Engaging Goodlad’s Postulates in Clinically-Based Social Studies Teacher Education

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Abstract: This paper discusses the efficacy of a clinically-based teacher education experience intended to promote teacher candidates’ understanding of secondary students’ capacity to engage with complex ideas and topics. Through this study, we draw on two of Goodlad’s postulates for field experiences in teacher education, Postulates 10 and 15, to examine how teacher candidates’ experience of a targeted, clinical assignment in a Professional Development School District (PDSD) setting enabled – or did not enable – inquiry into practice. Through their close observation of the kind of exemplary model lesson that Goodlad asserted must be a part of the teacher education experience, the teacher candidates were provided the opportunity to analyze students’ capacity to engage in an inquiry lesson. Our analysis of the teacher candidates’ observations revealed two issues: first, the teacher candidates’ experience of this lesson seemed to support their capacity to recognize productive conditions for learning. However, the candidates’ responses also indicated that there were gaps between the meaningful and effective pedagogies they saw in the lesson and what they imagined would be possible in their future classrooms. These findings offer insights into the complexity of clinically-based teacher education, an aspect of the professional development school movement Goodlad’s legacy continues to inspire.

KEYWORDS: social studies, teacher education, Professional Development Schools, clinically-based field experiences

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants
8. Work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings
Introduction

Teacher candidates’ preconceived notions about good social studies instruction are difficult to unravel. The dilemma can be exacerbated when teacher candidates are placed with cooperating teachers that continue to engage in the flawed practices they experienced as elementary and secondary students (Frykholm, 1996; Pryor, 2006). In short, becoming a teacher is a complicated process, often undercut by weak school-university partnerships. The work of John Goodlad, including his twenty Postulates, responded to this need to confront preconceived ideas of teaching by marshaling a vital conversation around teacher education, school-university partnerships, and the preparation of teachers and students for democratic society. Across his work, Goodlad noted the importance of teacher socialization—for both pre-service and in-service teachers. The socialization process of teachers is complex, and far too often falls short of disrupting the problematic understandings of what it means to teach (Goodlad, 1990). In many ways, this need to socialize more intentionally teacher candidates has led to decades of research around innovative clinically-based teacher education practices—practices notably informed by Goodlad’s Postulates. This study draws on Goodlad’s Postulates to describe and evaluate efforts in our teacher education to ensure that teacher candidates have the opportunity to observe exemplary practices in a practicum classroom during their own development as future educators.

Goodlad’s Postulates were collaboratively developed as a part of a careful surveying of teacher education research, the history of education, conversations with educator constituents, and a review of teacher education programs (Goodlad, 1994). The result was a set of reasoned arguments that were “not only a conceptualization of the major components of but also affirmations describing their healthy state” for teacher education (Goodlad, 1994, p. 69). Goodlad and his colleagues anticipated that teacher education programs could use the Postulates and a series of elements and questions for program renewal and review. Additionally, by engaging with these Postulates, Goodlad argued that simultaneous educational renewal is made possible through rich school-university partnerships. In other words, Goodlad believed that renewal and transformation would be made possible for both K-12 school settings and the teacher education program through symbiotic relationships of schools and universities (e.g. Goodlad, 1990). This has been further engaged through research on clinically-oriented teacher education (e.g. Cobb, 2001; Klieger & Oster-Levinz, 2015; Owens, Towery & Lawler, 2011), which indicates facilitating supported clinical experiences for teacher candidates in schools makes it more likely they will be better prepared for the teaching profession.

In this study, we describe teacher candidates’ responses to one set of questions that were part of one set of assignments, within one course, and administered to one cohort of teacher candidates. The course was an introductory field-based course for the bachelor’s students in the first semester of our secondary social studies certification program. The students were studying the notion of “connecting the content to the world” (Schmeichel, 2017) in social studies, and exploring media literacy strategies along with introductory notions of an inquiry approach for teaching social studies (e.g., King, Neumann & Carmichael, 2009). We rely on Goodlad’s Postulates to reflect on and make sense of these responses. Borrowing from Simpson and DeVitis’s (1993) work, we categorize Goodlad’s Postulates into four themes: Institutional Expectations (Postulates 1-3), Faculty Responsibility (Postulates 4-6), Programmatic Conditions (Postulates 7-17), and Regulatory Circumstances (Postulates 18-20). This study aims to explore how the programmatic conditions of our teacher education program may foster particular, desired
socialization of the teacher candidates. As such, this paper will specifically rely on Postulates 10 and 15 in our analysis. Although we acknowledge it is impossible to separate any one of the Postulates from the others, we found it appropriate to frame our analysis based on the Postulates that were most aligned with the clinical teacher education experience we designed. In what follows we briefly highlight the institutional expectations and faculty responsibilities which made our specific focus on programmatic conditions possible. We will then more fully address the two Postulates which frame this paper—Postulates 10 and 15.

