The Field Experience Journal

Volume 13 Spring 2014

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From the Editor

Dear Readers of *The Field Experience Journal:*

This edition of *The Field Experience Journal* begins with a submission for Drs. Shane Cavanaugh and Larry Corbett of Central Michigan University. This entry, "A Successful Model for Short-Term International Teacher Education Programs addresses how study abroad programs may aid teacher candidates in their goals of understanding the world and developing citizenship in a global society.

Dr. Maureen Gerard of Arizona State University in the submission titled, "What Must Preservice Teachers Know About Children in Foster Care", explores the impact of a foster care placement on the child's academic success and how teachers are lacking the skills or information to meet the educational needs of these learners.

"A Model for Developing Interculturally Aware Teachers" is a submission from Dr. Jodi Katasafanas and Heather Cunningham. This submission shares a model for preparing teacher candidates to staff culturally diverse and globally connected classrooms. The authors call for instructional practices in college classrooms to be altered to assist teacher candidates in their preparation for careers in culturally diverse settings.

Our final article in this edition was prepared by Mississippi State University's Dr. Penny Wallin and Dr. Matthew Boggan. This submission, "Transforming School Leadership with ELCC Standards and Best Practices: Perceptions, Ideas, and Suggestions for the 21st Century", examines how one university program is addressing the challenges of meeting the needs of learners in a diverse society by developing educational leaders who have a range of skills to address multi-dimensional issues.

Finally, my thanks to those who have contributed their manuscripts for our consideration and to our reviewers for their time and expertise.

Kim L. Creasy

A Successful Model for Short-Term International Teacher Education Programs

Shane Cavanaugh and Larry J. Corbett

Central Michigan University

Expanding students' understanding of the world and guiding them towards citizenship in a global society is an explicit goal at our university and many others. Study abroad programs are an important part of such goals. It is generally assumed that such programs foster greater cultural awareness and global perspectives in participants.   Research supports this claim, finding increased worldmindedness (Jones-Rikkers & Douglas, 2001), global-mindedness (Hadis, 2005), and intercultural sensitivity (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004) as a result of studying abroad. With such positive outcomes, it is gratifying to learn that the number of American students participating in study abroad programs "has more than tripled in the past two decades" (Institute of International Education, 2013).   One likely reason for this growth is the proliferation of shorter programs.

Traditionally, study abroad programs last a semester or a year, but short-term programs of 8 weeks or less have become increasingly popular. In fact, in the 2011/2012 school year, 58.9% of American students who studied abroad did so in a short-term program (Institute for International Education, 2013). Short-term programs are attractive to students who worry that a longer program would be too expensive, conflict with their course schedule, or increase their time in school. In addition, many students simply feel more comfortable with the idea of a shorter stay in a foreign country rather than a semester or year away.   Interestingly, an explicit goal of many short-term study abroad programs is to give students a taste for international travel in hopes that they will later participate in a longer study abroad program (Olson & Lalley, 2012). Like traditional study abroad experiences, short-term study abroad programs have been shown to

produce positive outcomes for students. Studies have found such programs to be effective in increasing cultural awareness (Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004), intercultural sensitivity (Anderson et al., 2006), and to lead students to "become more engaged with the world around them" (Olson & Lalley, 2012).

With traditional semester or yearlong study abroad programs, students leave their home university to attend another abroad. While this certainly offers opportunities for student growth, the advantage of many short-term programs is that faculty from the students' home university design and lead the program. Overall, short-term study abroad programs have proven to offer many benefits to participants – they provide cheaper, more flexible international options, are typically faculty designed and led, satisfy specific program course requirements, and foster a global outlook.

Short-Term International Teacher Education Programs

Such global outlooks may be of particular importance to future teachers who will teach in increasingly diverse classrooms. In fact, research has found international teacher education programs to expand students' cultural identities (Dantas, 2007), deepen their multicultural understanding (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012)**,** and to help them empathize with immigrant children (Garson, 2005, Quezada & Alfaro, 2007, Houser, 2008). Unfortunately, education majors are unlikely to study abroad for any length of time, making up only 4.1% of the total American student population who studied abroad in the 2011/2012 academic year (Institute for International Education, 2013). With a heavy course load and a semester or year of student teaching, many education majors cannot fit the traditional semester or year abroad into their college experiences. For these reasons, our teacher education department has created short-term international experiences specifically tailored to education students. This article will describe

these programs, our thinking behind the creation and design of them, as well as the advantages we have found for students, faculty, and our department.

Our Model for Short-Term International Experiences

Our teacher education department has long placed an emphasis on international experiences and has developed several faculty designed and led programs. For many years our department has offered faculty-led student teaching abroad programs where students complete 5-8 weeks of their student teaching at an international site. In addition, we have more recently created a model for shorter, summer programs that involve course work tied to international field placement for students earlier in their education majors. Directly connecting education coursework to field placements, as our programs do, has been shown to better foster development of the skills necessary to achieve future success as a teacher than coursework without the direct connection to schools (Moyer, 2006). And in the case of our programs, these schools are in London, Dublin, or Oaxaca, Mexico. Students and their professors spend between 12 days to 3 weeks abroad during the first summer session and complete two required education courses and a field experience. Each program begins with coursework on campus, some programs are completed while abroad, while others finish coursework back on campus. Every program relies on an individual or a group associated with the local schools to be the on-site organizer. This contact is paid to arrange suitable housing for the group (usually in homestays), school placements, and classroom space for the group to meet in while abroad. Although some aspects of the programs remain the same year to year, there is also a great deal of flexibility to allow year's faculty leaders to customize the program.

Program Goals

The main goals of our summer international programs are exactly those of other short-term programs, namely to provide a less expensive option that could be easily worked into students' full course schedules. To offset the idea that study abroad programs will add time to their college career, we built our summer programs around two required teacher education courses that are not normally offered on campus during the summer. This means that students can actually save time and work ahead by taking global versions of required courses. A review of recent applications to one of our summer international experiences shows just how important this, along with the reduced cost, is to students:

- "I have always wanted to study abroad, but I never thought that I would be able to fit it into my budget and my schedule. However, this program works perfectly for both. It is relatively cheap, and it allows me to take care of six credits that I needed over the summer in order to open up room in my semester schedule."

- "I chose this specific study abroad program because of the opportunity it would give me to not only speed up my educational sequence …, but also explore a part of the world that I've always wanted to see."

- "I have always thought about spending an entire semester abroad, but I didn't feel as if I had the money to commit. When I found out about the more succinct study abroad opportunities that take place over the summer, I started to research my options. I am so excited to be participating in a study abroad trip that is designed specifically for people studying education. I will be surrounded by students who are studying in the same field as me, so we will be able to discuss our experience as developing professionals."

- "This study abroad program fits perfectly with my academic plan and education program requirements, allowing me to take full advantage of summer courses and getting ahead in my program."

- "I have thought about studying abroad many times, but it was something that I thought I would never actually do."

- "I have never studied abroad because I felt like it would prolong my years here. This particular program will keep me on track to graduate."

Clearly, students value the fact that they can study abroad while also completing two required courses all over the first summer session.

Another goal of our summer international experiences is to give students a different field experience than what we could offer them on campus. Because of our university's location, it can be difficult to provide students with experiences in urban and/or multicultural school settings. The locations for the summer programs were chosen because they differ greatly from campus field placements in hopes of broadening students' perspectives. Each summer program includes a field experience in which students spend at least a week in the same elementary or secondary classroom observing, assisting, and teaching at least one lesson.

Another explicit goal of our summer programs is to allow more faculty members to be a part of the international experiences. While faculty members at our university have long had the opportunity to lead a student teaching abroad program, there are relatively few who can make the 5-8 week commitment during the school year. In particular, faculty members with young children find these programs nearly impossible to participate in. In contrast, 12 days to 3 weeks during the summer is a more feasible option and several faculty members have taught in these programs and brought their families along. Making the programs shorter and offering them in

the summer has enabled more faculty members to participate in the department's international experiences. Just as with our students, the international programs should serve to nurture an increased global awareness in our faculty and this can only be accomplished if all faculty members feel that they have an opportunity to participate in them.

