

## Purposeful Tensions: Lessons Learned from Metaphors in Teacher Candidates' Digital Stories

### Abstract:

In this qualitative study we present a brief overview of a digital story project and discuss how two teacher candidates' implicit metaphors of teachers and students within this project made visible their negotiated and evolving visions of their future classrooms. The tensions present in the teacher candidates' metaphors allowed us, as researchers and teacher educators, to view these tensions in response to our own teaching practices. This study served as a launching pad to modify our methods courses to support teacher candidates to begin the negotiation of their professional identities as they explore multiple experiences about teaching and learning. Implications include how the digital stories challenged us to find ways to enhance our courses by providing more intentional class engagements providing our students with opportunities to explore the tensions between the industrial and inquiry model in the classrooms we visit and work in, as well as the ones we hope to create.

Each semester, we set out with lofty goals of inspiring the aspiring teachers with whom we work to thoughtfully consider the kind of educators they want to become and supporting them on this journey. One method we have found beneficial in moving us toward achieving this goal is a project in which teacher candidates create digital stories envisioning their own future classrooms. This project was designed to elicit the developing visions our teacher candidates were constructing in elementary literacy methods courses across three different university settings. They are asked to create digital stories in which they present their vision of what their future classroom will be like. They present images, voiceover, text, effects, and sometimes music in order to demonstrate what they believe about literacy teaching and learning. This project replaced the traditional beliefs and understandings paper previously assigned in these courses which had become a rote exercise. The digital story project is intended to provide an authentic

space for teacher candidates to begin to sort out the complexities related to their evolving beliefs and understandings and negotiate their professional identities as they explore multiple voices of experience about teaching and learning they have encountered in their time as K-12 students, in teacher education coursework, and in field placements (Authors, 2015).

## **Review of the Literature**

### **Constructing Teaching Identities**

We encourage the construction of a teaching vision based on our understanding that the development of a teacher identity is a critically important component of the learning-to-teach process (Alsup, 2006; Atkinson, 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), as it is linked to teacher growth and performance. Bullough & Baughman (1997) emphasize, “teacher identity, the beginning teacher’s beliefs about teaching, learning and self-as-a-teacher, is a vital concern to teacher education as it is the basis for meaning making and decision making” (p.21). This key process of professional identity development is often overlooked in teacher education, however. Fairbanks et al. (2010) point out that “...a sense of agency with the intent of purposefully negotiating personal and professional contexts may be as important, if not more important, than the more traditional conceptions of professional knowledge” (p. 162). Recent research (Ticknor, 2014; Authors, 2015) indicates the importance of intentionally providing teacher candidates opportunities to begin to negotiate complex discourses inherent in learning to teach while still in supportive teacher education environments. For this reason, envisioning the self as a professional is a crucial stage in professional identity development and the construction of a vision of teaching and one we choose to emphasize in our courses.

### **Affordances of Digital Storytelling**

Research on the use of digital video composition (Authors, 2015; Pandya, 2014; Rish, 2013) shows that most teacher candidates' videos in which they are asked to reflect upon and represent their beliefs and/or visions of teaching multimodally are more complex and cognitively demanding than writing written reflections about one's teaching beliefs and understandings. As each of us, the four researchers, viewed the digital story projects created by the teacher candidates in our courses, it became apparent that they were using the digital composing process to negotiate their evolving beliefs as they created and "substantiate[d] their stances" (Mallette, Kile, Smith, McKinney & Readence, 2000) while visioning their future classrooms. According to Leander and Boldt (2012), texts like the digital stories our teacher candidates create are "not about the world; rather they are participants in the world" (p. 25). As such, our teacher candidates do not simply produce these texts but rather use them to interact with and negotiate discourses present in learning to teach.

### **Methodology**

This study describes work developed by a research group who came together as teacher educators with a common digital story project, across three universities. Fueled by our combined experience of over 60 years in elementary classrooms, we share a passion for finding ways to allow the digital storytelling project to inform our own teaching practices.