**Professional Development School Context**

The integrated practicum classroom described in this study was made possible by our participation in a Professional Development School District (PDSD) partnership. Having established an institutionally supported and promoted teacher education program (Postulate 1), continually seeking parity with other professional education programs (Postulate 2) and being autonomous and organized in our work (Postulate 3), this partnership has opened new opportunities to expand and enrich our work in teacher education. Specifically, it has provided the space for one of our faculty to assume the position of Professor-in-Residence (PIR), which includes responsibilities for lead teaching in a 9th grade Government class in a local high school. This role has allowed our faculty to pursue Postulate 5, for example, which calls faculty to maintain “a comprehensive understanding of the aims of education and the role of schools in our society” (Goodlad, 1994, p. 80). Communication with contributing constituents in the PDSD partnership (i.e., mentor teachers, university faculty and school leaders) about the vitality of the partnership coupled with our commitment to problem-solve the unrefined aspects of the partnership confirmed value of creating a high school social studies PDS classroom. One of the partner principals recognized that having an experienced social studies teacher, practicing alongside and within the context of his high school, would allow for a collaborative infusion of expertise in the area of social studies teaching and learning. Working together, the PIR and high school principal formulated a PIR role with responsibilities for the instruction of high school students, mentorship of early career teachers, and collaboration with social studies teachers. Though the focus of this study is on the teacher candidates’ experience in the PDS classroom, the classroom simultaneously created opportunities university- and school-based social studies educators to engage in ongoing conversations about the essential qualities of meaningful social studies education. Similarly, the high school students attending social studies class in the PDS classroom engaged in small group interactions with the teacher candidates – thus lowering the teacher-student ratio dramatically – while learning through sophisticated social studies methods that invited them to consider ways the social studies move them towards a more sophisticated understanding of themselves, others, and the social world.

By opening up her 9th grade classroom to students enrolled in our teacher education program, the PIR is a “hybrid teacher educator” (Zeichner, 2010), creating a functioning lab space for social studies teacher candidates to observe secondary students engage in the constructivist, student-centered methods taught and promoted in our teacher education program (Pryor, 2006; Zeichner & McDonald, 2011). The lab classroom is intended to reduce the gap between the theory addressed in teacher education coursework and practices the teacher candidates observe and experience in schools (Korthagen, 2010; Mattsson, Eilertsen & Rorrison, 2011; Orland-Barak, 2010). The PIR classroom serves as a space where teacher education responsibilities and teaching
secondary social studies responsibilities are shared because the teacher educator simultaneously serves as the cooperating teacher (Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). Through this arrangement, the PIR is able to embed programmatic conditions (Postulates 7-17), which provide rich spaces for teacher candidates to “move beyond being students…to become teachers” (Goodlad, 1994, p. 82) and to more explicitly socialize candidates beyond “their self-oriented student preoccupations” (Goodlad, 1994, p. 84). Furthermore, the PIR’s classroom becomes a space for candidates to engage, grapple, and inquire into the realities of today’s classrooms (Postulates 10-17). The range of programmatic conditions advanced by Goodlad in Postulates 7 through 17 inform our work and PDSD partnership. However, given this study’s more general look at promoting particular conditions for learning we hope teacher candidates establish in their own future classrooms, and our focus on the laboratory setting of the PIR’s classroom, this paper will specifically rely on Postulates 10 and 15 for our analysis.

Postulate 10 centers the notion that teacher candidates are exposed to the kind of learning they should aspire to establish in their own schools, and that in particular, they come to understand the conditions for learning they should enact in their future classrooms. Postulate 15 takes into consideration the surrounding context and experiences that both promote and ground the kind of thinking and inquiry that contribute to exemplary teacher education field work. We used these two Postulates to frame our study because they link two ideas that are central to our approach to clinical teacher education: they propose that teacher candidates draw on exemplary field-based experiences to inform their analysis and inquiry of the processes and contexts of teaching and learning they will encounter in their future classrooms. Specifically, this research describes our efforts to design a field-based experience to foster our teacher candidates’ capacities to inquire into the processes and contexts necessary to create conditions for learning for their future students. In doing so, we seek to contribute to a body of knowledge that draws on Goodlad’s legacy to improve teaching and to renew public schools.

The PIR’s classroom design illuminates one approach to fulfilling Postulates 10 and 15. By creating a setting for observation, hands-on experience, and an exemplary internship (Postulate 15), the teacher candidates in our program observe and experience the conditions for learning that we hope they will create in the future (Postulate 10). Our hope is that the theories and orientations addressed in our teacher education program will not be “washed out” (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981, p. 7) or undermined by an unpredictable or dissonant clinical placement (Misco & Hamot, 2012).

The research described in this paper is an analysis of tasks associated with a civics lesson observed and analyzed by the teacher candidates in this simultaneously taught high school civics class and social studies teacher education course. Twenty-six secondary social studies teacher candidates participated in the course described in this project. The course included two components led by two different faculty: (1) an on-campus seminar that serves as the introduction of social studies education and (2) a field-based practicum in the clinical space led by the PIR. In the seminar course, high-leverage social studies strategies were a central focus of the semester.

