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## **The Opportunities and Constraints of a Virtual Field Experience During a Global Pandemic for ELA Teacher Candidates' Learning About Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy**

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Zeichner and Bier (2015) noted the “opportunities and pitfalls” of the shift toward a greater focus on field experiences in teacher education programs in the United States. In particular, equitable opportunities for all teacher candidates to experience and apply culturally sustaining ELA praxis are even fewer given the marginalization of these pedagogies in schools under pressure to meet curricular standards and improve test scores. The COVID-19 global pandemic rapidly transformed the landscape of ELA teacher candidates' field experiences in 2020. Using Grossman's (2009) theoretical framework of representation, decomposition, and approximation of practice to analyze teacher learning, the authors explored and analyzed the opportunities and constraints of virtual fieldwork during a global pandemic. Implications are addressed for technology-supported opportunities to learn in the field that will endure beyond the current moment.

On March 11, 2020, we the authors (Melissa and Jody) were sitting in a fairly routine faculty department meeting. Midway through the meeting, our dean interrupted to inform us that all New York State and City Universities would move to fully remote instruction in response to the rapidly unfolding COVID-19 crisis.

Within days a downward spiral of physical and emotional turmoil occurred for those of us living and working in what was, at the time, considered the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States. Our lives and those of our students were suddenly faced with food and housing insecurity; isolation from family, friends, and peers; fear of infection for ourselves and our loved ones; and the unfolding of a public health crisis that disproportionately affected the city's most underresourced and underserved Black and Brown communities (Mays & Newman, 2020). For the remainder of that semester, we fought daily for our own families while also supporting our undergraduate and graduate students, many of whom were struggling financially and emotionally.

Over the next 6 months, we gradually adjusted our work to better prepare our teacher candidates while in remote spaces. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had further problematized the quality of English language arts (ELA) teacher candidates' field experiences, as they were asked to shift gears with little warning and preparation from in-person to fully remote learning.

In our university-based English education program (and across other teacher preparation programs in our region), our field experiences needed swift modification. Rather than learning in-person in ELA classrooms alongside supervising teachers, what counted as prestudent-teaching fieldwork primarily included observing decontextualized videos of practice available through online, searchable databases (e.g., ATLAS). While using video for teacher learning has numerous benefits (Baecher, 2019), the opportunity to learn in the context of a brick and mortar classroom with a mentor teacher was stripped away from teacher candidates' experiences.

We needed to reconsider and develop authentic and meaningful fieldwork in a digital space, while also ensuring that teacher candidates engaged in culturally sustaining pedagogies, especially considering the linguistically and culturally diverse student populations our ELA teacher candidates would one day be teaching. We define culturally sustaining pedagogy as an approach that affirms and sustains students' identities, languages, and communities and also centers criticality of systems of power, privilege, and oppression (Paris & Alim, 2014).

Given this crisis of context, we designed a virtual field experience for the ELA methods class (taught by Melissa). This experience built on the affordances of access to one section of an entry-level English class offered at our university for high school students through a program known as College Now (taught by Jody). This collaborative field experience has existed for several years, but for the first time took place virtually via Zoom in fall 2020. The benefits of this collaboration meant that each teacher candidate had the opportunity to observe and apply culturally sustaining pedagogy taught by a strong ELA mentor teacher.

For example, high school students in this class read and wrote about their intersectional identity markers and ways in which to dismantle and confront stereotypes. Similarly, small group discussions about nonfiction readings focused on issues about power, privilege, and inequities, including discussions on such topics as immigration, xenophobia, and Islamophobia,

indigeneity, gentrification, gender and sexual identities, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy.

In this article, we report our exploration and analysis of the opportunities and constraints of virtual fieldwork during a global pandemic, including analysis of technology-supported opportunities to learn culturally sustaining ELA praxis that will endure beyond the current moment. We aim to meet a call for research in a moment of which “critical examination of online instructional interactions in English language arts teaching and learning contexts are likely to become even more necessary moving forward” (Heron-Hruby et al., 2020, p. 88). In the following section, we situate this study within the broader scholarly conversation about field experiences during instructional methods courses, with particular attention to those in English education designed through access to digital tools and virtual contexts.

### **Literature Review**

Zeichner and Bier (2015) addressed the opportunities and pitfalls of shifts toward a greater focus on field experiences in U.S. teacher education programs. Citing decades of research (e.g., Ball & Cohen, 1999), they supported that several crucial elements of learning to teach need to be situated in the context of “real or simulated classrooms under the guidance of strong mentorship” (p. 22). An enduring problem, however, with teacher education programs is the inequitable variation in teacher candidates’ experiences in the field.

Zeichner and Bier (2015) noted issues such as quality of school placements and uneven support and mentoring as salient for understanding why inequitable opportunities exist, specifically within methods courses and fieldwork. These issues ultimately impact the quality of teacher preparedness (Zeichner & Conklin, 2008) and thus shape and perpetuate opportunity gaps (Ladson-Billings, 2006), especially for historically marginalized students. In particular, opportunities for all teacher candidates to experience and apply culturally sustaining pedagogies, frameworks that inform the design of Melissa’s ELA methods course, are even fewer given the pressure schools experience to meet curricular standards and improve test scores. For us, this has been an enduring problem in research and praxis in English education.

### **Virtual Field Experiences**

To date, little empirical research has been conducted on teacher learning within the broader context of online education. In a national survey of teacher education programs, Kennedy and Archambault (2012) found that only 1.3% of teacher education programs prepare teachers in contexts other than traditional, brick-and-mortar school classrooms. Their research indicates that, while few programs prepare teachers to teach in online environments, even fewer include virtual field experiences for preservice teachers. Additionally, when technology integration is a component of teacher education, preservice teachers often learn about software applications rather than how to integrate technology as a tool for curriculum design (Jacobsen et al., 2002).

Within the field of English education, a body of scholarship is emerging on preservice teacher learning in digital spaces (hereafter referred to as virtual field experiences) as sites of praxis similar to a brick-and-mortar field experience. Social networks and online communities have been supported as spaces for learning about relationship building with students (Booth, 2012; Munoz et al., 2014), developing critical content knowledge and skills for teaching literature (Schieble, 2010; Schieble & Kucinskiene, 2019; Thein et al., 2010), and working with linguistically diverse learners (DelliCarpini & Gulla, 2009). In particular, English education researchers of virtual field placements have examined how such spaces create a context for teacher candidates to learn to respond to student writing (Barnes & Chandler, 2019; Sherry, 2017).

Studies of online interactions between ELA teacher candidates and students have provided important insights on the potential of virtual field experiences for preservice teacher learning. For example, Garcia and Seglem (2018) conducted a microanalysis of a virtual field experience that involved 16 preservice ELA teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at a Midwestern university and 35 high school sophomores enrolled in an English class in South Central Los Angeles. Using a synchronous online chat tool called TodaysMeet.com, the partnership sought to bring together preservice teachers and students from geographically and demographically distinct locations. Garcia and Seglem sought greater understanding about how “online spaces reframe which languages count in classrooms today” (p. 2).

Through weekly communication via TodaysMeet.com, the ELA teacher candidates provided support for the high school students’ research and writing activities for their English class. The study found that connecting teacher candidates with students in a digital space opened up opportunities to build relationships that disrupted the traditional power dynamics between teachers and students in brick-and-mortar classrooms. Instead, the digital space created a context for remixing and blending languages and identity practices that allowed “for a more equal production and consumption of texts as well as a more symmetrical relationship between teacher and student” (Garcia & Seglem, 2018, p. 12).