Given the literature on the affordances of digital composing/storytelling in supporting complex negotiations of discourses of teaching and the creation of a teaching vision (Authors, 2015; Beach, 2014; Pandya, 2014; Rish, 2013; McVee, Bailey, & Shanahan, 2012; Albers, 2011, 2008) the questions guiding our study were:

- *How does digital storytelling make visible teacher candidates' visions of teaching and learning?*

- *How can we, as teacher educators, learn from these digital stories?*

## **Context**

This study focuses on the digital stories of two teacher candidates, Ellie and Charlotte (pseudonyms used). They were both enrolled in a literacy course during their elementary teacher education program. Charlotte's university was located in a mid-size Midwestern city and Ellie's was in an urban metropolitan university in the South. They were both White females in their early twenties.

As the final project for their literacy methods course, Ellie and Charlotte, along with their classmates, were asked to compose a digital story in which they envisioned their future literacy classroom. Within this digital story, they were asked to "consider potential interpretations of their design choices" (Pandya, 2014) including language, images, and music that would allow their audience of this first-person narrative to realize the theoretical rationale for their instructional, material, and assessment choices in their future classrooms.

## **Data Collection**

Ellie and Charlotte's digital stories were selected using critical case sampling because they were likely to "yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge" (Patton, 2002, p. 236). Our use of two cases, collective case study (Creswell, 2007, p. 74) across multiple sites, allowed us "to show different perspectives on the same issue."

Data was collected under an approved exempt protocol from IRB at each university. Additionally, willing participants were not identified to the researchers until after the semester was completed. Institutional Review Boards permission was granted for analysis of Ellie and Charlotte's course projects. Their stories were not analyzed until after the course

ended. We organized the data involved by transcribing the digital story images and corresponding voice-over in a table format (See Table 1). These were segmented by sentences, unless in some cases, they were broken into two segments when needed to correspond with images.

### **Data Analysis**

The following questions guided our analysis of the visual representations chosen and language used by each teacher candidate as she described visions of her future classroom:

- What phrases or phrasing reveal themes related to teachers and students?
- How do these phrases unveil implicit metaphors (paying particular attention to metaphors of teaching, teachers, learning, and students)?

We were guided by Saldaña (2009) to analyze the themes of the digital stories in order to glean meaning. Using this thematic analysis, we identified and brought together components to construct themes or patterns that might otherwise be thought meaningless. Looking this closely at the digital stories allowed us to derive a deeper meaning from each (Saldaña, 2009). Next, we took note of “resonant metaphors” that Ellie and Charlotte used during their digital story because these metaphors contained and gave shape to the experiences and perspectives of the participants. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), “The metaphors—sparse like poetry—embrace and express a large area of human experience” (p. 198). Finding the metaphors in the digital stories allowed us, like Musoff (2012), to “make experience coherent” (p. 302). Metaphors were also useful in uncovering the ways people understood the world around them. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) maintain that metaphoric processes are fundamental forms of human understanding, and they argue that the human mind grasps unfamiliar ideas only by comparison with or in terms of things that are already known. Therefore, metaphoric language used in the

digital stories presented the teacher candidates' particular views of reality by structuring the understanding of one idea in terms of things previously understood (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The researchers individually coded data from the digital story transcripts and visuals related to teaching and learning to identify themes. This emergent coding step in the analysis assisted us in unveiling themes related to teaching and learning, which resulted in our initial broad themes. Refer to Table 1 for an example of the emergent coding step. Next, for increased validity, the researchers came together to identify prominent metaphors of teaching and learning. Starting with first cycle themes (Saldaña, 2009), the research team identified phrases or phrasing from the narration along with the digital story images to identify the prominent implicit metaphors. Refer to Table 2 for an example of data analysis from Ellie's digital story.

To ensure internal credibility in our qualitative research, we ascribed to Lincoln and Guba's (1995) tenets by employing prolonged engagement, peer-debriefing, triangulation, and member-checking. Having four researchers involved in the study added an intentional layer of reliability to the aspects of peer debriefing and member checking.