As the semester neared to a close, the instructor of the seminar course and the PIR worked collaboratively to design a lesson for the 9th graders. This lesson, which was taught by the PIR, highlighted pedagogical strategies the teacher candidates had explored in the seminar course. In the following sections, we describe the research on high-leverage practices. We then provide details on the lesson and identify what we hoped both the 9th grade students and teacher candidates would gain from their participation. Finally, we draw on data generated from the teacher candidates to
describe and assess the efficacy of using the PIR classroom to promote high-leverage strategies in the social studies curriculum.

**Clinically-Based Teacher Education**

Extending Goodlad’s (1990) call for more clinically-based experiences, we also draw on research that promotes clinical preparation that models exemplary conditions for learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Louden & Rohl, 2006; Tatt, 1996) to design our courses. For example, the course and practicum experiences described in this project were informed by research encouraging teacher education programs to prepare teacher candidates by using clinical experience to model and enact ambitious, high-leverage practices (e.g., Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Kazemi, Franke, & Lampert, 2009; Lampert et al, 2013). The PIR classroom is designed to convey the purpose, value, and potential of a variety of high-leverage practices in social studies, where we draw upon the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013), inquiry (e.g., Parker, 2012; Swan, Lee & Grant, 2018), collaborative groups (e.g., Parker, 2012), and discussion (e.g., Hess, 2009) to inform the kinds of high-leverage practices we hope our candidates can demonstrate. In the PIR classroom, teacher candidates observe and interact with secondary students who are engaged in constructivist, student-centered methods in a social studies classroom (Ripley, 2013; Zeichner & McDonald, 2011). Our work reflects Postulates 10 and 15 as we attempt to disrupt much of the teacher candidates’ prior notions of what “good” social studies is by providing them the opportunity to see exemplary pedagogies in the laboratory setting of the PIR’s classroom that are aligned with the curriculum of our teacher education program.

The school in which the PIR teaches is a public, 9-12 grade, Title 1 high school that participates in the larger PDSD partnership. The school’s racial demographics are 59% Black, 18% Hispanic, 15% White, 4% multi-racial, and 2% Asian. 80% of the students at the school qualify for free and reduced lunches, and 4% of the students are limited in their English proficiency (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2013). The 9th grade government course was an on-level course with 28 students.

The lesson described in this study was intended to model an effective inquiry lesson exploring the idea of bias and fake news. While we aligned the lesson with the high school civics standards in our state, these content and skill standards are likely found in the civics curriculum and broader social studies skills standards of most states. Specifically, the lesson addressed a content curriculum standard that the students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of civil liberties and civil rights. By utilizing state standards that our teacher candidates will one day be expected to teach, again, sought to achieve Goodlad’s (1994) notion of healthy programming in terms of modeling learning experiences that our candidates should be able to design for their future students.

We drew from research on various aspects of best practices in social studies—the same practices we teach in our program—to design and assess the lesson. For example, in the planning phase, we relied on strategies suggested by Parker (2012) and the C3 framework (NCSS, 2013) on using inquiry in social studies. Further, the lesson was designed by following planning guidelines described by Wiggins and McTighe in Understanding by Design (2012). Lastly, lesson construction and implementation were continuously analyzed using the indicators offered by King, Neumann and Carmichael in Authentic Intellectual Work (2009): construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond school. We have highlighted the ways we have attempted to
convey the value of using high-leverage practices in social studies to our teacher candidates for this study. Yet, we acknowledge that focusing on high-leverage practices could be in neglect of essential understandings about justice (e.g., Philip, et al., 2018). Navigating the competing demands on the time we have with our candidates continues to be a struggle, but we work to ensure the exemplars enacted to demonstrate these practices are also justice and equity-oriented. Our candidates are exposed to high-leverage social studies practices within the context of model lessons that expose historical injustices and systemic oppression in ways that are accessible to the secondary students they encounter in schools.

We intentionally modeled the idea that social studies lessons should have value beyond school in the choice of the topic of the lesson (e.g. King, Neumann & Carmichael, 2009; Schmeichel, 2017). In response to an environment in which the proliferation of fake news exists alongside notions that no media can be trusted, (Jones & Ritter, 2018; Kavanagh & Rich, 2018) we chose to explore questions about the media and bias as the focus of this lesson. The lesson was built around the following question: “Is fake news fair?” In order to provide a basis for the teacher candidates’ reactions and observations of the student understandings resulting from the lesson, we describe each component of the lesson and highlight the understandings about media literacy and bias it was designed to promote among the secondary student participants. We then describe the teacher candidates’ involvement in the lesson and the understandings their participation in this lesson were designed to promote.