Further, the authors noted that ELA teacher candidates benefited from learning about new possibilities for building relationships with students that also provided them with more nuanced understandings about youth languaging practices. Importantly, Garcia and Seglem (2018) stated, “The differences between students and teachers may be too great to overcome without the possibilities of empowerment endowed by these digital environments” (p. 13). Findings from their study suggest digital spaces serve as sites of possibility for teacher candidates’ learning about culturally responsive pedagogy and that more research in this area is needed. We next describe the theoretical frameworks we invoked to analyze novice teacher learning in this particular digital context.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

### ***Teacher Learning***

Research in teacher education has looked within itself and to other professional fields (e.g., medicine) for guidance about the most effective ways to prepare novices to enter a professional field of practice. Grossman et al. (2009), for example, examined practice-related courses (e.g., methods courses) in teacher education and other professional fields to identify a set of pedagogies that together encompass a framework for teacher preparation. Rather than defining practices as a discrete set of techniques or skills, they understand practice as that which “incorporates both intellectual and technical activities and that encompasses both the individual practitioner and the professional community” (p. 2059). To fully learn and continue a history of activities that define a particular community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) involves a complex negotiation of “understanding, skill, relationship, and identity” (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2059).

Grossman et al.’s (2009) constructs about representation, decomposition, and approximation of practice is a useful framework for thinking about how to help new teachers learn and enter teaching as a professional practice. Representation comprises the various ways practice is made visible to candidates, including but not limited to in-person and video-based observations of classroom instruction. Decomposition considers how particulars of practice are broken down for the purpose of learning more about certain aspects or parts (e.g., vocabulary instruction or teacher and student relationships).

The third part of their framework involves approximations of practice, or the opportunities novices have to engage in the practice with support (e.g., student teaching). In this article, we draw on Grossman et al.’s (2009) framework to describe, analyze, and explain how a virtual field experience afforded a digitally mediated social context for novice teacher learning related to culturally sustaining praxis, with attention to constraints on learning within this digital space as well.

Some research on online interactions between ELA teacher candidates and students supports digital field experiences as a context for teacher learning through decomposition. Heron-Hruby et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study of a digital field placement referred to as the Writing Mentors (WM) program. The researchers leveraged an asynchronous platform to connect five sections of undergraduate ELA methods courses at one university with three participating ELA teachers and their high school students nearly 134 miles away. Using Google Classroom and the tools of Google Docs and screencast, ELA teacher candidates provided support for student writing that focused on the message and the writer, rather than corrective and evaluative feedback.

Employing qualitative methods, their study found that this digital field experience had some limitations that curtailed teacher candidates’ learning. In particular, the distance constrained preservice teachers’ knowledge about the mentor teachers’ objectives and classroom

instruction that made individualizing their feedback to student writers difficult. The preservice teachers also struggled with how to interpret uneven participation and communication from the high school students. The researchers found, however, that the digital field experience helped to shift the ELA teacher candidates' perspectives on how to provide feedback (e.g., modeling vs. corrective).

Given this recent empirical support for digital field experiences as a site for ELA preservice teacher learning through decomposition, we sought greater understanding about how the virtual field experience provided a space for representation, decomposition, and approximations of practice. We attended to the affordances and limitations of this space for each of these constructs for preservice teacher learning about culturally sustaining praxis.

### ***Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy***

We merged Grossman et al.'s framework (2009) on teacher learning with culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP; Paris & Alim, 2014). CSP demands that teachers develop literacy learning experiences centering the identities and communities that have been subject to cultural and linguistic erasure and marginalization (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014). A culturally sustaining framework aims to decenter white, middle-class, cultural, and linguistic norms as the goal for schooling for youth and communities of color and to reframe "the object of critique from our children to our oppressive systems" (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 3). A culturally sustaining approach also calls for schools to promote cultural and linguistic flexibility, rather than conform to the white gaze (Morrison, 1998) of expectations from which schools currently operate.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy extends the work of asset-based pedagogies to push educators to do more than simply "honor" the diverse knowledge and lived experiences that youth bring with them to school. Paris and Alim's (2014) loving critique of these approaches asks teachers to go beyond only honoring home languages and cultures to more sustaining approaches. Simultaneously, educators using CSP should interrupt the ways that white, middle-class norms are still held as the standard for official learning in school.

A culturally sustaining approach, instead, promotes student learning in flexible ways within a pluralistic society and asks teachers to center critical consciousness and justice in their core curriculum and pedagogical repertoire. This equity-oriented reframing works to sustain youth languages, literacies, and cultures rather than communicating messages that they must leave their ways of using language behind to advance socially and economically. Last, culturally sustaining pedagogy calls for criticality within and across all social groups, including investigating how people of color have internalized and produce some historical forms of oppression (e.g., misogyny and homophobia) and unpacking whiteness as ideology (Lyiscott, 2019).

## **Research Context**

### **Teaching English Methods Class Context**

Melissa taught the course, Teaching English Methods, in the 2020 fall semester. She identifies as a white, cisgender, and heterosexual woman. A former middle and high school English teacher, Melissa has taught this course for 11 years and coordinates the English education program. Teacher candidates read, write, and discuss scholars' nuanced approaches to culturally sustaining pedagogy (e.g., Gholdy Muhammad's, 2020, historically responsive literacy framework) and texts that integrate this framework in and out of the classroom (e.g., Jamila Lyiscott's, n.d., *3 Ways to Speak English*). (For a full account of the weekly topics and assigned readings for the course, see [Appendix A](#).)

Because of the global pandemic, in fall 2020 this course was offered fully online for the first time. With little prior experience with online instruction, Melissa attended a series of webinars during the summer before the course began to prepare to teach the course remotely. Traditionally, students who enroll in Teaching English Methods complete their culminating student teaching experience the following semester. Because COVID-19 had such devastating effects on New York City in spring 2020 and the K-12 public schools were fully remote or hybrid in fall 2020, Melissa anticipated that teacher candidates would be fully remote for their student teaching experience in spring 2021. Melissa, therefore, designed an online English methods course that would also help to prepare teacher candidates for the remote teaching they would most likely be doing in spring 2021.

Before the semester began, Melissa provided her students with a survey to determine their technology availability, needs, and comfort levels with using video and audio tools to connect with the class. A majority of students indicated that they preferred an equal amount of asynchronous and synchronous learning. Feeling less confident with asynchronous teaching and learning, Melissa nevertheless wanted to honor their preferences and designed the course to alternate each week with fully asynchronous and synchronous learning activities.

Melissa chose to use Google Classroom as the platform for the course because she found it more intuitive and easier to navigate than other web-based platforms for online course design. Further, the local school districts primarily use Google Classroom, and thus, this experience gave teacher candidates early exposure to the platform. Melissa also incorporated ideas and tools from the summer webinars, such as keeping routines and leveraging fewer digital tools to allow teacher candidates to become comfortable with these new tools.

Ultimately, Melissa wanted to design a course that provided a focus on technology-infused learning opportunities rather than a showcase of digital tools (Beach & O'Brien, 2015). She preselected three digital tools she encountered during professional learning to integrate into the course: Zoom, Flipgrid, and Padlet. She selected these tools because they afforded different ways for engaging in virtual, interactive dialogue. Because a goal

for this course was to help teacher candidates learn about a dialogic approach to classroom discussion (Juzwik et al., 2013), these tools provided a social context that aligned with this course learning goal.