## **Findings**

Through the use of metaphoric analysis, several key findings emerged. Each of the teacher candidate's digital story provided data that guided us to implicit metaphors which illuminate their visions of their future classrooms. In both Ellie and Charlotte's digital stories, metaphors describe their role as future teachers and the role of their imagined, future students. In the section that follows, we explain the metaphors that emerged and provide examples of their manifestation in each teacher candidates' digital story

### **Ellie's Metaphors**

*The goals I have set for my students are bold but I have no doubt that they will meet or exceed these expectations. –Ellie*

Ellie, like many of her peers, grew up in the same city where she was attending college. She attended a private elementary school and high school. She was attracted to becoming a teacher through observing her mother work in a public school as a speech pathologist as well as working with elementary students while in high school. She was an elementary education major with an early childhood concentration, and began the semester with the goal of being a preschool teacher. However, by the end of the semester, she was considering working in an elementary school. Another goal of hers was to eventually become a principal in the public school system in which her literacy methods courses were held. This project was assigned in Ellie's 6-hour literacy block, which was located in a local elementary school in which she worked in classrooms. She also had an additional field placement once a week for a full day in another elementary school in the same district, thus spending about 12 hours a week in elementary schools.

**Ellie's student metaphors.** Ellie's digital story reveals three prominent metaphors to describe her students:

- Students as Lovers of Literacy;
- Students as Overcomers of Challenges; and
- Students as Achievers of Goals.

As metaphors emerged in her digital story, we found she saw the students in her future classroom as active and engaged learners as she chose pictures of students reading, writing, thinking, and using technology (iPads). Her student metaphors of Students as Lovers of Literacy matched these visuals as well as her narration stating, "Young readers and writers need to experience literature in a variety of mediums" as well as when she said, "I want my students to think for themselves by exploring their classroom in ways that provoke imagination."

In contrast, and perhaps more in sync with the school she found herself working in, Ellie's other student metaphors were Students as Overcomers of Challenges and Achievers of Goals. In the narration of her digital story she clearly articulated, "I want it to remain a goal for my students to persevere in spite of challenges and resiliency is a skill for all aspects of [their] life" as well as "each child will have their [*sic*] own objectives." Additionally, early in her digital story Ellie stated, "Throughout the course of my education, it has always remained an important goal for me to be a lifelong learner. As an aspiring educator, I wish to encourage this goal for each and every one of my future students." Lastly, she said, "Being talented at anything, including reading and writing, involves practice and consistency." These quotes are not surprising as Ellie's placement was in a low performing school seeking to improve test scores.

**Ellie's teacher metaphors.** Ellie's digital story also reveals three prominent metaphors to describe the role of the teacher:

- Teacher as Target Setter;
- Teacher as Guide; and
- Teacher as Organizer.

In clear alignment with her students, who were overcoming challenges and achieving goals, it was not surprising to find her teaching metaphor of Teacher as Target Setter. In the final few slides of her digital story she proclaimed, "The goals I have set for my students are bold but I have no doubt that they will meet or exceed these expectations."

Also, Ellie envisioned a role of herself as a Guide in her future classroom. This is highlighted when she chose the words, "I believe that the development of comprehension arrives at its own pace and therefore cannot be rushed. My students will develop understanding on their own with guidance from the instructor." She also clearly thinks of herself as a guide when she says, "It is

my current understanding that students learning to read require an environment that promotes exploration and development.” Also, her visual choices of students working on iPads and a student at the white board position her as guiding students.

Another prominent metaphor that emerged in Ellie’s story is, Teacher as Organizer. This is evidenced in five of the images she selected showing color-coded organizational systems (without children) as well as her words, “Organizational skills and extensive classroom management techniques will prepare my students for high school, college and beyond.” She also has pictures of a variety of ways her books could be organized and displayed in the classroom along with a kidney-shaped table with homemade milk crate seats for students. Her visual choices also included a variety of inspirational posters as well as display type posters for classroom rules and writing instruction.