Successful Features of the Programs

Over approximately the last five years, we have continually refined our summer international programs to best meet the needs of our students and faculty. In this process, we have found three features to be particularly instrumental in the success of our programs:

- Connect required coursework to field placement

- Two professors lead each program

- Flexibility in program design and implementation

Connect required coursework to field placement: As discussed earlier, each of our summer international programs is connected to two required education classes as well as a field placement. Which two courses are included depends on the faculty members leading the program (this will be discussed in the flexibility in program design and implementation section). Pairing the two education courses in these international programs not only allows students to complete two required courses, it also makes good pedagogical sense. Before the program begins, the two instructors collaborate to ensure that the courses complement each other and take advantage of the close connection to field placement. The result is a concentrated, rigorous experience where faculty and students form a tight-knit learning community. Along with the two education courses, it should be noted that each student must take a one-credit cultural preparation course taught by the lead instructor(s). This course provides an introduction to the program's location, culture, history, and schooling to prepare students for their visit.

Two professors lead each program: We have experimented with summer programs that are tied to only one course and led by a single professor and found two disadvantages of such a model. First, students strongly prefer the two-course programs since completing two courses over the summer frees up more time in their schedules. Second, we have found that having two professors accompany students abroad offers many advantages in our ability to support students and each other. Having two minds to assess problems that will inevitably arise and to be able to come to a shared solution is invaluable when overseas with a group of undergraduates. In addition, having two instructors offers obvious logistical advantages: one can accompany the group while the other takes a sick or injured student to the hospital, two can more easily visit and observe students in field placements, and having two instructors allows them each a well-deserved day off.

There are a variety of roles our faculty members play in creating and leading the summer international programs. While some choose to equally co-lead the program - sharing responsibility for making all program arrangements, another model has become popular with our faculty. This option involves designating each instructor as either the lead or companion instructor. The lead instructor takes on the responsibility of working with the university's Study Abroad Office to create a budget and program costs for students, recruiting and accepting students into the program, arranging program details with the host site's contact person or group including housing and school placements, arranging for flight and ground transportation, cultural field trips, orientations, etc. Typically, the lead instructor is someone who has been a part of the program before and knows the local contacts and site.

In contrast, the companion instructor role can be a way for faculty to ease into leading an international program. Companion instructors may have never been to the program site or simply

do not want the responsibility required of a lead instructor. We have found this lead/companion system to be an effective way to inspire more faculty members to participate in international programs and to provide a greater pool of individuals who may become future lead instructors. Our department has just begun giving lead instructors a stipend to compensate for the extra time and effort that goes into this role. If the program is equally co-lead, the two individuals split the stipend.

Flexibility in program design and implementation: As should be clear by this point, there is a great deal of flexibility for professors participating in these programs. This flexibility has been intentionally built into our model for summer international programs as a way to encourage more faculty members to participate in them. There is room for faculty leaders to modify each year's programs in terms of which courses will be taught, whether the program will be co-led or will use the lead/companion instructor model, program dates (although all will begin and end in the first summer session), course format including meeting times, and cultural field trips while abroad. The two courses taught in the programs can vary depending on the two faculty members who are leading the programs. The elementary programs generally pair a methods class, educational psychology, or foundations with a field experience practicum course. Again, this depends on the expertise of the faculty members leading the program. The secondary programs combine the general teaching methods course with another required teacher education class, usually educational psychology or foundations. Secondary education students at our university, take their field experience practicum in their content area department (English, math, etc.) rather than in the teacher education department. Since the two teacher education courses do not require a field component, students participating in the international secondary program actually get additional classroom observation time facilitated by teacher education professors.

Departmental Benefits

In addition to benefits for the students and professors who participate in the international summer programs, we have also noticed a number of benefits for our teacher education department. First, as mentioned earlier, the summer international programs allow more students and faculty to participate in study abroad. This then creates a more global-minded faculty and student body. Even if students do not participate in one of the international experiences, they are very likely to have professors, friends, and certainly classmates who have. These experiences have a way of entering class discussions and can provide a broader understanding of children and teaching. As a result, there is a real sense among most faculty and students that international education is something that is valued, encouraged, and supported in our department.

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What Must Preservice Teachers Know About Children in Foster Care?

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Abstract

Statute and policy govern what happens to a child when removed from the biological family. The child's academic success and education are impacted by out-of-home placement, yet teachers are rarely equipped with the necessary skills or information for meeting the educational needs of this population of vulnerable children. Pre-service teacher preparation programs must address working with children from a spectrum of diverse contexts including the child in foster care. From a systems theory perspective, all children develop within nested layers of sociocultural influence or *systems*. The school experience is not just an interaction between the school or teacher and the child, but rather is an interrelated system involving the parent, family, and community. Foster care as a system strongly influences the child in foster care, the child's interaction patterns, the child's academic achievement, and the child's level of aspirations.

Keywords: foster care; field experience; pre-service teacher preparation

Introduction

"As a pre-service teacher… I was privileged to have the opportunity to work one-on-one with three students in the foster care system. The first time I met with the foster students at their group home was incredibly eye-opening. Ten boys lived together in a four bedroom home with a house manager and other staff members shuffling in and out of the home. My three students were thrilled that I was going to be there to work with them three times a week; they had not received that kind of individualized attention since entering the foster care system. I worked with a first grade student, and two fifth grade students...I drove home in tears. The first grader could not identify letters of the alphabet, let alone read. One fifth grader struggled with reading and doing basic addition and subtraction problems. The other fifth grader read at a second grade reading level and labored to complete his language arts homework. I knew I had my work cut out for me, but I was determined to help these students make some academic progress. Working with the three boys was a challenge, especially when I would sit with my one fifth grader and spend 30 minutes trying to get through a level one book or watch as my other fifth grader struggle to grasp the concept of cardinality. Other challenges arose such as having condensed time to meet with the boys due to their meetings with social workers or loss of focus due to an impending visit with a parent….I had the opportunity to see the fruits of my efforts looking at the alphabet book my first grader and I had created together, listening to my fifth grader read an entire book on his own without stumbling over the words, and watching my other fifth grader solve an addition problem using manipulatives grasping the cardinality principle. The semester I spent working with these three students taught me a lot about the struggles that foster students bring into the classroom and how to motivate them to learn and meet them where they are at educationally and work towards academic success."

Amy, 2007 graduate

Some 400,000 children are currently in foster care across the United States on any given day (Administration for Children and Families, 2013). Statute governs what happens to a child when removed from the biological family; court decisions mandate when a child can return to biological kin. Schools and teachers may be poorly equipped with the necessary information or skills for helping meet the educational needs of this burgeoning group of children. Pre-service teacher preparation programs must address working with children from an array of diverse contexts including the child living in foster care.

From a systems theory perspective, all children develop within nested layers of sociocultural influence or *systems* (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The child is not only influenced by these systems, but also has influence on them in a reciprocal relationship. The school experience

is not just an interaction between the school or teacher and the child, but rather is an interrelated, interconnected system involving the parent, family, and community. Foster care as a system strongly influences the child, the child's interaction patterns, the child's academic achievement, and ultimately, the child's level of aspirations.

An Academic Dilemma

Children in foster care experience a heightened array of risk factors. When a child cannot remain safely with his biological family, the child often is transferred to a neighborhood school in the district of the person providing out-of-home care for the child. These placements rarely come at 'opportune' times and frequently fall midyear or during testing periods (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). Most teachers are unaware of the confidential, contextual factors that place the child in foster care so they may not realize the extent of the challenges experienced by the child; most have no record of the child's previous academic history (Christian, 2008). Differences and inconsistency between districts and even schools within a school district result in academic challenges for the child in foster care. Research affirms the loss of up to 6 months of academic growth with a foster care placement (Temple & Reynolds, 1999).