For weeks that were designed to be asynchronous, Melissa designed sequential activities using the concept of an instructional chain (VanDerHeide & Newell, 2013). Citing these authors, Karchmer-Klein (2020) defined an instructional chain as “typically three or more sequential activities that are designed to meet the same learning objectives in different ways, perhaps through varying modalities or different degrees of depth” (p. 25). For example, during weeks designated as asynchronous, an instructional chain required teacher candidates to (a) read a text or watch a linked video to build prior knowledge; (b) post in response to a question on the discussion forum and respond to their peers; and (c) contribute to a Padlet discussion to crowd-source resources, lesson ideas, and other resources that linked to the weekly topic.

For weeks when the course met for synchronous learning, Zoom was used. Zoom activities included whole-class discussions about texts, small group work in break-out rooms, and discussion using the chat feature. Together, these tools were used to address content learning goals for the course.

Prior to the pandemic, fieldwork requirements for Teaching English Methods followed a practice-centered model (Zeichner & Bier, 2015). Each teacher candidate was placed in a classroom with a certified ELA teacher and was required to complete a number of weekly hours in the field, with a minimum of 48 hours completed by the end of the semester. Most ELA teacher candidates exceeded this number of hours. Teacher candidates completed practice-based activities that were scaffolded toward greater responsibility for instruction. These activities included, but were not limited to, observation, support with vocabulary instruction during a minilesson, working with small groups during guided practice activities, grading and assessment, and any other activities that were a frequent part of the cooperating teacher’s classroom.

While a solid practice-based opportunity for teacher learning, this early field experience mirrored many of the issues and problems previously identified in U.S. clinical teacher education (Zeichner & Bier, 2015). Unfortunately, often the alignment between the field and course content varied and was uneven (Grossman, 2010; Zeichner, 2010).

Teacher candidates were required to teach and video record one lesson they had designed as the culminating and summative assessment for their methods course. They then were required to watch their video recording and analyze their instruction and the student work samples from the lesson. Teacher candidates also met with their assigned supervisor who reviewed all these materials for a supervision conference.

This assignment was meant to determine teacher candidates’ readiness for student teaching and provide them with early exposure to the supervised teaching expectations and experiences that follow a similar format. Because of budget cuts for the fall 2020 semester and K-12 public school’s inability to host prestudent-teaching fieldwork during the pandemic,

Melissa needed to design an alternate and remote field experience without the institutional support usually provided to instructors.

### **English 120 Class Context**

Jody has served dual pedagogical roles in her last 20 years in education: One as teacher educator and one as secondary literacy teacher. Identifying as white and cisgender, Jody currently teaches full time in the same teacher education program as Melissa. She also teaches one English course as part of the College Now program, which provides opportunities for low-income high school students to receive early college credit. Jody has taught English 120, an introductory expository writing class, for the past 6 years and grounds her practices in culturally sustaining approaches (Paris & Alim, 2014).

The students enrolled in English 120 in fall 2020 were from different high schools across New York City, and a majority identified as Black and Brown. Like Melissa, Jody sent out an electronic survey to her students so as to ascertain their needs and interests and gain a better understanding of their contexts. Before the course started, she used this information to develop the format and the content of the course. She also reached out to students before classes began to support their technological needs and academic concerns (e.g., how to use Zoom backgrounds to block out the students' home environments).

In terms of pedagogical approaches, Jody worked to create a classroom that was both student centered and differentiated, allowing often for flexible groups and choice. For example, on a weekly basis students met in small breakout groups and participated in student-led Socratic seminars. Further, while the topics were selected in advance, students had choices in the articles they read and the prompts they responded to within their ongoing Google Doc response journals.

As to the curriculum, all topics come from critical perspectives so that students had opportunities to confront and disrupt systemic, institutional, and personal notions and actions of inequities and oppressions (Paris & Alim, 2014). For example, responding to the current global pandemic, the course began with students reading about racial disparities in COVID-19 cases nationwide. The sequence of readings then branched out into such topics as racism, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy. Subsequent weeks addressed other inequities, such as those around gender, class, sexuality, immigrant status, and religion. Each week students journaled about these readings and discussed the content and writing styles of the authors themselves. Ultimately, they used these readings and the ensuing discussions in order to create their own writing pieces based on topics that mattered most to them.

Jody was also intentional about infusing trauma informed practices into her curriculum and instruction (Jones & Spector, 2017; Love, 2019; Simmons, 2020). In this way, she engaged with students both individually and in small groups to get to know them, their identities, and communities. Students could also use the journals to respond to the topics that they preferred. Jody also often asked students to keep her abreast

about any struggles they were experiencing, either in the content being discussed or within their personal lives, particularly as they persisted through the pandemic.

On a weekly basis, time was also slotted for students to share aspects of their personal lives so that community was built and sustained. Jody shared her experiences and identities as well, for example, offering her own experiences with such issues as the quarantine. Collectively, she and the students developed ways to both survive and thrive in the current times, centering the creation of a remote space centered in collaboration and academic rigor but simultaneously love and support (Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 13).

### **Virtual Fieldwork Experience**

For the past several years, teacher candidates enrolled in Teaching English Methods in the fall semester have collaborated with high school students in English 120. Because both courses meet at the same time and in the same campus building, this collaboration has been feasible in person. Typically, ELA teacher candidates and students meet five to eight times a semester for approximately 30 minutes. During this time, ELA candidates supported student writing through individual writing conferences. The goal was for ELA candidates to learn more about culturally sustaining writing pedagogy and ways to communicate feedback to students; the benefit to high school students was to receive support from their writing tutor.

In fall 2020, the local public schools were caught in several difficult circumstances that included fear for teachers and students to attend school in person due to the high death toll from spring 2020. This dire context created difficult conditions for schools to host teacher candidates. Thus, the city schools made the decision that they could only host full-time student teachers and for the first time all prestudent-teaching fieldwork would not be placed with host teachers. Thus, our School of Education required that field hours take place remotely through use of video or simulations, unless alternative arrangements could be made by faculty.

Because we teach our respective courses at the same day and time, we devised an alternative virtual fieldwork experience that built on the structures already in place through past collaborations. The synchronicity of our courses was essential, as the School of Education policy was that prestudent-teaching field hours (e.g., videos of instruction) were required to take place during the regularly scheduled time for the course. Zoom was selected as the web-based platform for ELA teacher candidates and English 120 students to interact in small breakout rooms.

Jody shared several materials from her course with the ELA methods class to provide context. For example, she shared her syllabus and a Padlet activity that her students had created to introduce themselves. This gave ELA teacher candidates an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the course goals and to get to know the students' social and cultural backgrounds, interests, and language preferences. Jody also shared her Google Slides for weeks that collaboration would take place, so ELA

teacher candidates could read and understand the expectations. These slides also provided candidates with a model for organizing curriculum and instruction in a remote learning context. Jody also provided video recordings of her instruction, which ELA teacher candidates watched and discussed during the methods class.

For 8 weeks, ELA teacher candidates and English 120 students met in small breakout rooms via Zoom 1 night a week for 30 minutes. Depending on attendance, each breakout room would include one or two teacher candidates and one high school student. Before ELA teacher candidates joined the English 120 class via Zoom, Melissa met with them via Zoom for 15 minutes. This time was spent orienting them to the weekly focus (e.g., writing conference on finding trustworthy sources), addressing any questions, and offering informal coaching.