### **Charlotte’s Metaphors**

*I want all of the students in my classroom to love reading and develop a passion for it, that continues on into their adult lives. - Charlotte*

Unlike Ellie, Charlotte left her home state to attend college. She had attended public school in her hometown. She had always imagined herself becoming a teacher after having experience working with young children growing up. When she arrived at her university, she decided to pursue a dual major in elementary education and special education. Prior to the semester she created her digital story, she had some field experience, but it had all been observing or assisting in a classroom. She had not actually planned or taught any lessons herself. The introductory reading methods course she was enrolled in when she created the digital story was a three-credit-hour course with no field component. She was enrolled in four other courses at

the time but none had field experience attached to them meaning she did not spend any time in elementary schools during the semester.

**Charlotte's student metaphors.** Charlotte's digital story reveals three prominent metaphors to describe her students:

- Students as Independent Readers;
- Students as Responsible Participants; and
- Students as Performers of Learning.

As metaphors emerged, in the analysis of Charlotte's digital story, we found she envisioned the students in her future classroom to be independent and passionate learners as evidenced in her visual representations of students as independent readers, discussing books in small groups, and engaging in active conversations with others about books. Her metaphors of Students as Independent Readers matched these visuals as well as her word choice in referring to students as "enjoying the physical act of reading", becoming "fluent, readers of the future", and her desire for her students "to love reading and develop a passion for it, that continues on into their adult lives." Additionally, she envisioned her classroom as a place where her students choose books they enjoy at a variety of reading levels and experience read alouds as well as activities centered around quality literature.

The other prominent metaphor in Charlotte's story was Students as Responsible Participants as she chose pictures and phrases, which poised her future students in positions of active learners, decision makers, independent and capable learners, as well as recorders of their own thinking and work. She had a vision in which her students use their reading logs to "choose from prompts" to complete. They also read independently from books "which they have selected"

from their classroom library and have choices of a variety of assessments “from a 3 x 3 bingo board.”

Finally, Charlotte envisioned her future students as Performers of Learning. This is evident in her selection of images of students with large headphones on as they were recording their own reading and listening to recordings of peers. She also chose pictures of students performing a drama about something they read.

**Charlotte’s teacher metaphors.** Charlotte’s digital story also reveals three prominent metaphors to describe her role of teacher:

- Teacher as Facilitator of Learning;
- Teacher as Creator of a Learning Space; and
- Teacher as an Observer of Learning.

In clear alignment with Charlotte’s visioning of her Students as Responsible Participants is her view of herself as Facilitator of Learning. Her curricular vision of using literature focus units and a reading workshop model support this along with her emphasis on using both formal and informal assessments. In particular, the phrases “allow me to meet with individual students to talk to them about what strategy we had just learned” and meeting with her students to “provide them with the support they need” poise her as a facilitator.

An aspect that is clearly a priority for Charlotte was the physical set up of her future classroom. She had plans for an “open floor plan” where her student desks are in groups and also wants to provide “cozy spaces,” “reading nooks,” and a well-organized classroom library. Charlotte was thinking about why this physical layout is important as she went on to say, the layout of desks will allow her students to “sit with their peers to emphasize the importance of language and social interaction on [sic] learning.” Additionally, she was considering traffic

patterns around the room as she mentions the floor plan will “allow for the students to comfortably move around the room during silent reading.” The emphasis of these aspects in her digital story confirm her metaphor of Teacher as Creator of a Learning Space.

Finally, Charlotte, viewed herself as an Observer of Learning. She trusted that her students would be monitoring their own learning as they had choices in activities as well as assessment and would record much of this on their own. She also saw herself as sitting alongside them as they read to support and assist them.

### **Discussion**

In this section we look across the prominent metaphors which gave shape to Ellie and Charlotte’s experiences and perspectives and allowed us, like Musoff (2012), to “make experience coherent” (p. 302) and uncovered the ways Ellie and Charlotte envisioned their future classrooms. Refer to Table 3 for teacher candidates’ metaphors across cases. In this section we will discuss the tensions and alignments of Ellie and Charlotte’s metaphors. Then, we consider how these metaphors relate to the Inquiry and Industrial Models of education and how this informs our own practice.