**Using Inquiry to Promote Media Literacy**

We designed and implemented a lesson that allowed teacher candidates to witness the conditions for learning we hope they will enact in their own future classrooms. By thoughtfully utilizing a particular kind of field experience located in a PDS, our work resonates with Goodlad’s Postulates 10 and 15. Though not explicitly solicited, the lesson design drew upon students’ interest across the PIR’s experience working with them throughout the school year. The lesson was implemented in the spring, and at that point, the students had repeatedly expressed interest in exploring protests (i.e., the Black Lives Matter Movement) as they were continually working to make sense of their social and political worlds. Interest in protests and media portrayals following the Women’s March in January 2017 was vehemently high among a number of the students. Thus, the focus on historical and present-day protests seemed appropriate not only at the time (spring 2017), but also based on the feedback the high school students were offering the PIR about the kinds of curricular topics they would find compelling. As such, the teacher candidates witnessed a multi-day lesson in which students were asked to consider the use of the phrase, “fake news” by political officials, including President Trump, and on social media platforms, like Facebook. This introductory discussion ensured that all students had some background knowledge on fake news and that they shared an initial, working definition of the term that they could mobilize productively throughout the lesson. In the next phase of the lesson, students practiced media analysis through the use of historical photos. By presenting historical examples of media portrayals of protests, we offered students an opportunity to analyze events covered by the media that were detached from more familiar current events topics. We believed that this would help them to be less ideologically committed to interpreting the events with their own pre-existing biases about the events and perhaps focus on analyzing the sources’ representations of the events. The students analyzed photos published in newspapers reporting the Women’s Procession (1913) and the March from
Selma to Montgomery (1965). The students responded to questions that prompted them to consider the source of the images and the ways the photos could be interpreted by different constituents and audiences to notice perspectives present in the photographs.

We then introduced two examples of modern protests. Students were provided with media accounts of these protests that included an image, the headline, and the first several paragraphs of the accompanying article. When examining the modern-day events, students were asked to answer a series of analytical questions about the resource and to use a “bias scale” (see Appendix 1) to evaluate the level of bias present in the media accounts of the two protests. These questions and the use of this scale encouraged students to consider several issues, including the politically contested nature of these events, journalists’ choices to frame these events in a particular way, and the way that headlines, images, and initial paragraphs work together to create an impression of the event for the reader. This task also served as a formative assessment that reflected students’ capacity to assess the value the sources.

In the final phase of the activity, the students examined a news story about an immigration protest at one of the airports. The story included a number of the markers of the kinds of articles that are labeled as “fake news”: the article came from a website that was not associated with a well-known or reputable news organization, the author did not quote any of the parties said to be involved in the scuffle and did not provide any firsthand accounts, and the article included significant contradictions in the account of the event. The students then participated in a Structured Academic Controversy (e.g., Hess, 2009; Parker, 2012) around the fairness of fake news and a fishbowl discussion about what responsibilities they have – as citizens and consumers of online sources – in an information landscape wrought with fake news.

Student engagement in the lesson was high, as demonstrated by on-task behavior and significant levels of participation in all components of the lesson, including whole-class activities, group work, and individual tasks. The experienced teacher educators observing and facilitating this lesson assessed this level of engagement by tracing students’ participation throughout the implementation. Across the lesson’s implementation 80-90% of the students were engaging in on-task behaviors. For example, students tracked the teachers’ (both teacher candidates and PIR) movements with their eyes, engaged with the required readings, followed along on the assigned documents and tasks, provided relevant answers to prompts in written and verbal form, and engaged in conversations with their peers and the teacher candidates around generative questions. Likewise, a majority of students demonstrated understanding at each of the key formative assessment points. Our assessment of their written work and their participation in the numerous discussions facilitated during the lesson indicated that almost 90% of the students demonstrated the capacity to (1) understand the complexity of assessing media sources for bias and accuracy, (2) recognize the need to adopt media literacy strategies to interpret news sources accurately, and (3) connect the concept of “fake” news to the first amendment rights of speech and press.

Using Model Lessons in Teacher Education

We had several goals for the teacher candidates as a result of observing this lesson and the 9th graders who participated in it. These goals reflect indicators evident in several of Goodlad’s Postulates, we focused specifically on Postulate 10. Again, the assertion in this Postulate is that teacher education programs must promote the conditions for learning that teacher candidates should enact in their future classrooms. Our objective in this clinical teaching experience was to
present this lesson as an example of successful conditions for learning, given our commitment to Postulate 15, and the need for exemplary classroom settings for quality experiences in teacher education. Through observing and interacting with students around this lesson, we hoped that teacher candidates would gain some insight around the conditions for learning present in high-leverage social studies practices, while being supported in the PIR’s classroom. More specifically, we wanted the teacher candidates to see that secondary students are capable of engaging with complex topics embedded in media analysis in a meaningful way when provided with well-designed, scaffolded tasks that allow students to construct their own understandings. Thus, the 9th grade lesson the teacher candidates observed the PIR teaching was intended to disrupt a number of commonly held ideas we have observed our teacher candidates bring to our teacher education program: namely, that their curriculum should be limited to topics expressly stated in the standards and that secondary students are not interested in or able to engage in grappling with complex topics.