For example, for the first meeting, Melissa coached the ELA methods students about ways to form a trusting and positive relationship with their students. She recommended they thank the English 120 students for helping them learn how to be teachers and provided examples of how to use strength over deficit language. Unlike traditional fieldwork for the methods class, where Melissa had no direct access to field placements and coaching took place solely between the cooperating teacher and ELA teacher candidates, Melissa was able to provide some informal instruction on how to engage in the field because of the shared virtual experience. At the end of their 30 minutes in breakout rooms, the ELA teacher candidates immediately rejoined the methods class via Zoom to debrief the experience, pose questions, and support one another.

ELA teacher candidates and English 120 high school students met a total of eight times over the 15-week semester. For 2 of these weeks, ELA teacher candidates video recorded the meeting to analyze their teacher talk moves (Schieble et al., 2020) and how they provided feedback on student writing and positioned students as writers (Vetter, 2010).

Each weekly meeting was paired with an article that aligned with the weekly focus topic (see [Appendix B](#) for the weekly topics and paired articles). ELA teacher candidates were required to reflect on their virtual field experience and use theories and research from the weekly paired article to analyze their experience. Melissa read and provided feedback using the comments feature in Google Classroom for each reflective journal response as a way to provide individualized support.

## **Methods**

Drawing on qualitative case study methodology, we asked the following research questions:

- What are teacher candidates' perspectives on the opportunities and constraints of a virtual field experience?
- How does a virtual field experience create a space for teacher learning through representation, approximation of practice and decomposition of culturally sustaining pedagogy?

According to Stake (2005), case study is a form of qualitative inquiry that concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case. We employed case study methods to construct an intrinsic case to understand how a virtual field experience shaped learning within the particulars of one English education program. An intrinsic case study positions the researcher as seeking greater insight into an issue in a certain place and time. Because this study occurred in the context of a global pandemic, we sought insight into the particularities of this unique context and, thus, an intrinsic case study aligned with our goals. With that said, despite our interest in the particularities of this case, findings may be transferrable to other digital field experiences and program contexts.

## **Participants**

Participants for the study included 25 English teacher candidates enrolled in a university-based English education program in New York. ELA teacher candidates were both undergraduate and graduate students seeking initial certification to teach English to grades 7-12. The class racial and ethnic demographics included 12 white, five Latinx, three Arab American, three Asian American, and two teacher candidates who identified as biracial; 14 teacher candidates identified as female and 11 as male.

Because Teaching English Methods is taken prior to student teaching, the teacher candidates had completed a majority of their coursework and two prestudent-teaching experiences that were primarily observational. Several of these teacher candidates had their field experiences interrupted in spring 2020 due to the global pandemic. Melissa recorded in her field notes that many teacher candidates shared that they did not feel confident about working with students in a virtual field site because of this interruption.

Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the local public school district Institutional Review Board office put a halt to all ongoing or new research-related activities with students and located in person in the public schools. Therefore, the English 120 students were not permitted to participate in the research study nor share their perspectives. The University Institutional Review Board office did allow for new and ongoing research activity that could be conducted remotely. Thus, study of the preservice ELA teachers' coursework and experiences was permitted because data could be generated in a remote setting. This is an unavoidable yet pertinent limitation of the research.

## **Data Generation**

Data were primarily generated through remote learning tools that included Google Classroom, the website Melissa used to teach the methods course remotely, and video-based recordings using Zoom. Data sources included eight journal responses submitted to Google Classroom by each teacher candidate after meeting with their English 120 students via Zoom (see [Appendix B](#) for the meeting schedule and topics for each journal entry). Two of these eight meetings were video recorded via Zoom: (a) a small breakout room discussion about a nonfiction article on systemic

racism and policing and (b) the final writing conference. The purpose of video recording was to provide material that teacher candidates could subsequently watch and reflect on for their journal response.

Additional data sources included Melissa's field notes and assessments produced in the methods course and collected via Google Classroom. Melissa collected teacher candidates' written reflections on their perspectives about the virtual field experience at different points in the semester, generated via remote learning tools such as the Zoom chat and Pear Deck (an app extension for Google Classroom). Given the financial-, work-, family-, and school-related stresses that teacher candidates were under from the pandemic, Melissa did not ask to conduct interviews or focus groups with teacher candidates and, instead, relied on their written reflections as evidence of their perspectives. Melissa completed member checks with teacher candidates whose data were drawn upon as exemplifying themes to establish validity.

## **Data Analysis**

Inductive and deductive qualitative coding procedures (Ravitch & Carl, 2020) were used to analyze data and construct themes to address the opportunities and constraints of a virtual field experience to support preservice teacher learning about culturally sustaining pedagogy. To address Research Question 1, as a first phase of analysis, Melissa read the entire data set and assigned inductive codes to raw segments of data that could be interpreted as an opportunity or constraint of the virtual field experience.

For example, the inductive code "build connections with students" was created and assigned to segments of data when teacher candidates wrote about developing a positive relationship with their students. Inductive codes were entered into a data chart; excerpts from the raw data were selected and entered into a second column in the data chart to exemplify each inductive code.

Drawing on Saldaña (2015), themes were constructed as an "outcome of coding" (p. 14). All inductive codes were analyzed and resorted into two data charts: one that focused on inductive codes that could be categorized as opportunities of virtual fieldwork and a second that demonstrated an inductive code as a constraint.

To address Research Question 2, Melissa conducted a second phase of data analysis to examine how the virtual field experience created both opportunities and constraints for preservice teacher learning about culturally sustaining pedagogy. Using the existing data chart of inductive codes and excerpted data, categorized into broader themes of opportunity or constraint, Melissa reanalyzed each inductive code and excerpted data segment and assigned deductive codes based on the theoretical frameworks brought to the data set and her own experiences as an ELA teacher and teacher educator. To analyze the virtual field experience as a site for teacher learning, deductive codes were developed from Grossman et al.'s (2009) constructs of representation, decomposition, and approximation of practice.

To connect opportunities and constraints for teacher learning about culturally sustaining pedagogy specifically, the New York State Education Department (n.d.) Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Pedagogy framework was selected to generate deductive codes. The document was selected to generate deductive codes to characterize culturally sustaining classroom teaching and learning practices for several reasons. First, it represented a professional document informed by an expert advisory panel of scholars known for generating the original theory and research. Second, the descriptors provided insight into how districts and educators are articulating and using CSP as a framework for teaching and learning to align with our teacher preparation efforts.

Additionally, Melissa cross-checked each deductive code generated from the state document with the originally published scholarship it represented (New York State Education Department(n.d.)). For an example of the second phase of coding, the inductive code, “build connections with students,” was also assigned the deductive code “approximations of practice” and the tenet of culturally sustaining pedagogy, “build rapport and develop positive relationships with students.” Deductive coding procedures allowed for a deeper analysis of how the virtual field experience created a space for teacher candidates’ learning about culturally sustaining pedagogy. Throughout the inductive and deductive coding process, Melissa recorded her analytic insights and wonderings in relation to the research questions in analytic memos. [Appendix C](#) provides a snapshot of the data chart that included themes (opportunity or constraint), codes, and exemplifying data.