#### **Tensions and Alignments in Metaphors**

Further analysis of the how the metaphors relate to each other, allow us to examine how Ellie and Charlotte were developing their professional identities (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011, p. 764). As we viewed Ellie and Charlotte’s metaphors of students and teachers, and considered how those metaphors might coexist in each of their future classrooms, it became clear that how they envisioned the roles of teacher and student did not always match. This mismatch created a tension between the roles of teacher and student. For example, the contrast between Ellie viewing herself as a Goal Setter or a Guide along with her students as either Explorers or

Achievers of Goals demonstrate that she was still developing her thinking in regards to what classroom instruction will look like in her future. Therefore, when a teacher is playing the role of goal setter and expecting students to achieve a given goal in a given timeframe, exploration by students is restricted because each student is expected to work toward a teacher-identified goal, thus limiting freedom for students.

There is a clear alignment between Charlotte viewing herself as Facilitator of Learning and viewing her students as Responsible Participants in their learning. In an actual classroom, a teacher taking on a facilitator role would likely view her students as responsible participants in the learning process. Likewise, there is a clear alignment between Charlotte's metaphors of Students as Performers of Learning and her role as Observer of Learning. Similarly, students who are allowed to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways would benefit from a teacher who valued observation as an assessment tool.

### **Models of Education**

The metaphors of the envisioned roles in the digital stories also provide illustrations of the presence both of the Inquiry and Industrial Models of education (Leland & Kasten, 2002). Inquiry Model espouses that learning occurs "from engaging in activities that pose problems to be solved" (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1996, p. 158) while the focus of the Industrial Model is "mastery of minimal standards" (Gardner, 1991, p. 203). Both are present in the digital stories our teacher candidates created. Even though there is agreement, "...in this country that the goal of education is to help people to become active and informed citizens" (Leland & Kasten, 2002, p. 6) instances of the Industrial Model are pervasive in classrooms where students are placed.

**Inquiry model.** Ellie clearly took up the Inquiry Model when describing the role of the teacher as a Guide, while Charlotte positioned herself as a Facilitator of Learning. In each of

these stories, the students were then positioned as Lovers of Literacy, Responsible Participants, and Independent Readers. This Inquiry Model of Education, one that “promotes the notion that schools should represent one’s real life and is not a ‘one size fits all’ perspective” as well as suggesting that “learning is best achieved when students make decisions about their own learning process” (Flint, 2009, p. 8) is also apparent in the images and descriptions of reading logs, choice in activities, use of multimodal literacies, attention to student learning styles, individual instruction, interactive activities, and involvement as "members of a community.”

**Industrial model.** The Industrial Model, in which “schooling practices are developed to be efficient, uniform, and competitive” is intended to create a workforce. In this setting, students are “compliant, punctual, and accountable” (Flint, 2009, p. 6). This model is evident as Ellie positioned the teacher as a Target Setter and her students as Achievers of Goals and spoke of “perseverance”, “resiliency”, “objectives” and bold goals for her students. Her metaphor as Teacher As Organizer aligns with the Industrial Model because of the teacher -centered way she envisioned arranging her classroom and positioned her students in need of being organized. Several of her images showed color-coded organizations systems and the images did not include children.

Characteristics of the Industrial Model are not present in Charlotte’s story. Based on our discussions, we realized that the lack of field experience in conjunction with her literacy methods course did not allow her to see a “real” school where standards are most often the focus. Ellie, on the other hand, had experiences with both models since she did have a field experience in addition to her methods courses, and therefore experienced more tension when creating a vision for her classroom. Unlike Ellie, Charlotte took her course on campus, with no related placement

in an elementary classroom. Is it possible this allowed her to hold on to a more idealized view of her future teaching and the role her students could play in the classroom?

**Considering Our Own Practice.** As we further explored the tensions we noticed between the two models of education present in the digital stories, we found that Inquiry Model resonated with our own visions of teaching and learning. It is how we believe children learn best, and not surprisingly, the vision that we present to the teacher candidates with whom we work through our selection of texts, the design of our assignments, and the way we lead discussions. Since this model of education may be unfamiliar to many of our teacher candidates, given the era of standardization and testing in which most of them grew up, we believe it is important to provide them a model of how this inquiry learning can be implemented in their future classrooms.