Foster care places children at significant disadvantage educationally. Research conducted by the Casey Family Programs, a national foster care organization, found children placed in foster care to have nine significant educational implications. Children receiving out-of-home care have high rates of absenteeism and tardiness attributed to court appearances, appointments with social service workers and therapists, and medical appointments (Wareing & Solomon, 2005). Foster children, already traumatized socially and emotionally, miss more school days to attend court, to meet with social service workers, to meet with therapists, and to make doctor's visits. Missing school and coming to school late results in a larger achievement gap and an

increased loss of social interaction and content learning. When a child changes schools, a multitude of adjustments must be made to the curriculum, teachers, peers, and expectations of the school (Christian, 2008). These adjustments take time and energy − precious time and energy diverted from learning. Thirty-five percent of foster children experience four or more school changes and each school change is equivalent to a six month loss in educational progress (Temple & Reynolds, 1999). This translates to a loss of two years of educational progress.

The risk factors for children in foster care have additional educational implications. Most children in foster care test below grade level. They may enter the foster care system achieving on grade level, but the multiple transitions between schools and high rates of absenteeism cause them to fall behind to the point where it becomes impossible to 'catch up'. Twenty-six to forty percent of children in foster care repeat one or more grades (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). This results in an entire set of social-emotional implications for the foster child. Repeating a grade allows the child to repeat and review in order to meet academic standards, but it is socially stigmatizing. Often children who repeat more than one grade level are tacitly viewed as a 'lost cause' or in need of special education services, when all that is needed individualized help. Compared to youth who live with their biological parents, foster children score 15 to 20 percentile points lower on state achievement tests (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003).

Children in foster care tend to be disciplined or suspended from school more frequently than the rest of the school population. These students struggle to adapt to the multiple, stress filled changes going on in their lives and thus, 'act out' in school. 'Acting out' behavior results in disciplinary action, even suspension. Discipline actions such as suspension further consume valuable time that should be spent in the classroom. Children in foster care are less likely to take college preparatory courses than other children. The pathway to higher education begins

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narrowing early in their academic career. The instability of their schooling leads to low self-efficacy and few children think about continuing their schooling further than what is required. Foster care and the lack of attention paid to the educational needs of foster youth cripples their desire to learn and compounds the stress in their lives. Forty-six percent of youth in foster care do not finish high school compared to the 16 percent of typical youth who are likely to drop out of high school (Children's Law Center, 2007). The risk factors of foster care in students' lives run deep.

State-funded, out-of-home care, whether it is foster family care or residential group home care, carries a stigma that influences the attitudes of those who interact with the children and youth. Some teachers feel that it is not worth the effort to help foster children since they may not be part of the classroom community on a long-term basis (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003). Ultimately, the goal is to return the child to a safe, permanent place of residence; out-of-home care is considered temporary (Arizona DES, 2007). Therefore, relationships and attachments for foster children are poorly formed and temporary. Difficult relationships with the foster child complicate a teacher's time investment; teachers may focus on the preconceived notions about foster children; any assistance the teacher could provide would be pointless because the children do not benefit from the extra help (Powers & Stotland, 2002).

Preparation of Pre-service Teachers

A survey of current text books published for pre-service teacher methods coursework confirms a lack of specific information on working with children in foster care or on tailoring instruction to meet their individual needs. Teacher preparation methods currently pay 'lip service' to teaching **all** children in an effort to create a fully inclusive classroom. Textbooks focus on adapting and accommodating instruction to meet the learning objectives of students

with special needs; chapters include strategies for challenging and enriching the gifted student; chapters are devoted to closing the achievement gap between English language learners and native English speakers. However, textbooks devote little to the gap between children in foster care and typical students. Nationally, over 799,000 children passed through the foster care systems in the fifty states during the fiscal year of 2012 (Administration for Children and Families, 2013). Reporting abuse and neglect of children most often falls on the classroom teacher. It is an absolute certainty that today's pre-service teacher must know what to look for, how to follow reporting mandates, and how to adapt and plan for children in foster care in their classrooms.

Mandatory Reporting Indicators

Children who have experienced trauma or neglect may beg, steal, or hoard food (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008a; The National Children's Advocacy Center, 2008). They may also display an extreme of behaviors, either "being overly demanding or not at all; overly compliant or not compliant; aggressive or withdrawn" (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008a pg. 2). The characteristics of children suffering from abuse differ only slightly from those who experience neglect. Children who have been physically abused are typically wary of adults in general and demonstrate extremely aggressive behavior or are very withdrawn (The National Children's Advocacy Center, 2008). Sexually abused children will either exhibit excessive acting out or continual depression (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008a). Also, they generally struggle with peer relationships; they may be unable to make or to keep friends. The signs of emotional abuse are not physically evident as is the case with physical or sexual abuse, but affect nearly every area of the child's life and well-being. Children who have been emotionally abused may have speech problems and lag behind the

typical physical, emotional, or intellectual development of children in the same age group. Their daily lives are also affected resulting in trouble sleeping, playing, and eating along with the development of habit disorders such as sucking, rocking, or biting (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008a; The National Children's Advocacy Center, 2008). Emotionally abused children exhibit behavior extremes similar to neglected children and physically and sexually abused children. .

Children who have been abused and/or neglected will start displaying the characteristics of someone who has been traumatized by a catastrophic event. Traumatized children live in a heightened, stressed state of fear. Responses to adults take the form of people-pleasing or withdrawing and isolation (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008b). It is unthinkable that the parent/caregiver they trust would abuse or neglect them is too difficult for traumatized children. Instead of thinking badly of the caregiver, the child forms an idealized image of the parent and then turns the hatred towards inward because they believe that they must have done something wrong to deserve the abuse or the neglect. Idealizing the parent leads the child to be in denial of what that caregiver is doing to them or to repress the memories of their victimization (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008b). The abuse and neglect children experience at the hands of parents and caregivers leads is traumatizing. Recognizing and understanding the characteristics and behaviors of children who have been neglected and abused is the first step towards being able to help them in the classroom.

Strategies for Teaching Children Who are Abused, Neglected and Traumatized

School and academic success changes life for children who are in foster care. Strategies and best practices that are proven and effective with typical students are all the more important for children in the foster care system. According to a fact sheet organized by the National

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Working Group on Foster Care and Education "educational success is a potential positive counterweight to abuse, neglect, separation, and impermanence . . . [and] enhance[s] [foster children's] well-being" (2007,pg. 1). With this in mind, teachers must work towards creating a learning community within their classrooms that does not allow any child to 'slip through the cracks', especially the child in foster care. Since children in foster care lack permanency or stability in their lives, it is essential for there to be routine and predictability within the classroom. A structured classroom environment that provides a predictable routine on a day-to-day basis will allow children in foster care to feel a sense of security in their lives and provide the necessary scaffolds to help the child develop internal controls (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008a).

The environment in the classroom and on the school campus must provide a positive emotional environment where the child feels clear boundaries while welcomed and accepted (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008a). Children who suffer from abuse, neglect, and traumatization blame and deceive themselves into thinking that they are worthless. Therefore, it is imperative that positive self-esteem is promoted in throughout the school. Foster children need opportunities to develop resilience by taking on increasingly important classroom responsibilities. Establish clear and logical consequences for accepted classroom behavior and consistently enforce them. Use cooperative learning strategies. Talk with all students in language which empowers them to think carefully and decide wisely. Display students' work on the walls; showcase students' specific talents through an expert chart such as starting a story, deciphering a difficult word in a book or tying their shoes. Allow students a voice in the classroom with respectful opportunities to speak up and speak out. Celebrate the students'

strengths to help create a sense of personal efficacy which translates into educational success for the child in foster care.

Once a classroom community has been created that has a predictable daily schedule, a positive emotional environment with high expectations, and effective classroom practices that support positive self-esteem, teachers can put more emphasis on academics. As students in foster care begin to feel secure in the classroom and develop a sense of belonging, they are willing to take certain risks. At the beginning it is important to provide these students with opportunities and experiences in which they can succeed. Many of these students hear praise infrequently; they have often heard all that is wrong. For this reason, it is important to use a lot of praise and encouragement when they do things correctly and to celebrate their successes (Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 2008a). Use very specific, task related, genuine praise with the child in the foster system that encourages an open mindset (Dweck, C., 2013).

Students in foster care bring significant educational risks with them when they are replaced into new classroom settings. Few records follow most foster students from their school of origin to all other transfer schools. For this reason, teachers must take the time to authentically assess the child in foster care in relation to the academic norms for typically developing peers in the grade level. This will help the teacher gain an understanding of the prior knowledge this student brings with them. Since each school transition for a foster student is a six month loss of academic progress, teachers must evaluate the child's skills, knowledge and dispositions early.