## **Findings**

Findings demonstrated the virtual field experience afforded several opportunities and constraints for representation, decomposition, and approximation of teacher candidates’ learning culturally sustaining praxis in ELA. The unique and atypical occurrence of fully remote schooling at the K-12 and college level allowed all teacher candidates to participate in the same field experience, an opportunity that is not feasible during typical in-person field experiences and is unlikely to be replicated in postpandemic life. Thus, the virtual field experience afforded a unique opportunity to coordinate methods course content on culturally sustaining pedagogy with candidates experiences in the (virtual) field, resulting in strong alignment between course content and the field experience.

Further, access afforded by Zoom through video and audio tools brought candidates and students from several different geographic locations (for example, one teacher candidate was living in Puerto Rico) together to learn. Zoom video and audio tools also provided the ability to archive teaching and learning digitally for preservice teachers’ reflection and analysis. Simultaneously, the findings indicate the constraints of a virtual field experience include what candidates perceived as lost from not participating in a brick-and-mortar field context, a situation they lamented and felt deprived of because of the pandemic. Findings are next explained, described, and analyzed through the two broader themes of opportunities and constraints for preservice teacher learning about culturally sustaining pedagogy in a virtual field experience.

## **Opportunities**

### ***Building Connections With Students***

ELA teacher candidates perceived that the virtual fieldwork experience afforded them an opportunity to work one on one with their high school student for a sustained period. At the end of the semester, Melissa asked teacher candidates to use the Zoom chat feature to reflect on the experience. Several teacher candidates reflected on what they learned from interacting regularly with their high school student over time (all names are pseudonyms):

Virtual fieldwork was more hands-on than my previous fieldwork because we were actually supposed to interact with the students.... I was initially worried we wouldn't be able to connect online, but it actually ended up working really well. (Naomi)

I assumed that tutoring writing over Zoom would result in a sort of cold distance between us and the students of 120, but I was pleasantly surprised to (quite immediately) find that creating an intimate and trusting collaborative relationship with [my student] virtually was not only possible, but easy. (Robert)

Melissa noted in her field notes that teacher candidates were concerned at the start of the semester that the digital tools would prohibit, rather than support, trust and relationship building with their students. Several teacher candidates noted that the warm and authentic relationship they forged with their students over the semester was the most beneficial part of the experience.

Melissa wrote in her field notes that Naomi compared the discussion she had with her student as similar to a conversation she would have with a friend over FaceTime. For her final journal entry, Naomi wrote about an exchange she had over email with her student. The night before a major paper was due, Naomi emailed her student to check in. Her student wrote that she was extremely stressed because she had been unable to keep up with her writing. Naomi responded with the following advice:

I didn't want to reprimand her because I don't think that's my place, so instead I told her to take a deep breath and to email Jody explaining her situation. I told her that I understand her feelings and that I'm struggling to write my finals too — that I've been a chronic procrastinator my entire life and that she doesn't need to apologize to me. I ended by telling her that we both need to hold ourselves accountable to write and that I believe in her.

Naomi also described in her journal entry that her student emailed in reply that she was grateful to Naomi for understanding her and that she had made an appointment with Jody to talk about the paper. She subsequently emailed Naomi that after her meeting with Jody she had been permitted an extension to write the paper and that she was relieved.

Naomi's example indicates how the virtual field experience created an opportunity for approximating teaching practice to learn a central tenet of culturally sustaining pedagogy: how to build rapport and positive relationships with students. Naomi noted that "reprimanding" her student for procrastinating, an initial gut response that she imagined is how a teacher would have replied, felt out of place in the context of their mentor-mentee relationship. Instead, Naomi learned to approach this student conundrum in a humanizing way that resulted in working with her student to generate a solution that resulted in a positive outcome.

Naomi noted at the end of her journal entry that "based on my two most recent experiences with the English 120 class, I've come to realize that I really have a knack for connecting with teenagers." The fact that this email exchange took place outside the time and place of their weekly meeting shows evidence of a genuine relationship.

Similarly, Moran (2018) found that the digital third space afforded by Slack provided a "low stakes environment ... more about guiding and directing" (p. 245) that was similar in principle to elements of connected learning (Ito et al., 2010), which involve peer interaction and sharing and resulted in positive relationship building. Garcia and Seglem (2018) also found that digital spaces provide contexts that can reshape the traditional power dynamics between teacher and students. They found virtual spaces can serve to disrupt "the sociocultural contexts generally typical of schools, allowing for ... a more symmetrical relationship between teacher and student" (p. 12).

Thus, some empirical evidence supports the assertion that virtual field experiences may provide a meaningful and authentic opportunity for approximation of practice (Grossman et al., 2009) with a foundational tenet of culturally sustaining pedagogy. The need to build relationships with students that are identity- and culture-affirming and supportive as a foundation for CSP is well documented (Ladson-Billings, 2017). That is, teacher candidates had opportunities to engage in approximations of practice of building relationships with students. These particular ELA teacher candidates may have felt a connection due to strong interpersonal skills, rather than the proximity afforded by video, and this phenomenon may not have been experienced by teacher candidates who were less adept at developing relationships. Nevertheless, the disruption of traditional power dynamics afforded by digital contexts as sites for teacher learning is worth further investigation.

### ***Learning Through Representations of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy***

Another salient opportunity afforded by the virtual field experience was a context for representation of culturally sustaining praxis in ELA. Alignment between course content and the experiences of teacher candidates in the field can vary widely. Because field placement lacks resources in most teacher education programs and relies heavily on a teacher's willingness and ability to host a teacher candidate, alignment between course content and the field can be difficult to achieve. Thus, Grossman et al.'s (2009) notion of representation, or the ways practice is

made visible to teacher candidates, can vary greatly in a brick-and-mortar context.

Collaborating with Jody, however, who teaches and writes extensively about culturally sustaining praxis in ELA, resulted in consistent and high quality representation of practice for every teacher candidate. Thus, a more equitable learning experience was made possible. One teacher candidate, Sally, noted this affordance in her first journal entry:

So far it does seem a benefit to have this class online: it allows the teacher to bring in 25 individual writing tutors for their students without the travel and logistical complications of having 25 physical bodies in the school building. We have also talked very directly and somewhat privately to the students about what they are thinking about for their writing project.

Sally said that digital spaces for a field experience can be helpful for the host teacher and students without overcrowding the traditional brick-and-mortar classroom. She also noted that the breakout room feature for Zoom made providing individualized attention easier. Jody recorded several classes and made her curriculum and resources available to teacher candidates, thus providing opportunities for candidates to observe writing instruction and small group student-led conversations that reflected CSP and that were centered on social justice topics.

Because all instruction was remote and all materials were accessible through a web-based platform, the virtual field experience offered a digital archive of classroom life that students could mine and examine. For example, as part of field hours, teacher candidates were expected to watch Jody's videos of remote instruction and post their reflections and questions to one another using the online discussion forum. Simultaneously, candidates read chapters from Gholdy Muhammad's (2020) book, *Cultivating Genius*, and Richard Milner et al.'s (2018) book, *These Kids are Out of Control*, and analyzed the ways that Jody's course curriculum and teacher talk represented the theories and practices addressed in the readings. One teacher candidate, Jonathan, wrote about the impact of representation of CSP on his student:

I told [my student] that his essay for English 120 was likely to feel more authentic than his previous writing assignments because, this time, he holds a personal stake in his topic. [The student] identified himself as ethnically Korean, and he has chosen to use his essay to explore the pervasive stereotype in which Asian Americans are cast as a "model minority."

Thus, the virtual field experience provided a tightly aligned opportunity for teacher candidates to learn from representations of practice centered in tenets of CSP, such as centering the identities of all students and critically examining topics of power and privilege.