To reduce the number of observers present in the classroom, the teacher candidates were divided into two observation groups. Each group observed two days of instruction, which constituted about one-third of the 9th graders’ experience with the lesson. The teacher candidates completed a series of activities before, during, and after their two observations. Before the 9th graders arrived in class, the PIR walked the teacher candidates through the segment of the lesson they would see. This enabled the teacher candidates to learn about the understandings the lesson would promote and to understand how each task in the lesson was linked to one or more of those understandings. Further, it allowed the PIR to identify the points of the lesson in which the students may be confused and to discuss appropriate strategies to correct misunderstandings.

During the observation, each candidate sat with a group of three to five students. They were instructed to support discussion, answer questions, and encourage participation as needed. Further, they were assigned to conduct a close observation of two focal students in their table group. Specifically, they were tasked with noting how these two students engaged with the group and made sense of the ideas and topics discussed. They took notes throughout the lesson and used the observation notes to prepare for the after-lesson debrief with the PIR and the course instructor.

The teacher candidates also used these notes to complete the assessment analysis tasks in the post-observation. In their analysis, they described how well the focal students engaged with the concepts (e.g., rights and fairness, perspective and bias) and skills (e.g., analyzing news media representations) of the lesson. In order to scaffold the candidates’ observations and assessments of students’ understanding and engagement, they were given these prompts:

- Is the focal student in the ballpark?
- Are they developing an understanding of one or more of the concepts?
- How does the assessment help you see that?

They were instructed to cite specific evidence of focal students’ verbal and written responses to back their claims about the students’ understanding. The candidates were required to discuss how the formative assessment supported the two high school students’ capacity to understand the concept and promote their ability to analyze news media. Among the several observations and analyses candidates were tasked with completing during this multi-day lesson, they were asked to respond to the following questions during each of their two observations:

- How did the students understand the concepts of the lesson? How did the student interpret and analyze media sources?
- What value do you see in engaging students in the analysis of media representations in social studies?
• What challenge(s) do you foresee having as you engage students in the analysis of media representations?

Our intent for these questions was to gain insight into these teacher candidates’ capacity to inquire into the student learning in response to dynamic teaching. Further, as Goodlad’s Postulate 10 indicates, we wanted to examine how their perceptions of students’ learning informed their understanding of the complexity of enacting these kinds of lessons in their future classrooms by relying on the kinds of clinical experiences advocated by Goodlad in Postulate 15.

Data Analysis

The data analyzed in this study were drawn from teacher candidates’ responses to the questions on the assignments described above. Using qualitative research software, the researchers engaged in an iterative coding process to analyze the responses. In the first phase, each researcher examined the data through open coding. Following this phase, the researchers discussed examples of students’ responses and set parameters for examples and nonexamples of evidence of the learning goal. One member of the research team returned to the students’ responses to selectively code the data. These selectively coded excerpts were reviewed in a third round of analysis by the other research team members. From there, the core variables associated with the learning goals were used as a framework for analysis.

We approached our analysis of these assignments with the mindset that this data would provide some insight into whether this clinically-based teacher education experience had achieved our goals of demonstrating that the students are capable of and willing to engage in complex thinking. The examination of one set of assignments cannot reveal the totality of what the teacher candidates learned from this lesson or predict the potential for taking up these practices in their future pedagogy. We assert, however, that through the micro-analysis of this highly-structured set of tasks and experiences, we can gain greater insight into how candidates make sense of a targeted clinical experience.

In our analysis, we found, perhaps not surprisingly, mixed results. First, the candidates demonstrated the capacity to recognize the ways in which students grappled with media literacy concepts over the course of the lesson and were able to identify when learning occurred. The close attention to and analysis of students’ thinking seemed to help teacher candidates make sense of the conditions for learning (Postulate 10) that contributed to the understanding that the students developed over the course of the lesson. On the other hand, when asked to describe the future challenges they might expect in teaching media literacy, many of the candidates seemed to cling to prior understandings about secondary students’ interests and capacities. Rather than basing their understanding of the challenges of teaching media upon their experiences with the students they had observed, some of the candidates seemed to be drawing upon previously held notions of students to consider the challenges they would face in their future teaching. In other words, some of the teacher candidates described their future media lessons as being constrained and inhibited by factors they did not observe in the model lesson. Using Goodlad’s Postulate 15 as a frame to consider their responses, we found our candidates were able to apply this unique hands-on experience to inquire into knowledge, teaching, and schooling. Yet, they were unable to use these examples of high student engagement to imagine other students – their own future students – being able to engage in this way. In the following section, we describe the mixed results we identified in the teacher candidates’ responses. Further, we argue that the model lesson presented in the PIR
classroom resulted in a limited intervention in the teacher candidates’ perceptions of students’ capacities to engage in meaningful, inquiry-based lessons.

**Teacher Candidates’ Observation of the Conditions for Learning: Making the Connection**

Following each of the teacher candidates’ two observations, they were asked to analyze the verbal and written responses of the two focal students to whom they were assigned. The assignment prompted them to consider the high school students work through two different questions. The first question was “How did the students understand the concepts of the lesson?”