Meeting the Educational Needs of Students in Foster Care

Any work that a teacher invests in helping a student in foster care is important, but the constant possibility of the student changing schools and the displacement process beginning

again. The lack of academic information transfer causes a dilemma for enrolling the student in the new school. A service plan with concrete outcomes explicitly addresses the child's legal status and need for permanency planning (Hardin, 1992). But this service plan is rarely seen by the classroom teacher. Confidentiality is crucial as is complete acceptance of the child without prejudice. A solution to this ongoing problem can be a version of the individualized education plan (IEP)− an accommodation plan−that incorporates case management information along with the academic history and essential educational information for each child that is in out-of-home placement. An accommodation plan drawn up when the child enters the care of the state will ensure that the child's educational needs are recorded and follow the child regardless of how many different times the child switches schools and districts. The educational accommodation plan alerts teachers of the delicate context surrounding this child and includes invaluable insight and information to case management issues. Teachers are able to individualize lessons to best meet the educational needs of the student. They are able to provide extra support and tutoring services as needed. An educational accommodation plan that follows the child ensures that schools are cognizant of the child's academic successes and educational needs.

Field Experience with Children in Foster Care

The risk factors for children in the foster care system seem overwhelming. Individual risk factors begin in family pathology, conflict, poor attachment and weak bonding. These factors in turn influence school success or failure, social rejection or acceptance, neighborhood stability or disorganization, and poverty level and economic deprivation. The multiple risk factors for children in the foster system exponentially increase the probability of sustained developmental problems through childhood and adolescence. A stable and continuous influence in the life of a foster child builds resilience. Teacher oftentimes provide the stable, continuous influence that

adds a critical element of predictability to the foster child's life. Teachers have the capacity to not only influence the development of the foster child, but to systemically influence families, neighborhoods, and communities before families go into crisis.

It is true; "Teachers are not 'finished products' when they complete a teacher preparation program. Guided entry into teaching, via residencies and mentored induction should become standard feature of every high quality teacher preparation approach "(No Dream Denied, 2003). In this era of accountability, demand for demonstrated results is placed on teacher preparation institutions. How can teacher preparation colleges accommodate yet another set of demands on pre-service teachers? How can space in an intense, overloaded curriculum provide for another topic? Field experiences for pre-service teachers can be purposefully designed to put intern students into group homes to tutor foster children, help with homework, build reading skills, and develop study habits that will encourage academic achievement. Alternately, partnerships to bring foster care students on to college campuses instill academic aspirations and to generate familiarity with postsecondary schooling.

Recall Amy's experience with three children in foster care from the opening vignette. In some innovative university programs, effort is made to expose foster kids and pre-service teachers to each other. The relationship is part of the college's field experiences curriculum for undergraduate students. The field experience tutoring foster children benefits pre-service students by offering them first-hand opportunities to observe language and literacy development, to use new teaching techniques, and to serve disadvantaged youth in the community. It provides student teachers with 'real-world' leadership skills, opportunities for community collaboration, experience in advocating for quality educational programming, and opportunities for undergraduate research."(DeGeorges, 2008).

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A Model for Developing Interculturally Aware Teachers

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Abstract

The need to graduate well-prepared teachers to staff our culturally diverse and globally connected classrooms is a significant concern to all U.S. teacher education programs. The practice of offering unsupported course and fieldwork activities has been unsuccessful in developing an interculturally aware teaching force. A model is presented for supporting intercultural field experiences that involves modeling culturally responsive teaching in the college classroom, introducing skills to learn about one's own cultural identity and that of others, and leading reflective classroom discussions. These activities, coupled with intercultural field experiences either internationally or in U.S. cultural minority communities, can dissolve pre-service teachers' misconceptions and stereotypes and develop increased intercultural awareness by enhancing students' knowledge, skills and dispositions about cultural diversity. More of this support is needed to develop the interculturally aware teaching force needed for U.S. classrooms.

The Need to Develop Interculturally Aware Teachers

The need to create a teaching force that is interculturally aware is undeniable, as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) report first added competencies for interculturally aware pre-service teachers in 2001 (NCATE, 2001). Pre-service teachers must develop proficiencies for working with their students from diverse cultural backgrounds; demonstrate dispositions of respect and a value for difference. This involves developing capacities to critically examine their own beliefs, attitudes, and understandings, recognize practices that may be biased, and alter the way they see themselves and others (Keengwe, 2010). As teacher educators, we know we need to stress the importance of global citizenship and multicultural awareness, but many of us working in settings of higher education find these proficiencies challenging to add to our courses in education and fieldwork placements. As teacher educators we *hope* offering cultural diversity lessons and field experiences will aid our students to become more aware of their own beliefs, their biases, and stereotypical points of view that all young adults bring to class. We know that this work is certainly needed in teacher education programs. In their survey of pre-service teachers at one south Florida university, Roseman, Perkins, and Ban (2012) found that a full 25% responded that they didn't perceive knowledge or understanding of cultural diversity as important to their work as classroom teachers. And we also know that even when exposed to multicultural education coursework during their teacher education program, many pre-service teachers struggle with implementing ideas related to multicultural education in their student teaching placements (Colbert-Lewis, 2011). Further evidence also indicates that these classroom-based lessons alone are much less effective in shaping pre-service teacher beliefs about diversity than courses connected with intercultural field experiences, and that these field experiences must be intentionally supported in

order to effect any significant change in perceptions about cultural diversity (Castro, 2010; Phillion et al., 2008). The proficiencies mandated by NCATE in 2001 call for increased intercultural awareness in pre-service teachers. Intercultural awareness involves an awareness of oneself as a cultural being and the ability to learn about culturally different others (Sleeter, 2004). Intercultural awareness can be developed through supported intercultural field experiences and enable pre-service teachers to shift their perceptions of self and culturally different others (Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011).

Reflections on Past Practice

Field experiences for pre-service teachers include both pre-student teaching activities in K-12 classrooms and student teaching itself. Intercultural field experiences are those which occur in environments that are culturally distinct from that which reflects dominant U.S. (Anglo-American) culture. Intercultural field experiences may occur in U.S. communities where the majority of community members represent a cultural minority group, or in an international setting. The intercultural field experiences currently practiced at some universities without any support or reflection do not develop intercultural awareness in pre-service teachers. In fact, these unsupported intercultural observations may actually cement misconceptions and stereotypes that pre-service teachers already have (Marx & Moss, 2011b). There are classroom activities that can help pre-service teachers make sense of what they are seeing such as learning about their own cultural identity, learning to observe and interview participants in the field, and participating in reflective classroom discussions. Reflections on past practice tell us that more of this support is needed so that pre-service teachers do not leave intercultural field experiences simply re-confirming misunderstandings and stereotypes of people different than themselves.

Effective Intercultural Field Experiences

Intercultural field experiences are a common way to help students understand the relationship between culture and education. Many universities require pre-service teachers to complete pre-student teaching field experiences in culturally diverse settings before student teaching, and some universities offer either international field experiences or domestic field experiences in U.S. schools located in communities where the majority of residents are cultural minorities. These experiences give pre-service teachers a means to more fully experience the impact of cultural influences on education. As Gay (2010) explains, ethnicity and culture are foundations of all other behaviors. If teachers do not have enough intercultural awareness to successfully support students whose cultural background is different from their own, these students will not develop to their full academic potential. Furthermore, teachers without intercultural awareness will not be able to help their own students see past cultural misconceptions and stereotypes.