### ***Engaging in Critical Self-Reflection***

Teacher candidates were required to video record two Zoom breakout room sessions with their students over the semester. One recording took place at a midpoint in the semester during a small group, student-led critical conversation about an article on a social justice topic. The second recording was of the last writing conference held with students about their research papers. Both teacher candidates and students were informed that they could turn their video camera off for the recordings.

Teacher candidates were required to subsequently watch the video recordings and write a reflective journal response that integrated course readings. Working individually with students in breakout rooms via Zoom provided relative ease for video and audio recording of their teaching practice. These video recordings provided a digital archive of teaching and learning that supported teacher candidates to decompose, or further break down and analyze, particular aspects of their practice.

Melissa noted in her field notes a few affordances of using Zoom rather than in-person video recording with a camera in a classroom. Often video and audio tools are difficult to position in a bustling classroom, and teacher candidates are not able to fully hear or see details on a video recording. Video and audio recording via Zoom, however, captures the full visual detail and results in fully audible sound. These technological advances provide opportunities for teacher candidates to focus on the particulars of their practice. An extended example from one final writing conference recording is next provided to expand upon this finding.

Jonathan, a white male graduate student, wrote about an example from his final writing conference with his student. Over the semester, Jonathan met consistently with his student and another peer from the methods course. Jonathan assessed that his student needed support with incorporating more of a first-person perspective to meet Jody's suggestions for centering student voice and choice and allowing students to move away from the traditional third person narrative for essays. Jonathan included an excerpt from the video recording in his response journal:

We were saying you could do that if you wanted, but it seems like you have not here. Do you feel like this is something you've decided not to do, or is it something that's just kind of the way it flowed out? (00:06:16-00:06:58)

Jonathan used this excerpt from the video recording to further decompose, or break down, how he communicated feedback to his student. He further analyzed this excerpt in his response:

My primary objective in this portion of our conversation was to determine whether [my student] had consciously determined to eschew a personal voice in his writing, and I feel I communicated this goal instinctually by emphasizing the word "decided."

Here, Jonathan showed interactional awareness (Rex & Schiller, 2010) about how he positioned his student as a writer and the way that using the word “decided” communicated a sense of his student’s agency with the writing process. As a foundation of culturally sustaining pedagogy, Jonathan decomposed this aspect of his teaching practice and the way it created space for student decision making. Jonathan drew further on support from the weekly course article to analyze his practice:

The above dialogue captures the “student-centered approach” endorsed by Jeanetta Jones Miller in her article, “A Better Grading System: Standards-Based, Student-Centered Assessment” (Miller 112). The language I employed during our exchange was intended to help [my student] feel himself positioned within the “driver’s seat” of his essay and to encourage him to take ownership over his writing. In this regard, my effort is reminiscent of the ‘coaching’ Miller prescribes for students “who need to be able to shift from exposition into narrative mode to breathe life into stilted language” (Miller 112).

Jonathan broke down his practice and analyzed the way his teacher discourse created a context for coaching his student, rather than employing more teacher-centered or directed feedback. Thus, Jonathan was able to use this digital archive of his practice to observe how he learned from Jody’s representation of culturally sustaining writing pedagogy and the course reading and how this action informed his own practice.

Further, Jonathan reflected on another area he observed in his video that prompted him to engage in critical self-reflection:

I cringe as I listen to how long-winded I tend to be during the course of my conversation with [my student] and my partner. I hear myself dominating the discussion, almost invariably leading each exchange and frequently elaborating my points for several minutes at a time, going far beyond what a student may fairly consider interminable. Given the reality of my White, male, middle-class, and heteronormative profile, I fear that I am projecting and reifying hegemonic control over what should be a free and open discourse. Going forward, I will consciously take strides to rein my tongue and preserve more conversational space for my students and peers to voice themselves.

Jonathan decomposed a crucial aspect of culturally sustaining practice. Observing that he dominated the conversation, and that his discourse aligned with a pattern of hegemonic white and male discourse, Jonathan engaged in an important moment of critical self-reflection and demonstrated a resolve to be more critically mindful of this tendency to dominate discussion in his practice moving forward. A crucial aspect of learning to enact antiracist praxis in ELA is for teachers to be critically self-reflexive and persistently mindful of these patterns and to open up spaces for more deliberative dialogue with students (Johnson, 2018).

## **Constraints**

ELA teacher candidates perceived some constraints of the virtual field experience, as well – constraints that were inextricably tied to the context of living and learning in a global pandemic. However, we also interpret them as emic to teacher learning within a digital space.

### ***Apprenticing With a Cooperating Teacher***

While teacher candidates built skills for working with students one on one and building positive relationships, they lamented that they did not have the opportunity to apprentice with a cooperating teacher through the individualized experience of doing fieldwork in person in a brick-and-mortar classroom. Two teacher candidates shared their reflections on this issue in the Zoom chat at the end of the semester:

While there was a lot more student engagement, which I loved, I did miss watching the whole lesson play out. That was what I valued most about fieldwork: seeing a lesson from start to finish and how the teacher engaged with students. (Lilly)

By being embedded in the school itself, you get a more thorough sense of the whole atmosphere. (Jonathan)

Thus, the virtual context led teacher candidates to perceive an element of learning was missing or lost: a sense of connection to the whole moving and fluid organism of classroom life in a brick-and-mortar classroom. Teacher candidates could only watch video recordings of selected lessons and missed the opportunity to become part of the class community.

While the virtual field experience provided several opportunities for approximations of practice and decomposition, it also constrained teacher candidates' opportunities for learning from fuller representations of how teachers enact high expectations and deliver rigorous instruction for all students through culturally sustaining pedagogy. For example, Bieler (2019) found that the physical classroom environment, including the ideological messages conveyed through posters, materials, and the physical arrangement of a classroom, play a substantive role in building a culture for learning that centers students' identities, literacies, and communities.

A brick-and-mortar field placement provides representation of the wider social context for teaching and learning. As Jonathan noted, it "gives you a thorough sense of the whole atmosphere." Heron-Hruby et al. (2020) discussed similar findings in their study of preservice ELA teachers who served as writing mentors (WMs) for high school students using Google Docs. The authors noted one salient finding from their study was that, "WMs craved ... a fuller understanding of the teacher's expectations that they felt could be achieved only by visiting the classroom" (p. 85).

Jody also reflected that it was hard to watch all the teacher candidates during the writing conferences; with sometimes 17 breakout rooms, watching the engagements in substantial and intentional ways was

impossible. She also did not feel comfortable giving them individual feedback because she was neither their cooperating teacher nor their methods instructor.

Managing spaces with 17 high school students and 25 teacher candidates made it difficult to provide the kind of differentiated feedback that preservice teachers need and deserve. While she could offer broad strokes for suggestions to pass on to Melissa, the work was still challenging. Because of these challenges, a virtual field experience may not capture the fuller learning experience about classroom dynamics that an in-person social context provides.

Yet, this finding may be more complicated. As Garcia and Seglem (2018) found, a digital space interrupted the more traditional power dynamics between teacher and student that are constructed in a brick-and-mortar school space. As it is difficult to disrupt the historically, socially, and racially rooted power dynamics of school spaces, digital spaces may be sites for further exploration of teacher learning about pedagogies and practices that seek to disrupt these spaces instead of reinforcing them.

