year, we reviewed previous professional learning session concepts that our supervisors had already received. Supervisors had explored several foundational concepts, including transformative and social action approaches to multicultural curriculum (e.g., Banks, 1988), culturally responsive teaching (e.g., Gay, 2002), culturally relevant pedagogy (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995), and teaching strategies to engage all learners (e.g., Kuykendall, 2004). In addition, previous professional learning sessions had added concepts about culturally relevant pedagogy and brain research (Hammond, 2015) and coaching for inclusive practices (Aguilar, 2013). As such, we knew our supervisors had been exposed to a foundation aligned with our stated goals and mission.

We designed our “disruptions” session with the foundational work in mind, knowing also that supervisors had exposure and interest in our common beliefs about equity and social justice, but were reticent about their role in disrupting incidents of deficit thinking. To that end, rehearsals seemed like a natural place to start. We wanted our supervisors to practice what they could say and do to support our candidates seeking help in this area. *Rehearsing* is a strategy used to

enhance the preparation of teachers (Javeed, 2019; Kazemi et al., 2016; Lampert, 2010) across subjects. At the core of “rehearsals”, teachers prepare a lesson, practice teaching it with and/or to peers, receive feedback, and then collectively analyze the success of the lesson with all participants. Through dialogue and analysis, the lesson is revised. The rehearsals prepare the teachers to practice discussion dialogue, material distribution, classroom organization, and other aspects of the lesson that may not have been apparent through the original design. Essentially, the practice should approximate reality as a means of preparation (Trent, 2013). The rehearsals we used with our supervisors were structured as “scenarios”. The supervisors worked in groups of three or four to read one common scenario and decide on an approach to address the situation with their teacher candidate. We decided to start with a true recent incident a candidate had experienced, that although serious, would be an easier entry-point into the concept of “disruptions” than some other scenarios dealing with issues of race and class. (See Figure 1: Mansplaining scenario). Essentially, we started with a non-threatening topic as an easy way for supervisors to explore how to engage in difficult conversations. After practicing with an easier/light-hearted topic, we could up the ante and engage with more difficult topics.

*Figure 1: Mansplaining scenario*

<p>Scenario #1</p> <p>Your teacher candidate relays feelings of discomfort about how their mentor teacher talks to them. The teacher candidate tells you that the mentor teacher gives him this feedback: “Stop ‘mansplaining’ to the students”—but he doesn’t know how to respond to that gendered statement.*</p> <p>The teacher candidate is asking for some assistance navigating this issue with their mentor teacher. How can you help with:</p> <p>_____ Conversations <b>with</b> the teacher candidate</p> <p>_____ Supporting conversations <b>between</b> the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher</p> <p>_____ Providing resources/ideas <b>for</b> the teacher candidate</p> <p>*According to Dictionary.com, mansplaining is “to comment on or explain something to a woman in a condescending, overconfident, and often inaccurate or oversimplified manner”.</p>
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To get started, the supervision teams talked through the scenario and came to a common understanding of the issue. We asked each group to consider supporting the teacher candidate in three ways. Our first goal is always for candidates to communicate directly with their mentor teacher. As such, supervisors first discussed ways they would help the candidate plan for a direct conversation. If a direct conversation did not alleviate the issue or if the teacher candidate asked for additional help, our next preferred outcome is for supervisor moderation of a conversation between the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher. If neither of those are successful—or if the candidate does not want to engage in a conversation with the mentor teacher at all on the topic—we ask supervisors to strategize ways the candidate can navigate a situation that could be ongoing. After all supervisor teams talked through the scenario, we asked one group to rehearse

the conversation with the teacher candidate as well as the mediated conversation with the rest of the supervisors as the audience. Through role-play, one supervisor played the teacher candidate, one played the mentor teacher, and the other stayed in the role of university supervisor. The remaining supervisors acted as audience and participated in a debrief discussion afterwards.

To build on the “mansplaining” issue, we next provided supervisors with another scenario, this time focused on helping candidates navigate instances of deficit-thinking. (See *Figure 2: Deficit-thinking*)

*Figure 2: Deficit-thinking*

Scenario #2:

Your teacher candidate relays feelings of discomfort about how their mentor teacher talks about the families of students. When the teacher candidate tries to share ideas of how to support the students, the mentor teacher says, “Parents of these kids don’t care—they don’t ...” (help them with their homework, come to events, check the online grading portal, return email, etc.)

The teacher candidate is asking for some assistance navigating and interrupting this deficit-thinking of the families. How can you help with:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Conversations **with** the teacher candidate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supporting conversations **between** the teacher candidate and the mentor teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Providing resources/ideas **for** the teacher candidate

In addition to having a discussion, each small group rehearsed the scenario. One person acted the part of the teacher candidate, one played the mentor teacher, and the other remained the supervisor. After the role-play, we asked each group to create a script they could use to support their candidates’ navigation of the issue presented in the scenario. In the debrief discussion, supervisors shared the scripts with the collective group and provided feedback to one another. In addition, we provided additional scenarios related to other common issues that teacher candidates bring forward (e.g., deficit-language toward students whose first language is not English), with the invitation for supervisors to consider creating a script for those, as well. As a final instructional move, we asked supervisors to link the issue and script to specific candidates they currently supervised and articulate a timeframe for implementation of one idea from the day. The goal was for supervisors to feel comfortable “taking up” the challenge of supporting candidates as they disrupt inequities in their placement classrooms in ways that are respectful to their mentor teachers and maintain a positive working relationship. When teacher candidates ask for help, supervisors have prepared and practiced strategies that they can employ with mentor teachers.