Many scholars have noted that it is difficult for white Americans, or any member of a dominant national culture, to truly understand the perspectives of cultural minorities if they have never experienced minority or outsider status themselves (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Milner, 2005; Sleeter, 2000). Intercultural field experiences such as international student teaching or field experiences in a U.S. cultural minority community affords pre-service teachers the experience of being a cultural minority or outsider (Romano & Cushner, 2007; Zeichner & Melnick, 1996). These experiences appear to be imperative for most U.S. pre-service teachers, since the majority of the U.S. teaching force is comprised of white Americans (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). This opportunity to experience being "the other" through an intercultural field experience is an invaluable way to develop the intercultural awareness pre-service teachers

needed to be effective teachers in U.S. classrooms. And evidence suggests that after completing intercultural field experiences, pre-service teachers do shift their perceptions of others in the world and are more willing to interact with people culturally different than themselves (Garii, 2009). As teacher educators, faculty cannot predict the career paths of our pre-service teachers, but we can be very sure of two things: our teachers will work in classrooms where many of the students are culturally different from them, and their classrooms will be attended by students who will be living in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world (Marx, 2011). As teacher educators, we must make certain that they are well-prepared for the classrooms they will face. Offering supported intercultural field experiences to our pre-service teachers will ensure that they are prepared.

A Model for Supporting Intercultural Field Experiences

Effectively supporting intercultural field experiences involves three components: modeling culturally responsive teaching in the college classroom, imparting pre-service teachers with the skills to make sense of their own cultural identity and that of others, and on-going reflective discussions that help pre-service teachers to make sense of what they are seeing in the field.

<u>Culturally Responsive Teaching in the College Classroom</u>

Culturally responsive teaching is an approach to classroom instruction that is built on the premise that all children are have knowledge and abilities drawn from their life experiences and cultural backgrounds, and that the teacher must build upon what students already know and can already do to enable the students to develop academically (Gay, 2010). Ladson-Billings (2009) adds that this approach to teaching empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically. Through modeling this type of instruction in our college classrooms, our pre-service

teachers learn how to organize instruction through student-controlled learning groups. The instructor remains active, but not as "the sage upon the stage," rather as the guide, mediator, and knowledgeable consultant. By utilizing this format in our college classrooms, we model instruction that is designed to promote success in culturally diverse classrooms (Milner, 2013). This occurs through authentic student engagement and requiring that our students play an active role in crafting curriculum and developing the learning activities through consulting with the teacher.

Increasing Intercultural Awareness

Another important part of supporting intercultural field experiences is helping our pre-service teachers understand themselves as cultural beings and giving them tools to learn about the culturally different others they may observe in their field sites. Sleeter (2004) offers a number of project ideas and even course syllabi free on the Teacher's College website[1] that help pre-service teachers progress in these areas. Key items related to understanding oneself as a cultural being include theory about culture and cultural identity, an explanation of how a teacher's cultural identity influences their practice, as well as a class project pre-service teachers can complete about their own cultural identity. Key items that prepare students to learn about culturally different others include lessons on the important skills of interviewing and observing members of the field site community, short field assignments that help pre-service teachers practice these skills, and a capstone project in which pre-service teachers synthesize these skills by producing a final study about the field site community.

On-going Reflection

The final piece to supporting intercultural field experiences is engaging pre-service teachers in on-going reflection throughout the entirety of the field experience. Much evidence

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[1] http://www.teacherscollegepress.com/pdfs/culture.pdf

highlights the effectiveness of reflection activities integrated with fieldwork and course work in shaping student dispositions about intercultural awareness (Husu, Toom, & Pakrikainan, 2008; McCormack, 2011; Sharma et al., 2011). My Cultural Awareness Profile (MyCAP) is a self-reflection tool designed to support teacher educators' efforts in preparing interculturally aware pre-service teachers (Marx, 2011). MyCAP consists of 40 Likert-scale survey and short essay questions intended to initiate self-reflection and dialogue. Faculty members teaching classes that support candidates in either a field experience with a diverse U.S. population or a field experience abroad can administer this survey at several points in the semester as a formative assessment vehicle.   The questions on MyCAP, some of which are listed below, act as conversation starters between professionals and students.

There are four dimensions to MyCAP: exploring the global context, learning about different cultures, knowing ourselves as cultural, and communicating across cultural differences (Marx & Moss, 2011c). Each dimension is addressed by asking a series of questions to which pre-service teachers respond on a Likert scale followed by a writing prompt. For example, one question in the "Communicating Across Cultural Differences" section is, "I adjust my communication style depending on who I am talking to" (I agree, somewhat agree, disagree). The writing prompt for this section would be: "Describe a time when you talked with someone from a culture different than your own. What went well in the conversation? What were some of the challenges you faced in trying to communicate effectively?" (Marx & Moss, 2011a). More examples of questions and writing prompts from the 4 Dimensions of MyCAP include:

Questions	Writing Prompts
1. I understand that my perspectives may not be shared by people of other cultures. 2. I have had opportunities to get to know people from other cultures, either nationally or internationally.	1. If someone from another country came to visit you, how would you describe your culture to him or her? 2. Describe three characteristics of a cultural group other than your own.

(Marx, 2011)

Robert and Annie: Two Pre-Service Teachers Who Benefited from Support

Robert and Annie are two pre-service teachers who developed intercultural awareness through from the support offered to them during their intercultural field experiences. Robert, a 22-year old white male pre-service teacher, experienced significant growth through completing the interview and observation assignments in a course designed to support his field experience. His field experience was in a U.S. urban middle school, with a student population that was approximately 65% African American and 45% white, and where over 80% of students received free and reduced lunch. Robert describes himself coming from a middle class background with two educators for parents and a home that stressed both parent and child participation in school and school-related activities. Although Robert said the town he grew up in was racially diverse, he did not seem at ease at the beginning of the semester talking about how his African American students were culturally different from himself or his white students. He openly admitted he thought the best way to deal with any cultural differences was to "treat students all the same," meaning he avoided addressing cultural differences at all.

Robert completed a number of observation and interview assignments during his first few weeks of his field experience that helped him understand his students and their community on a much deeper level. Through interviewing community members, Robert discovered that one of the reasons the school experienced such low parental involvement was that many parents were single parents who worked long hours or multiple jobs to support their children. His interviewees explained to him that the parents in the community depended heavily on extended family such as grandparents or other relatives to bring students to school and tend to them afterwards. This helped Robert understand why students rarely returned homework that he instructed them to complete with their parents. It also enabled him to understand how his students' community was culturally different than the community and household in which he grew up.

Robert also learned a lot about his students by observing them at the local community center. There, he was able to see how his students responded to community members and their own family members. He was surprised at how direct and seemingly harsh some African American parents were with their children – his students – and he was amazed at how even his toughest African American student, Anthony, became respectful and obedient to his mother when parented this way. When Anthony was goofing around instead of preparing to leave with his mother, she called out to him, "Don't make me come over there or else we will have a problem." Anthony immediately grabbed his gym bag and headed in her direction. At first Robert was inclined to call this parenting style "bad parenting," as it did not at all match the style of parenting he experienced while growing up in a middle class white home. In his home, voices were never raised and directives to children were often phrased passively, such as "How about you clean your room now?" But after talking to several community members Robert discovered

that this parenting style was actually considered quite normal, and that a direct and more authoritative approach was more common among African American parents than white parents. Robert realized that without this structured observation and further exploration, he would have labeled the woman a "bad parent" when really she was just using a parenting style that was culturally unfamiliar to him. This experience helped him realize that cultural differences among his students are important and must be recognized, because activities such as parenting were culturally unique. Recognizing these differences made Robert a better and more interculturally aware teacher.

Annie is another pre-service teacher who developed intercultural awareness through support during a field experience. Annie, a 21-year old white female, participated in a student teaching abroad program sponsored by her university. This program enabled her to complete the last month of her student-teaching requirement in a bilingual K-12 school in a large Latin American city. This was quite an adventure for a young woman who had never left the United States before. Her group engaged in a number of instructor-led group reflections on the trip designed to increase their intercultural awareness. One group reflection centered on MyCAP dimension 3 (Knowing Ourselves as Cultural – perspective consciousness) (Marx & Moss, 2011a). When asked to describe her own cultural identity and values, Annie identified herself as a traditional American from a working class family of Eastern European heritage. Cultural values that she identified from her own upbringing include respecting others – especially elders, working hard, and demonstrating self-control. When asked how she saw her cultural identity and values influencing her teaching, Annie offered that she shows her students respect and expects the same in return. She also shared that she models hard work and self-control to her students and expects them to learn from her example. It was helpful for Annie to identify these facets of

her own identity as cultural, because it enabled her to see her students as cultural beings as well and recognize that they may have different values and ideals than her own. For example, when Annie became frustrated during the program that her Latin American students were rarely silent as instructed during individual work time, she thought back to her group's discussion about values and realized that her students were not trying to be disrespectful to her and or disregard her instructions, they simply came from a culture that valued collaboration much more than individual accomplishment. Overall, Annie's participation in group reflections helped her to make better sense of her students' behaviors and increased her intercultural awareness.