### ***Facilitating Small Group Discussion About Critical Nonfiction Articles***

For the fifth weekly meeting, teacher candidates and English 120 students met in small breakout rooms to discuss two nonfiction articles about systemic racism and policing. The teacher candidates were asked to prepare for the discussion by generating one or two authentic questions (Juzwik et al., 2013) to pose during the discussion. Simultaneously, the English 120 students were also instructed to generate their own thought-provoking questions to bring to the breakout room discussion.

Five Zoom breakout rooms consisted of approximately three to four teacher candidates and two to three students. Breakout rooms were organized by pairing writing conference groups together, so that students and teacher candidates had built a prior relationship with at least one person in the breakout room. The discussions lasted for approximately 20 minutes and were video-recorded using Zoom tools so that teacher candidates could later watch and reflect on their practice for their reflective journal entry. In their journal entries, several of the teacher candidates noted that these breakout room discussions felt awkward, that there were long moments of silence, and it was difficult to read social cues:

This was a very challenging thing to do via Zoom. It was hard to determine how long we should allow for pauses as we couldn't necessarily see all of the students and determine whether they were about to respond to a question or bounce off each other and were just thinking before speaking, or if it was necessary to move on to another question to continue the discussion. I think there were too many tutors and that sometimes our voices overpowered that of the students/we asked too many questions and didn't allow enough time for answers or back and forth between the students. I also think we sometimes unintentionally made connections and links for them instead of allowing them to build off of each other. Once

again though, I don't think that was anyone's fault and more so just an issue you encounter working with Zoom and with such a short time limit.

In this case, teacher candidates' perspectives suggested the virtual field experience constrained approximations of practice for teacher learning about facilitating small group discussions about critical topics about power and privilege with students. Our interpretation of what may have made these breakout room discussions awkward is the shift in how teacher candidates positioned themselves compared to their work with students in writing conferences. Instead of a mentor-mentee relationship, teacher candidates felt more pressure to enact the role of "teacher" and "facilitator." This shift in perceived role created a space where newly formed teacher and student power dynamics, without the relationship building that took place during writing conferences, made the conversation awkward.

As Jody monitored these spaces, she noticed that there was much more teacher talk than student talk. Several teacher candidates' preformed questions may have been more appropriate for a discussion with their graduate-level peers than with students and perhaps did not open up opportunities for meaningful dialogue in the moment.

To analyze and reflect on the conversations, ELA teacher candidates watched the video recording of these small group conversations and created a chart of critical talk moves they observed (Schieble et al., 2020) to decompose their practice. This opportunity to analyze the talk provided teacher candidates with a candid look at how they tended to dominate the conversation and how to facilitate a more student-led conversation. Jody also debriefed with the high school students afterward and got their feedback for the teacher candidates. Some of that feedback included advice for teacher candidates to begin with student-generated questions and to provide more space for student talk. Melissa was then able to share this feedback with the teacher candidates and strategize ways they could modify these experiences for the future.

We also realized that, while we had spent a lot of time modeling writing instruction and conferences, much more time was needed for conversations around such topics as systemic racism and police brutality. It may be that teacher candidates and students felt comfortable in more small, intimate online spaces. More scaffolding was needed to help teacher candidates navigate larger student-led conversations (which is true in person and remote).

We know from experience that often new teachers have a hard time being quiet and just letting students talk. With more practice and relationship building in these groups the conversations likely would have flowed better, but with limited availability to meet we decided to maximize time for writing conferences. This finding points to a need for further research on preservice teachers and students online interactions using video-based tools such as Zoom.

## **Discussion**

Findings demonstrate that a virtual field experience provided some unique affordances for novice teacher learning about culturally sustaining pedagogy in ELA. All teacher candidates experienced the ability to see this praxis represented in a remote learning context, to decompose or break down their own teaching practices using articles that drew on these frameworks, and to approximate practice by mostly working one on one with students in breakout rooms via Zoom to conference about student writing. This approximation of practice provided teacher candidates with opportunities to learn about building positive relationships with students that centered their identities.

Additionally, teacher candidates had the opportunity to observe and engage in remote teaching and learning. As Kennedy and Archambault's (2012) study found that prior to the pandemic only 1.3% of the teacher education programs they surveyed provided candidates with experience in a virtual learning environment, the global health crisis may have forced a needed spotlight on this issue. The authors also noted that survey respondents said the survey itself prompted a need for discussion amongst faculty about the lack of opportunity to learn about online education.

Indeed, reading this research and exploring the affordances and constraints of the virtual field experience reported on in this article has prompted us to share a similar concern. For example, Melissa intends to bring this issue to the forefront as part of upcoming teacher education program revision conversations. More research on the possibilities and constraints of virtual teaching and learning and how schooling will be transformed by the current global health crisis will be needed moving forward.

With these opportunities, however, came drawbacks. Melissa noted that the teacher candidates reflected on the virtual field experience with an underlying sense of lamenting or foreboding for what was lost. This foreboding for what might have been perhaps mirrors a sense of global mourning that accompanies the experience of living through and witnessing the wretched effects of a global pandemic. Many teacher candidates in the course struggled with anxiety, difficulty concentrating, food and housing insecurity, and supporting family and friends during this crisis. Their resiliency and persistence to strive to teach and learn under these unforeseen constraints is a testament to their dedication to youth and schooling and is perhaps the greatest lesson learned.

To conclude, the success of virtual field experiences is dependent upon the strength of pedagogy. This research, and the related literature (Karchmer-Klein, 2020), supports the notion that the leverage of pedagogical and technical skills results in "engaging instruction for online environments" (p. 2). Also consistent with the literature, we learned that teaching online is not the same as teaching face to face. With thoughtful and purposeful integration, however, virtual field experiences can play a vital role.

Our research suggests that virtual field experiences greatly supported teacher candidates to learn in individualized settings with students and

also provided easily accessible and clear data for decomposing teaching practice. Virtual experiences may be used frequently and intentionally before student teaching as a way to scaffold novice teacher learning about CSP. These practices are important for learning to teach. From this experience, a virtual component will remain in the Teaching English Methods course. We look forward to learning more as we move toward postpandemic life about how teaching and learning has been transformed in unforeseen but also highly innovative ways.

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*Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* is an online journal. All text, tables, and figures in the print version of this article are exact representations of the original. However, the original article may also include video and audio files, which can be accessed online at <http://www.citejournal.org>

## Appendix A Weekly Topics and Articles/Readings

### Building Community Using Virtual Tools

Polleck, J., & Shabdin, S. (2013). Building culturally responsive communities. *The Clearing House*, 86(4), 142-149.

Christensen, L. (2019). *Reading, writing and rising up: Teaching for social justice*. Rethinking Schools.

### Critical Conversations in ELA

Schieble, M., Vetter, A., & Martin, K.M. (2020). *Classroom talk for social change: Critical conversations in English language arts*. Teachers College Press.

### Choosing Texts with Intention in ELA

Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. Scholastic.

### Critical Approaches to Teaching Reading and the Study of Literature

Appleman, D. (2015). *Critical encounters in secondary English: Teaching literary theory to adolescents*. Teachers College Press.

Lyiscott, J. (2017). Racial identity and liberation literacies in the classroom. *English Journal*, 106(4), 47-53.

Anzaldua, G. (1987). "How to tame a wild tongue" in *Borderlands: The New Mestiza-La Frontera*. Aunt Lute Book Co.