### **Taking Up the Work**

It is both difficult and critical to undo the years of white supremacist socialization that both our university supervisors and our teacher candidates have experienced. Retraining (Jarvis et al.,

2003; Merriam & Brockett, 2011) is more difficult for many of our university supervisors than our teacher candidates for a few reasons. Many of our supervisors are older, which means there are more years of embedded language and thinking to counter. Additionally, many of retired supervisors stay current on educational research only through our institution, specifically through the professional learning sessions. For some supervisors, the “mansplaining” scenario was a challenge; many have been conditioned to gendered language over decades of life experiences. This conditioning is also true of white supremacist language and culture. While all of our supervisors are willing to engage in learning on the topic of whiteness and the undoing of racist structures, the understanding of *how* to do that work falls along a wide continuum. In addition, as a collective our supervision team is less willing to *lead* in this realm. For the most part, their interests remain focused on coaching candidates on the more familiar aspects of instruction, such as management techniques and lesson organization. Supervisors are willing to discuss deficit views with the candidates and facilitate difficult conversations; however, it often takes the candidate bringing forward the issues to the supervisor or asking the supervisor for help for an interruption to happen. A persistent question for our EPP remains how to develop skills in our supervision team so, as a whole, they take leadership with their candidates versus waiting for candidates to initiate.

Reteaching is complicated with our teacher candidates, as well. For most of our candidates, they do not lack the interest and motivation; instead, they lack the skills to adequately engage in professional discourse that may include disagreement. But they are bringing issues forward to us and thinking carefully about how to change the field, as noted from two excerpted placement journal samples:

- How do we bring more voices into the room? If we can start to hear more students, we can start to learn about them, their interests and their strengths. Maybe not all voices are literally heard. We need to open up new spaces for students to do the same sort of rough processing so typical of in-class discussion.
- I propose that our academic, behavioral, and disciplinary efforts should focus on developing self-regulated AND critically conscious scholars who understand at an appropriate developmental level that their lives are at the mercy of external forces (institutional racism, for example) AS WELL AS shaped by their own actions supported by restorative practices... I believe students need teachers trained and competent at cooperating with them to identify the root causes and needs behind their behavior, even if we don't have all the answers about why people and institutions behave so unjustly and so unfairly in the world, or why children of color, for example, are systemically and systematically targeted and inhibited in particular in meeting their rights and needs.

While our candidates continue to bring forward their vision to provide an equitable education for their students, we remain concerned about the impact of our work. Our teacher candidates tend to report more satisfaction with the actions of mentor teachers as they spend more time in the placement classroom. The reasons for the increased satisfaction—or reporting less dissatisfaction—are unclear. Based on previous research, two reasons seem plausible and lead us to wonder: as our candidates take more instructional responsibility in the classroom, are they so focused on themselves that they naturally focus less on the actions of their mentor teacher? (Ellul & Fehring, 2016; Kelly, 2017). Or, is it that our candidates moderate their beliefs as they are

enculturated into the education system? (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016; NCATE, 2010; Zeichner, 2010).

The student teaching field experience is a safe and supported time for practice—it is one of the most supported times during the teaching career. With the framework of the mentor and supervisor in place, it is an ideal time to build habits of using a strength-based stance toward learners and their families. We want teachers' default position to see students' and families' assets (Willey & Magee, 2018; Yosso, 2005) which means that EPPs must coach candidates on how to do so. University-based educators can foster an equity-stance through coursework, but it is the clinical supervisor who has the most prescient vantage point to elevate the work. The EPPs are responsible for supporting supervisor learning, as well, and our EPP has built a strong foundation upon which to grow our work through professional learning sessions focused on equity and inclusion.

We have the good fortune of having teacher candidates in our program who also want to engage in equity work. If we want them to take up the work *after* they leave our program, we have to provide them opportunities to practice *during* our program. And, as much as we talk about equity in our courses or practice writing inclusive lesson plans, the application and implementation into the classroom is what solidifies the concepts for our students. As Dudley-Marling (2007) wrote:

No child profits from a perspective that portrays her family or her community as deprived or deficient; however, a deficit stance per se is not problematic, but what comes from this stance is. A deficit gaze that pathologizes individuals, families, and communities is instantiated in pedagogical practices and dispositions that are primarily responsible for disproportionate levels of failure among poor and minority populations. (p. 7)

Our ultimate goal is twofold. We want the teachers who graduate from our EPP to act as change-agents in their future schools and to create classrooms where each child is respected, cherished, and provided an emancipatory education that prepares them to engage in the world. The changes we want to see are both in the immediate and also in the equitable practices we want students to use throughout their careers.

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