Annie also demonstrated increased intercultural awareness through group reflection related to MyCAP dimension 2, Learning about Different Cultures (Marx & Moss, 2011c). This dimension highlights the need for pre-service teachers to understand the diversity of different cultural practices found worldwide so that they can prepare their own future students to interact with people from all over the world. During a group reflection in the second week of her program, Annie shared that a recent excursion to an open-air market had a significant impact on her. She was struck by the skills of the artisans in the market, including a jewelry maker who demonstrated how he made intricately beaded necklaces, and a wood carver who showed her how he carved beautiful birds from indigenous trees. Annie shared with the group that she was amazed that she learned so much about how people live and the diverse skills people have in just one afternoon, and that she had left the market realizing how much there is in the world culturally that was new to her. After hearing similar reactions from a number of students in her group, Annie shared that she wanted to learn even more about different cultures and hoped to become more open minded about people who have different traditions than her own. Annie's participation in the field experience, coupled with support through this reflective discussion, led

to her development of intercultural awareness with respect to learning about different cultures. Hopefully, she will be able to share this newfound interest in other cultures and her increased open-mindedness with the students she will teach in the years ahead.

Conclusion

Teacher education programs are mandated to prepare pre-service teachers for the classrooms that they will face. This means that as teacher educators, we must ensure that our students develop intercultural awareness. Teacher education programs should continue to encourage pre-service teachers to participate in intercultural field experiences such as student teaching abroad and domestic placements in cultural minority communities. Coursework that includes the modeling of culturally responsive teaching in the college classroom, development of the skills needed to understand their own cultural identity and those of others, and on-going reflective discussions must also be added as support for these field experiences in order to ensure that students' perceptions of self and others shift in ways that lead to greater intercultural awareness. Future interest includes examining whether our pre-service teachers actually demonstrate intercultural awareness in their own classrooms after beginning their teaching careers. We know that intercultural awareness is needed, and that as teacher educators we are tasked to ensure that the teachers we train are well-prepared for the students they will teach.

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Transforming School Leadership with ELCC Standards and Best Practices:

Perceptions, Ideas, and Suggestions for the 21st Century

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Abstract

The challenges in meeting the needs of students in today's diverse society require thoughtful educational leaders who possess a wide range of skills to address multi-dimensional issues. The research on the evolving essential components to prepare effective school leaders (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, La Pointe, & Orr, 2009; Young, Crow, Murphy, & Ogawa, 2009), coupled with the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC Standards, 2011), serve as the basis for NCATE-approved Educational Leadership programs. Using Participatory Action Research (PAR), leadership students in Mississippi State University-Meridian's cohort programs served as co-researchers during their 14-month experiences. They engaged in sustained collaborative inquiry, grounded in field-based internships, courses, and research to answer the question: How do emerging leaders in an ELCC-based Educational Leadership program articulate and perceive their leadership roles? Soliciting personal reflections and first hand experiences, this narrative report uses interviews and open-ended surveys to capture perceptions, ideas, and suggestions from emerging leaders to inform continuous improvement of the Educational Leadership Programs. As the initial phase of a multi-year research project, the goal of this research is to acquire a better understanding of the perceptions that educational leaders have in relation to the ELCC Standards and the Educational Leadership program at Mississippi State University and to identify strengths and areas for improvement within the program. Subsequent phases will compare data collected at time of program completion with data

collected after key milestones in school leadership roles to further align program components with ELCC Standards and job-based performance. Ultimately, the inquiry and evaluation process used in this research will be available for replication by comparable programs.

Introduction and Review of Literature

Peter Senge issued the challenge to transform learning organizations into "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together" (1990, p. 3). The complex issue of meeting the wide range of student needs and legislative mandates in today's educational settings calls for strong leadership skills. According to Lazandou & Iordanies,

> Leadership involves the art and the process of influencing individuals so that they collaborate willingly to achieve common objectives. It entails four basic abilities: to respond to how individuals are motivated in different situations by different factors, to inspire and guide the members of the organization, to create a suitable climate, and to articulate and support clear objectives (2011, p. 5).

Contemporary school leadership is highly focused on "reframing leadership" (Bolman & Deland, p. 348), as school communities seek to match skills sets with factors of need to ensure student success (Adelman & Taylor, 2006, p. 131). The call is to prepare educational leaders who possess skills and constructs with a range of "leadership continuum behaviors" (Reinhartz & Beach, p. 13). Fullen (2000, p. xix) stated, "Never before has leadership in education been more critical for public school systems…[therefore] the need for leadership to forge synergy and coherence is paramount." In the book *Transforming School Leadership with ISLLC and ELCC*, Shipman, Queen, & Peel (2007) stated, "…we all urgently need school leaders who can lead students to success in school…with the foresight to usher students, teachers, and communities into the 21st century of education" (p. xi). There is growing consensus that attention to and

systematic analysis of the ELCC Standards in every facet of training impacts how programs in Educational Leadership directly affect the preparation of successful leaders who possess the practical and pragmatic capabilities for transformational leadership (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005).

Methods

At the beginning of the 2012-13 and 2013-14 Educational Leadership Cohort Programs at Mississippi State University in Educational Leadership, students were introduced to the ELCC Standards as the overarching guide for leaders. Over the course of the programs, they were asked to demonstrate their growth as emerging leaders through journaling and formal reflections on a) their knowledge and evolving understanding of the ELCC Standards, and b) research-based ideas for demonstrating best leadership practices. Additionally, students were asked to complete a survey regarding their understandings of the ELCC 25 sub-standards and how they are connected to the Educational Leadership programming. The questions were presented in the form of a Likert-scale, with invitation to add optional comments. Participation in this study was voluntary. All students in the 2013-14 Cohort participated, and 78% percent of the 2012-13 Cohort students participated, which totaled 23 out of 25 students or 92% participation for both cohorts.

The study first records the formal definitions of each ELCC Standard that guide NCATE approved leadership programs, followed by a collaborative summary of the understanding, perceptions, and metaphorical thinking about each Standard based on the contributed reflections. The survey results on each of the 25 ELCC sub-standards are displayed in charts, with direct student comments in italics in order to provide a window into the journey of 21st century emerging educational leaders.

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Results and Discussion

Standard 1: Visionary Leadership

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and
ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation,
implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the
school community.

Table 1: ELCC Standard 1—Understanding of Sub-Standards

2013-14 Cohort N= 16	1.1: I was able to revise, steward, or create a vision for my school.	1.2: I received a better understanding of how to use data to identify school-related goals and implement plans to achieve these goals.	1.3: I was encouraged to promote continual and sustainable school improvement.	1.4: I gained a better understanding of how to evaluate school progress and revise school plans that are supported by stakeholders.
Strongly Agree	68.8%	75%	76.5%	56.3%
Agree	31.2%	25%	23.5%	43.8%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0.0%
2012-13 Cohort N= 7				
Strongly Agree	100%	85.7%	100%	85.7%
Agree	0%	14.3%	0%	14.3%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 1 illustrates that emerging leaders feel very confident that their Educational
Leadership program connects the sub-standards of ELCC Standard 1 within their coursework.
Students strongly agreed or agreed that they gained a clear understanding of Visionary
Leadership. While all four sub-standards received high scores, the students felt most comfortable
with ELCC 1.3 and ELCC 1.2. We attribute this to the many assignments completed by

emerging leaders focused on promoting continual and sustainable improvement and building understanding of how to use data to drive school-related goals. "The importance of creating a school vision, revising it on an as-need basis, and getting the community involved in this creation and continuance, were all dealt with throughout the internship (Student 1, online survey, December, 2013).