Milner, R., Cunningham, H.B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E.G. (2018). "These kids are out of control": *Why we must reimagine 'classroom management' for equity*. Corwin.

### Language and the Politics of ELA

Lyiscott, J. *3 ways to speak English*. Retrieved from [https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila\\_lyiscott\\_3\\_ways\\_to\\_speak\\_english?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila_lyiscott_3_ways_to_speak_english?language=en)

### Critical Media Literacy

Saunders, J.M., Ash, G.E., & Salazar, I. (2017). "We're already somebody: High school students practicing critical media literacy IRL. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 60(5), 515-526.

Gainer, J.S. (2010). Critical media literacy in middle school: Exploring the politics of representation. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53(5), 364-373.

van Leent, L., & Mills, K. (2017). A queer critical media literacies framework in a digital age. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 61(4), 401-411.

**Digital Literacies in ELA**

O'Brien, D., & Scharber, C. (2008). Digital literacies go to school: Potholes and possibilities. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 52(1)*, 66-68.

## Appendix B Virtual Field Hours Schedule

Date/Time	What to Do on Wednesdays	Due Fridays by 5pm
9/9/20 (4:45-5:15)	<p>ENG 120 ZOOM Breakout Room:</p> <p>Writing conference to talk with students about their ideas for their essay and the sources they have selected</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Smith, N.B. (2017). A principled revolution in the teaching of writing. <i>English Journal</i>, 105(6), 70-75.</p> <p>Due: Journal Response</p>
9/16/20 (4:45-5:15)	<p>ENG 120 ZOOM Breakout Room:</p> <p>Writing conferences to talk with students about their outlines and thesis statements</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Beck, S.W., Jones, K., &amp; Storm, S. (2019). Equity-based writing assessment as structured improvisation. <i>English Journal</i>, 109(2), 76-83.</p> <p>Due: Journal Response</p>
9/23/20 (4:45-5:15)	<p>ENG 120 ZOOM Breakout Room:</p> <p>Writing conference with students about first drafts</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Narter, D. (2018). "The first essay I'd like to show you..." 1:1 DV for writing assessment and reflection. <i>English Journal</i>, 107(3), 106-109.</p> <p>Due: Journal Response</p>
9/30/20 (4:45-5:15)	<p>ENG 120 ZOOM Breakout Room:</p> <p>Writing conference with students about annotated bibliographies</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Mills, A., &amp; Moon, S. (2014). Teaching equity through <i>Gatsby</i> in the age of CCSS. <i>English Journal</i>, 104(2), 86-92.</p> <p>Due: Journal Response</p>
10/7/20 (4:45-5:15)	<p>ENG 120 ZOOM Breakout Room:</p> <p>Facilitate critical conversation on articles</p> <p>(systemic racism and policing)</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Johnson, L.L., Jackson, J., Stovall, D.O., Baszile, D.T. (2017). Loving Blackness to death": (Re)Imagining ELA classrooms in a time of racial chaos. <i>English Journal</i>, 106(4), 60-66.</p> <p>Due: Journal Response</p>

Date/Time	What to Do on Wednesdays	Due Fridays by 5pm
10/28/20 (4:45-5:15)	ENG 120 ZOOM Breakout Room: Writing conference on student draft of annotated bibliographies	Read: Ife, F. (2012). Powerful writing: Promoting a political writing community of students. <i>English Journal</i> , 101(4), 64-69.  Due: Journal Response
12/2/20 (4:45-5:15)	ENG 120 ZOOM Breakout Room: Writing conference on students research paper	Read: Miller, J.J. (2013). A better grading system: Standards-based, student-centered assessment. <i>English Journal</i> , 103(1), 111-118.  Due: Journal Response
12/16/20 (TBA)	ENG 120 ZOOM: Volunteer to facilitate roundtables for student writers (optional)	Due: Review response journal entries and write final reflection about what you learned from this virtual fieldwork experience and identify 1-2 goals for student teaching

## Appendix C

### Excerpt from Data Chart for the Theme of Opportunities of a Virtual Field Experience

Inductive Codes	Deductive Codes for Teacher Learning	Deductive Codes for CSP [a]	Data Excerpts
Overcame physical barriers of brick-and-mortar classroom	Approximations of Practice	Build rapport and develop positive relationships with students	So far it does seem to me to a benefit to have this class on-line: it allows the teacher to bring in 22 individual writing tutors for their students without the travel and logistical complications of having 22 physical bodies in the school building. We can also talk very directly and somewhat privately to the students about what they are thinking about for their writing project.
Connected in a meaningful way with students	Approximations of Practice	Build rapport and develop positive relationships with students Center the identities of all students in classroom instruction	She loves to draw and feels so-so about writing. I shared that I also identify as an artist, specifically a writer, and that I've always been jealous of people who can express their feelings through visual image creation, which is probably why I picked up a camera when I was her age.
Disrupted deficit-based assumptions about students	Decomposition	Reflect on your own implicit bias Have high expectations and deliver rigorous instruction for all students regardless of identity markers	When my partner and I met I was impressed to find he had already put a great amount of thought into his essay topic, and our time was then spent workshopping thesis ideas and answering some general questions he had.
Observed students' self-selected critical research and writing topics	Representation Approximations of Practice	Center the identities of all students in classroom instruction Provide opportunities	I told [my student] that his essay for English 120 was likely to feel more authentic than his previous writing assignments because, this time, he holds a personal stake in his topic. [The

Inductive Codes	Deductive Codes for Teacher Learning	Deductive Codes for CSP [a]	Data Excerpts
		for students to critically examine topics of power and privilege	student] identified himself as ethnically Korean, and he has chosen to use his essay to explore the pervasive stereotype in which Asian Americans are cast as a “model minority.”
Engaged in critical self-reflection	Decomposition	Reflect on your own implicit bias	Given the reality of my White, male, middle-class, and heteronormative profile, I fear that I am projecting and reifying hegemonic control over what should be a free and open discourse. Going forward, I will consciously take strides to rein my tongue and preserve more conversational space for my students and peers to voice themselves.
Engaged with student viewpoints on critical social issues	Approximations of Practice	Provide opportunities for students to critically examine topics of power and privilege	First and foremost, I noticed in my interactions with my student that she was very engaged and excited about the topic that she chose. We began discussing her topic and why it is important to her. The topic she chose was based around the question of whether or not people of color receive different medical attention than their white counterparts. When we spoke in depth about what the topic meant to her, she seemed eager to share some of the information she had already found through her research, and seemed genuinely interested in the area of study she chose.
Implemented informal coaching from course professors	Approximations of Practice	Center the identities of all students in classroom instruction	I assured him that his attitude is not at all unusual nor wholly unfounded and that everyone, even pre-service ELA teachers such as myself, can struggle to recruit enthusiasm when

Inductive Codes	Deductive Codes for Teacher Learning	Deductive Codes for CSP [a]	Data Excerpts
			diving into a new writing project.
Analyzed video-based recordings of classroom instruction	Representation Decomposition	Have high expectations and deliver rigorous instruction for all students regardless of identity markers	Both the teacher- and student-led discussion points included thoughtful opinions and experiences that helped the class unpack the complicated social justice issue at hand. Because the teacher fostered, recognized and sustained the critical conversation, the student response was enthusiastic and thoughtful. Clearly such a pedagogical approach excites students to participate and expand their learning because their voices are validated and valued.
[a] Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll et al., 1992; Paris & Alim, 2014; Sealey-Ruiz, 2013			