Our analysis of the teacher candidates’ responses indicated that across the board, they were all able to cite specific ways that the 9th grade students made sense of the concepts of the lesson. In other words, all teacher candidates demonstrated the capacity to notice and name what the students had learned during the lesson. Through their close observation of student’s contribution to discussions and as well as their written work, the teacher candidates were able to find evidence of students’ engagement with the lesson topics. For example, one teacher candidate’s assessment of her focal student’s work stated that the student’s “answer demonstrates a fundamental understanding of a key reason behind the institution of the first amendment in order to protect individual opinions.” Another teacher candidate described how the verbal responses her focal student offered in class paralleled responses he offered on a written task. After noticing this similarity, the candidate concluded, “My focal student understood the concept of rights and liberties and what it protected under them.” Time and again, the teacher candidates found a myriad of different ways that students demonstrated their understanding of key social studies concepts associated with this media literacy lesson. The teacher candidates were able to recognize that the high school students were making meaning of the learning goals that shaped the lesson’s design. Through our design of the high school students’ and the teacher candidates’ learning experiences, this unique practicum site, the PDS classroom (Postulate 15), became a site where novice teacher candidates could notice student learning. By explicitly discussing the ways we managed the conditions for learning for the high school students (Postulate 10), the candidates took advantage of this opportunity by demonstrating they could see the ways that student learning was evident across the lesson.

Importantly, most of the teacher candidates were also able to identify student work that indicated an emerging understanding of the ideas in the lesson. This recognition was demonstrated in comments like this one from a teacher candidate who assessed her focal student by observing that his understanding indicated that he would “definitely be in the ballpark, he seems to understand that everyone deserves the right to vote, but that fake news is still covered by the first amendment.” In another case, a teacher candidate who was describing a focal students’ discussion of a topic noted that her contributions “showed the blurring in her thinking of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. However, she grasped the general concept that media highlights significant information.” This comment, like others found across the data, indicated that the close observation of students’ learning created the space and opportunity for teacher candidates to recognize the subtle distinction between an emerging understanding versus the mastery of a concept.

In the second question of this part of the assignment, the teacher candidates were also prompted to consider the focal students’ efforts to interpret and analyze media sources. Again, the candidates’ responses show that they had overwhelmingly positive assessments of the 9th graders’
capacity to learn and apply the media analysis skills introduced during the lesson. For example, one candidate explained that her focal student “improved his understanding from last week that fake news is something unfair to understanding it is something untrue. He didn’t categorize the negatively biased paragraph as fake news.” In another example, a candidate pointed to a specific example from a written text to defend her analysis about his focal student’s skills: “Based on his handout, it is evident that [focal student], without maybe realizing it, sees how perspective and bias play into the media. The question asking who is seen in a good way or a bad way allowed him to argue that the officers are shown in [different ways].” She goes on to say, “[focal student] mentioned to me in class that a different photo could have shown the police officer in a good way.” These teacher candidates’ responses are indicative of the positive assessments evident in almost all assignments.

Our analysis of the teacher candidates’ work indicated that the structured observation in which the teacher candidates participated gave them a front row seat to conditions for learning. Through structured and intentional pre-observation, during observation, and post-observation tasks, the teacher candidates’ understanding of the learning process materialized beyond abstract conceptions of conditions for learning to real world examples. These observations are important because they indicate that the candidates were able to trace students’ learning to particular components of the lesson design. As stated above, our teacher education goal for this lesson was for the teacher candidates to see that 9th grade students were willing and capable to engage in the consideration of complex topics. The teacher candidates’ responses on this assignment demonstrated that they recognized that the high school students were either proficient or progressing in their understanding of the lesson’s concepts and were capable of interpreting and analyzing the news media sources using the approaches and scaffolds included in the lesson. As such, we could have come to the conclusion that our lesson achieved its goal. However, in the following section, we present findings that indicate that the model lesson was incomplete in its goals.

Orientations Toward the Future: Gaps Between Observed and Future Students

The final question on the assignment the teacher candidates completed was “What challenge(s) do you foresee having as you engage students in the analysis of media representations?” This question was designed to encourage them to envision the challenges of addressing similar topics in their future classrooms. Transfer is, of course, the ultimate goal of the vast majority of topics and strategies we introduce in our teacher education program, including the clinical experiences in a PIR classroom. As outlined in Postulate 15, our goal is to provide exemplary observation experiences. We hoped that this question would help us see whether the candidates were able to use this hands-on lesson to see the challenges of creating conditions for learning. In other words, we hoped that this question would allow our candidates to apply the exemplary teaching example to imagine creating similar conditions in their own future classrooms, as described in Goodlad’s Postulate 10.