Emerging leaders view Standard 1 as establishing a vision for a culture and learning environment for all stakeholders at the school. The role of the leader is strategic in building a "passionate commitment that is uniquely tailored to fit the specialized needs and interests of the stakeholders" (Student 22, online survey, December, 2013). A successful vision includes collaboration, communication, and commitment. The key element of the vision is "the ability to put dreams into action" with a well-designed plan (Student 6, online survey, December, 2013). The leader delegates, facilitates, and guides in establishing goals through careful analysis of collected data that connect to assessment, resources, professional development, and community outreach, to achieve a "common and shared focus" (Student 6, online survey, December, 2013).

Student Commentary:

Without having a vision for where I want to lead my school in order to promote success for each student, it would be as if I were driving across America without a roadmap or Garmin. The vision guides long term goals and everyday practices. As a principal, I must ensure that I am creating a learning environment for the students and teachers in the school. I must work with all stakeholders to create a shared vision and mission that all constituents can embrace (Student 7, journal entry, December, 2013).

Metaphorically speaking, students believe a leader under Standard 1 is "an electrician able to connect all the wires" (Student 10, journal entry, December, 2013), "a calm navigator who can

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maneuver any kind of vehicle over terrain" (Student 2, journal entry, December, 2013), or "an artist who has a clear mental picture and conveys it on canvas" (Student 14, journal entry, December, 2013).

Standard 2: Instructional Leadership

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.

Table 2: ELCC Standard 2—Understanding of Sub-Standards

2013-14 Cohort N= 16	2.1: I gained a better understanding of how to sustain a school culture through collaboration, trust, and high expectations for students.	2.2: I was able to gain a better understanding of how to evaluate the curricular and instructional programs at my school.	2.3: I gained a better understanding of how to develop and supervise instructional school staff.	2.4: I learned how technologies can be effective in supporting teaching and school environment.
Strongly Agree	68.8%	50%	N/A- students have not completed course work in this area	56.3%
Agree	31.2%	50%	N/A	43.7%
Disagree	0%	0%	N/A	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	N/A	0%
2012-13 Cohort N= 7				
Strongly Agree	100%	42.9%	71.4%	57.1%
Agree	0%	42.9%	28.6%	42.9%
Disagree	0%	14.3%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%

According to Table 2, emerging leaders did not have as strong of an understanding as ELCC Standard 1, but still agreed that their comfort level was high in regards to Instructional Leadership.

Student Commentary:

"Through participation in the Educational Leadership cohort program at MSU, I now have more communication with the counselor as to the needs of the individual student and the deciding how to differentiate the individual needs of my students." (Student 6, journal entry, December 2013). "I have increased the rigor of my curriculum at my school solely based on the information I garnered through participating in the cohort at MSU." (Student 1, journal entry, December 2013).

Future use of these data will guide the program to improve on the understandings of ELCC Standard 2, especially how to evaluate curriculum and instructional programs.

Emerging leaders view Standard 2 as a focus on school culture and instructional programs that allow students and staff to learn and grow "with high expectations and high support" (Student, 3, online survey, December 2013). To fulfill this standard, a leader understands and offers sustained, effective instructional support; understands best practices for quality student learning: content, pedagogy, formative and summative assessments, data analysis, and brain-based teaching and learning; and ensures time and expertise for meaningful professional development.

Student Commentary:

In order to achieve the school vision, I must strive to provide the kind of strong leadership that creates a positive school culture, one that nurtures each individual and provides a strong curriculum that challenges students and teachers to create high academic standards and

achievement in a safe social and emotional environment. I must utilize relevant staff development through Professional Learning Communities to address areas of academic and social needs, as well as research-based classroom strategies that will benefit student learning. When teachers are well trained and versed in current trends, issues, and research, the students, school, and community reap the benefits. (Student 22, journal entry, December 2013)

Metaphorically speaking, students suggested a leader under Standard 2 is, "a potter meticulously creating the design, choosing the materials, and shaping the artistic piece" (Student 13, online survey, December 2013); "a lion with perseverance, heart, and brains" (Student 10, online survey, December 2013); or "a boat captain equipped with charts, instruments, and anchor to navigate through unknown waters safely, with the assistance of a trustworthy crew" (Student 6, online survey, December 2013).

Standard 3: Management

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Table 3: ELCC Standard 3—Understanding of Sub-Standards

2013-14 Cohort N= 16	3.1: I gained a better understanding of how to monitor and evaluate school management, operational systems, and physical plant operations.	3.2: I investigated and gained understanding of effective methods to manage human resource and budgetary operations.	3.3: I gained a better understanding of how to promote school-based policies and procedures to protect the welfare and safety of students and staff.	3.4: I gained a better understanding of distributed leadership of delegating responsibilities.	3.5: I gained a better understanding of how to organize time when supporting high-quality instruction and student learning.

Strongly Agree	62.5%	N/A*	62.5%	75%	37.5%
Agree	37.5%	N/A	37.5%	25%	62.5%
Disagree	0%	N/A	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	N/A	0%	0%	0%
2012-13 Cohort N= 7					
Strongly Agree	85.7%	71.4%	71.4%	85.7%	85.7%
Agree	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%	14.3%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

necessary course not completed yet

From the survey results of ELCC Standard 3, students continue to feel that they are receiving proper training in connecting their course work to the ELCC Standards. Students especially felt a strong understanding of distributed leadership and delegating responsibilities. Students did not feel as strong in organizing their time to support high quality instruction, but 100% either agreed or strongly agreed that they understood all of the sub-standards of ELCC Standard 3.

Student Commentary:

"Leadership needs to be shared in order for the operations of the school as a whole to run effectively" (Student 3, online survey, December 2013).

"Through my shadowing of administrators, I have learned that actual time and planned time cannot be depended upon and that an administrator needs to plan for the unplanned to be effective" (Student 6, online survey, December 2013).

Emerging leaders view Standard 3 as a call to action to ensure safe and orderly schools built upon understanding the many aspects of the organizational operations, including fiscal,

legal, academic, social, and accountability. A leader is a manager who attends to the details of day-to-day safety issues, as well as crisis situations, balances resources and finances, resolves conflicts, and maintains clear communication to ensure that all areas of the school operate in a safe, solvent, and effective manner.

Student Commentary:

"As an administrator, I must promote success of all students by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. From the general operations (bell schedules, lunch rotations, check-in/out procedures, physical plant) to crisis management and safety precautions, my job is to conduct the management tasks according to policy and procedures for the wellbeing of all students and staff" (Student 1, online survey, December 2013).

Metaphorically speaking, students believe a leader under Standard 3 is "a security guard who is aware and prepared at all times" (Student 9, online survey, December 2013); "a mother hen keeping her brood safe, secure, and comfortable" (Student 17, online survey, December 2013); or "an architect/builder with the right tools and expertise to build and maintain a firm, safe, and useful structure" (Student 4, online survey, December 2013).

Standard 4: Collaborative Leadership

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Table 4: ELCC Standard 4—Understanding of Sub-Standards

2013-14 Cohort N= 16	ELCC 4.1: I gained a better understanding of how to collaborate with faculty and community members in an effort to improve the school's educational environment.	ELCC 4.2: I gained a better understanding of how to mobilize community resources through the use of diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources within the community.	ELCC 4.3: I gained a better understanding of the purpose of building and sustaining positive relationships with families and caregivers.	ELCC 4.4: I gained a better understanding of the purpose of building and sustaining positive relationships with community partners.
Strongly Agree	56.3%	50%	62.5%	56.3%
Agree	43.7%	50%	37.5%	43.7%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%
2012-13 Cohort N= 7				
Strongly Agree	85.7%	57.1%	85.7%	85.7%
Agree	14.3%	42.9%	14.3%	14.3%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0.0%

After reviewing the charts of student understandings of the ELCC Standards, it is more apparent that students are gaining an understanding of the standards that drive Mississippi State's Educational Leadership program. In a world where everyone wants the "boss" to make the decisions, it can become difficult for the head leader to understand collaborative leadership. The majority of the students expressed a strong understanding of all sub-standards of ELCC Standard 4. The score on sub-standard ELCC 4.2 revealed that additional instruction in the areas of collaborative leadership and mobilizing community resources would strengthen student understanding.