We asked specifically about the challenges they might identify because topics inherent to media literacy education are slippery (Schmeichel et al., 2019). For example, the sheer number of resources which teachers and students can draw from to get the “news” is overwhelming. Notions of bias and fairness are abstract and dynamic concepts rather than definitions that can be memorized and applied identically in every context. Further, students (like adults) have
investments in the ideological positions they perceive are undergirding the ways in which events or people are depicted and described in media sources. All of these factors work together to create a set of issues related to teaching media literacy that are typically not present in teaching other topics in social studies (although perhaps they should be). The “slippery” issues associated with media were intentionally embedded in the lesson, both in terms of the resources that students examined and in the different ways they were asked to think about the relationship between news, fake news, and 1st Amendment rights. In asking the teacher candidates to identify the challenges they could foresee, then, we hoped that students would identify the conditions for learning embedded in these topics in their responses.

While there were some teacher candidates who identified these kinds of topics, we were surprised by the large proportion of responses that pointed to other kinds of potential challenges. In the description of teacher candidates’ responses that follows, we point to the answers that aligned with what we expected and those that did not. We then assert that these “unexpected” responses reveal gaps in our attempts to use the clinical space to help candidates imagine themselves and their future students engaging in these activities and topics.

Several teacher candidates drew directly on the “slippery” characteristics of media noted above to frame their understanding of the challenges they expected to encounter in their future efforts to engage students in media education. In doing so, they indicated that they recognized the complexity of including media education in their future practice. For example, one of these students noted, “I could see students struggling with the analysis of media representation and being able to understand fake news as well as bias news. It is a difficult concept to understand and apply.” The same teacher candidate described how the practice students gained through the scaffolded tasks in the lesson helped students come to see the bias presented and then said about her future teaching, “I think demonstrating a real-life example will help evade the challenge of students not understanding what bias is.” Other teacher candidates also recognized the challenge of tackling bias as a topic. One of these teacher candidates described it this way: “The main challenge I foresee is teaching the idea that everyone is technically biased, but not everyone is equally biased.” She mused, for example, that addressing the difference between the New York Times and Fox News would be “difficult to teach and for students to actually understand.”

A different teacher candidate described his future challenges in terms of tackling the breadth of media sources, stating “it would be difficult to encompass them all and all the specific ways they could be used to portray and represent information.” Additionally, he noted that he thought it would be important to incorporate media education consistently and coherently across the entire school year, and not just in scattered lessons, concluding, “This will take some extra thinking on my part in developing multiple lessons, but is definitely possible. I think it is a skill that is worth reinforcing throughout the year.” The responses described here, as well as the handful of similar responses found in the data, were aligned with our pre-assignment expectations of the kinds of challenges that teacher candidates would and should perceive as a result of their close observation of the model lesson. Through their direct engagement and analysis of the 9th graders’ efforts to make sense of the topics, these candidates demonstrated that they gained some insight into the complexity of including media literacy in a meaningful way. Some of the candidates were able to take advantage of a model set of conditions for learning, which exemplified Goodlad’s Postulate 10, to demonstrate specific examples of teacher candidates inquiring into teaching. Overall, however, the number of candidates who described future challenges in this way comprised only about one-fourth of the class.
Most of the teacher candidates described the challenges of addressing media literacy in their future teaching in terms that were not related to the nuances or complexity of the topic itself. These responses indicate that they anticipate problems not related to media explicitly. For example, some candidates framed the challenges they anticipated as a problem of student interest. This was foregrounded in the response of one teacher candidate who said, “While some of this lesson can be interesting, a plethora of students will get distracted or bored with what they are learning.” Another explained, “The sad truth is most students don’t care about the news until it applies to them.” Yet another said that the “main challenge will be student interest. A lot of students think social studies ideas are really boring.”

Teacher candidates’ concerns about engaging and maintaining students’ interest are understandable and valid. What makes their predictions notable in this context is that these concerns about future students’ interest describe students who stand in direct contrast to those they observed. Not only did the PIR discuss that the lesson design drew upon the 9th graders expressed interest in the Black Lives Matter Movement and the Women’s March in January 2017 with the teacher candidates before observing this lesson, but the 9th graders the candidates observed were fully invested and engaged. Despite the experience of seeing a media education lesson “hook” the 9th students involved, these candidates do not perceive that their future efforts to enact activities like these will be interesting enough to engage their future students.

The disconnect between what teacher candidates saw and what they think about their own future classroom can also be found in the beliefs about students’ capacities for this kind of work. Despite seeing 9th grade students grapple with the complex ideas in the lesson successfully and in meaningful ways in the PIR’s classroom (Postulate 15), some teacher candidates’ responses indicate that they imagine their future students will not be as capable. For example, one candidate said their biggest challenge would be “students not completely grasping the true meaning of an article, photo, etc.” This comment about the deficit of future students exemplifies a major theme in these responses. For example, another student stated, “My future students will not have the understanding of bias that other students may have.” Despite observing ninth grade students successfully engage in a lesson specifically designed to showcase their abilities to engage in this work, most of the teacher candidates cited the deficits their future secondary students would bring to this type of lesson.

The question we asked was designed to identify challenges in attempting to do this kind of work, and as such, what concerns us is not that the teacher candidates identified that teaching these ideas would be difficult. We expected that they would identify challenges that were directly related to the challenges of teaching media. However, the candidates expressed concerns about aspects of teaching grounded in misconceptions about student capacity and interest. What is particularly relevant is that the challenging “future” situations they described were not observed in the PIR classroom. By this we mean that the hypothetical classroom and students the teacher candidates envisioned were not similar to those they had observed. The knowledge that teacher candidates seemed to draw upon to respond to this question likely reflected their a priori understandings of learning and teaching, rather than what they had directly observed in this lesson. Rather than relying on what they actually witnessed students saying and doing in the PIR classroom, it seemed that they relied upon preconceived ideas to inform their conceptions of their future students. Likewise, the way the candidates responded to the question may be a result of the way the question was worded – it may have caused them to focus on the negative outcomes, rather than the positive ones. They might be more inclined to talk about the kinds of opportunities that were created for
the students if they were prompted to think about this particular learning experience as an opportunity within the questions. While no single clinical experience can unravel the misconceptions that candidates bring with them to a teacher education program, we assert that the limitations we identified are important to acknowledge and explore further in order to realize Goodlad’s vision.

To be clear, the clinical space we described in this study is not constrained by many of the factors that inhibit more traditional clinical teacher education experiences. We therefore recognize the affordances of offering the clinically-based experiences called for in Postulate 15 through our PDSD. For example, in this classroom, the PIR had the flexibility to design her own curriculum and choose teaching strategies that align with best practices in social studies and secondary education. As such, she was able to choose topics that aligned directly with student interests and was able to implement engaging and effective learning tasks. All units were developed around big ideas and formative and summative assessments were aligned with those learning goals. The class meetings the teacher candidates observed occurred during the second semester of the year-long course; by that time in the year, the PIR had established meaningful relationships with the students and created a positive, well-established classroom culture. As a result of that culture and of meticulous organization and classroom management, the class ran smoothly and productively. The level of student engagement demonstrated in this lesson clearly indicated that most of the students felt that their contributions to class were valued and that their ideas were taken seriously. In sum, we had almost full control over the design of what the teacher candidates observed and experienced during these lessons, allowing us to more fully curate and manage the experiences of the teacher candidates in alignment with Postulate 15. Despite all of the advantages and autonomy that this clinical space afforded, most of the teacher candidates described other kinds of classrooms and students when they were asked to envision challenges in their future teaching. This may indicate the PIR classroom is not functioning as a space to see high-leverage practices – to enact Goodlad’s Postulate 10 – as accomplishable by students and teachers in the way we had hoped.

Contribution to Scholarship

The clinical experience described in this paper was designed to model exemplary practices and introduce teacher candidates to possibilities and ways of thinking about themselves and students that are difficult to achieve without integrated field courses (Ripley, 2013; Zeichner & McDonald, 2011). We attempted to operationalize the vision set forth in Goodlad’s (1994) work by ensuring the candidates would see conditions for learning that they should establish in their own classrooms (Postulate 10) by making a unique hands-on, exemplary learning experience the point of analysis (Postulate 15). In doing so, we hoped to find that our candidates could self-analyze, inquire, and think about knowledge, teaching, and schooling in ways that parallel Goodlad’s Postulates, and in doing so, contribute to renewing public schools and improving the teachers that work in them. In short, we hoped these experiences would help socialize these teacher candidates in ways that could lead to the simultaneous renewal Goodlad described. Our findings reveal that these teacher candidates were able to use students’ participation in class and their written work to identify conditions for learning. As a result, we can identify several positive outcomes of the clinical teacher education experience we intended to create. In renewed iterations of this course, we continue to harness the potential in our PDSD partnership to create opportunities for our candidates to explore student learning and participation with our faculty and mentor
teachers working directly alongside the candidates in clinically-based teacher education experiences. This orientation towards enhancing the secondary students’ learning shifts the focus of our PDSD teacher education squarely towards commitments that university- and school-based social studies partners can agree to and learn from. Our work is not done because despite exposure to instruction that deliberately demonstrates the kind of teaching that we encourage, most of the candidates still doubted what is possible in their own future classrooms and with their students. While the dissonance between the teacher preparation program and classroom-based experiences (Misco & Hamot, 2012) was eliminated during this practicum experience, some teacher candidates still saw barriers to enacting high-leverage practices in their future classrooms. As teacher education programs continue to work to enact Goodlad’s legacy and improve public schools by investing the time and resources to create robust field experiences for teacher education, we must continue to try to unpack how teacher candidates make sense of clinical spaces and how that may or may not transfer to their conceptions of what is possible for themselves and their students (Levine, 2006; Robinson 2007).

References


**Appendix 1**

**Bias Scale**

- 0 = Untrue or False Information ("Fake News")
- 1 = Extremely Biased
- 2 = Very Biased
- 3 = Somewhat Biased
- 4 = Slightly Biased
- 5 = Void of All Bias

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