Emerging leaders view Standard 4 as the imperative to connect and involve community for the wellbeing of the school. An effective school leader believes that collaborating with families, promoting diversity, and using community resources is vital to student success.

Student Commentary:

"Collaboration is a key word in all of my communications with fellow faculty and community members. I have learned that EVERYONE needs to believe they have a stake in all decisions that may affect the student" (Student 16, online survey, December 2013).

"My intention as school leader is to invite family and community interactions, accept and maximize community resources, and, as a respectful partner, become a model for stakeholders to collaborate in supporting student achievement and success" (Student 11, online survey, December 2013).

Metaphorically speaking, students believe a leader under Standard 4 is "a finely tuned GPS system" (Student 6, online survey, December 2013) or "a football coach huddled with the team while fans cheer on the sidelines" (Student 3, online survey, December 2013).

Standard 5: Ethical Leadership

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.

Emerging leaders view Standard 5 as a reminder that all stakeholders have rights under a code of ethics. This code covers practices and policies, relationships with students and colleagues, tobacco and drugs, funds and equipment, compensations, confidentiality, and contract. A school leader must model integrity in personal and professional aspects. The leader who masters this standard has knowledge of policies and procedures, which address poverty and

the multiplicity of challenges and factors that affect families, communities, students, and the learning process.

Student Commentary:
"As a leader for social justice, I am compelled to be honest and fair in every situation as I work as an advocate for social justice. I must promote myself as a role model by understanding and appreciating diversity in the school community; presenting myself in a professional manner; attempting to inspire others to perform at high levels; and accepting the role as a school leader who is the voice for equity and fairness for every student" (Student 2, online survey, December 2013).

Metaphorically speaking, students stated a leader under Standard 5 is " a cook who tastes and seasons before serving and then serves with pride" or "a judge who believes 'the measure of a man's character is what he would do if no one were watching'" (Student 10, online survey, December 2013).

Table 5: ELCC Standard 5-Understanding Sub-Standards

2013-14 Cohort N= 16	5.1: I gained a better knowledge of the importance of integrity and fairness to insure school accountability.	5.2: I gained a better understanding of reflective practice, self-awareness, transparency, and ethical behavior.	5.3: I gained a better understanding of the values of democracy, equity, and diversity within the school.	5.4: I gained a better understanding of potential legal and moral consequences of decision making.	5.5: I gained a better understanding of social justice.
Strongly Agree	62.5%	68.8%	81.3%	56.3%	68.8%
Agree	37.5%	31.2%	18.7%	43.7%	31.2%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2012-13 Cohort N= 7					

Strongly Agree	83.3%	100%	100%	100%	85.7%
Agree	16.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	14.3%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Did Not Answer	1 (not counted in %)	1 (not counted in %)	1 (not counted in %)	0%	0%

Cushner, McClelland, and Safford (2003) noted, "It is when subjectivity turns into bias that educators get into trouble." In order for students to get a clear understanding of ethical leadership, the program must use the ELCC Standards as a basis for being objective instead of subjective. Issues of subjectivity versus objectivity are ones that will challenge an emerging leader when it comes to ethical issues. Having an open-mind can be a challenge in districts that have histories of being closed-minded.

The highest understanding of the ELCC Standards came from ELCC Standard 5. Students seemed to have a very strong understanding of ELCC Standard 5.3: Understanding Values of Democracy, Equity, and Diversity. This may be encouraged because of a newly designed course in the program entitled Educating Diverse Learners, where students are challenged to probe their journey to become leaders for social justice. An area of focus for future understanding may be ELCC Standard 5.4: Potential Legal and Moral Consequences of Decision Making although over 50% of emerging leaders felt very confident in their understanding of this sub-standard.

Standard 6: Political and Contextual Leadership

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Table 6: ELCC Standard 6—Understanding Sub-Standards

2013-14 Cohort N= 16	6.1: I gained a better understanding of the purpose of serving as an advocate for students, families, and caregivers.	6.2: I gained a better understanding of how a leader can act to influence local, district, state, and national decision affecting student learning in the school environment.	6.3: I gained a better understanding of how to anticipate and assess emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt school-based leadership strategies.
Strongly Agree	68.8%	56.25%	62.5%
Agree	31.2%	37.5%	37.5%
Disagree	0%	6.25%	0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%
2012-13 Cohort N= 7			
Strongly Agree	100%	57.1%	71.4%
Agree	0%	28.6%	28.6%
Disagree	0%	14.3%	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0.0%	0.0%

Emerging leaders view Standard 6 as a reminder to maintain and respect the necessary balance among political, social, and cultural influences. The leader who embraces this standard is able to create or foster the 'soul' in the school and know strategies and conflict resolution techniques, which help to improve the community of the school. The leader is fluent with 21st century education policies (such as Common Core and brain-based learning) and can involve stakeholders and the larger sphere of influence to support the school.

Student Commentary:

"As an administrator, I promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts. I must be familiar with laws and regulations related to education and keep myself current with these laws as well as current issues and forces that may affect teaching and learning in our community, state, nation,

and global society. Through communication and collaboration, I must be the advocate for equitable and just education as a key to opportunity and social mobility" (Student 6, online survey, December 2013).

Metaphorically speaking, a leader under Standard 6 is "a key piece of a puzzle that completes the 'big' picture" (Student 1, online survey, December 2013); "a well-oiled machine that adjusts gears and speeds to reach the destination" (Student 5, online survey, December 2013); "a creative artist who reflects the best of what he sees, knows, and can imagine" (Student 9, online survey, December 2013).

ELCC Standard 6 can be a bit of challenge to understand because of the political issues associated with the standard. In this standard, the researchers received the first and only "disagree" selection from the survey. One student did not agree that they received a clear understanding of how to influence local, district, state and national decision making affecting student learning in the school. Although more than 90% of the students gained a moderate to strong understanding of all of the ELCC 6 sub-standards, these data can be used to improve students' understanding of influencing others to improve schools.

Standard 7: Internship

The internship provides significant opportunities for candidates to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice and develop the skills identified in Standards 1 through 6 through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively by the institution and school district personnel for graduate credit.

Standard 7 ensures site-based internship experiences of 300-500 hours, under the guidance of practicing, certified administrator-mentors in collaboration with university

instructors. This aspect of the Educational Leadership training provides pragmatic experiences that cannot be replicated in the university classroom. Student reflections capture the essence of the Internship component:

Student Commentary:

"Working closely with my principal has given me much insight into what the position entails and how to improve my leadership skills. I have experienced the ups and downs of responsibility and juggling demands, which is a bit disconcerting at times. Overall I feel safe under her guidance and have enjoyed the level of trust she has given me to 'try my wings.' I have organized professional training sessions based on staff surveys and test data, conferenced with an irate parent, and presented our school's goals to a community organization. Being a school leader is exhausting, yet gratifying" (Student 14, online survey, December 2013).

"I am learning that a principal must not only worry about his own school but also be aware of every other school in the district and coordinate efforts for the community. Many different invested members of the community are involved in the school and need to be considered when making decisions. Even small decisions should not be taken lightly when they impact the lives of others" (Student 8, online survey, December 2013).

"I have learned that a school leader is somehow connected or involved in every aspect of a school. I must be adaptable in order to successfully implement new concepts into the faculty. I have learned how important it is to build a climate in the school that promotes the concepts that I hold dear, and that it is equally important to attempt to keep the faculty adaptable as well. And speaking of adaptability, I am slowing understanding how to let work and family co-exist. I am learning that I must be flexible and a juggler to balance the personal and professional aspects this world of educational leadership" (Student 6, online survey, December 2013).

Becoming a 21st century school leader under the ELCC Standards requires a growing understanding of the expectations with ongoing analysis and reflection. This paper provides a view into the evolving understanding of the Standards from the perspective of emerging school leaders. Ongoing qualitative research, dialogue, and reflection offer insights from emerging leaders as they engage in metacognitive inquiry to internalize standards and formulate paths for leadership and strengthen the quality of educational leadership programs. Just as future leaders are expected to seek ways to continuously improve, so too must established programs use student perceptions and understandings to ensure the fidelity of the standards and relevancy of the program. This approach may be used in the future for quantitative research on the statistical significance of the accumulated findings.

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