When noting the differences between the digital stories produced by Ellie versus Charlotte, we considered whether or not spending time in the classroom while taking courses on campus is more or less productive than taking classes on campus without being involved in a field experience. While being shielded from any contradictions to the Industrial Model in schools allowed Charlotte to envision a more inquiry-based classroom - one more in line with our own visions of ideal classrooms - we are concerned that when she does experience the effects of an industrial model, she will be unprepared to negotiate these tensions. -We suggest that these tensions may create productive spaces for teacher candidates to begin to reflect on and determine what they believe- their visions for teaching and learning. (Authors, 2015)

### **Conclusions**

When teacher candidates have only experienced an industrial model of education in both their own apprenticeships of observation (Lortie, 1975) and their field placements, it may

become difficult for them to see the possibility of implementing any other approach. We begin to think about how this would inform our teaching of literacy courses and engaged in conversations about how these findings could help us find concrete ways to improve our own teaching practice.

### **Limitations**

It is important to note that this study focuses on just two teacher candidates' digital stories. The purpose of sample videos we share is not to answer questions like "how much" or to generalize findings but they are presented as critical cases that allow us to show multiple perspectives of negotiating teaching visions. Additionally, because this project was an end-of-semester project, we discussed the lost opportunity we had to allow students to examine their digital stories, to identify their beliefs about the roles of the teachers and students in the classrooms where they are placed, and their hopes for their own classrooms. This study does, however, add to the emergent body of literature by highlighting the use of digital storytelling to develop teacher candidates' teacher identity. It also, as is detailed in the next section, provides some direction to promising practice in this area.

### **Implications for Practice**

These shared insights helped us recognize the importance of being explicit about guiding conversations and creating classroom engagements in our university courses around Inquiry versus Industrial Models of teaching. We found these conversations to be extremely powerful and revealing for us as teachers and learners. We recognized that we had previously been aware of the issues identified; however, having them foregrounded in this study helped us hold each other accountable in making changes in our courses.

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**Seeing themselves as readers, writers, and inquirers.** One way we have begun to do so is providing opportunities for our teacher candidates to experience what it is like to see themselves as readers, writers, and inquirers. Many of them come to us unable to identify as such. They have not had the experiences as students engaging in authentic reading, writing, and inquiring. Many of the ways our teacher candidates have experienced literacy is an industrial model where language is “an object to be analyzed into objective parts...separate from the responses of readers and the intentions of the author” (Myers, 1996, p. 89), rather than literacy as “a way to explore topics of personal interest while building and negotiating meaning with others” (Leland & Kasten, 2002, p. 12). Before we can expect them to instill these views in their own students, they must learn to see themselves in this way. In order to do so, we have begun to intentionally engage them in reading, writing, and inquiry experiences. They read and interact with children’s literature. They compose in journals. We set aside time in class for them to engage in the reading and writing processes. Our teacher candidates also work on many of the same projects we advocate using in their elementary classrooms including multigenre projects and digital storytelling. Only by engaging in these practices themselves can they come to see themselves as readers, writers and inquirers and inspire their students to do the same.

**Modeling and experiencing inquiry.** We are finding it useful to explicitly model inquiry teaching methods for our teacher candidates with and without field experiences. Many of these are unfamiliar to them or forgotten from their childhoods. For example, we provide spaces for

them to explore an inquiry question they have, either related or sometimes unrelated to education. They then present the findings of their inquiry to their peers. We then ask them to “put on their teacher hats” to examine how it felt to engage in this process, how it compares to their own schooling, how it relates to the field classrooms they are in, and how it might relate to the standards they will be given to teach. -For many of our teacher candidates, inquiry type experiences are rarely discussed when they talk about experiences in their elementary schooling. We recognize our teacher candidates are now the products of their own lived experiences as students of the first generation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), many having not experienced a student-centered curriculum. Likewise, many of them were not witnessing these types of curricular practices in their field placements. We notice after the teacher candidates experience how natural and powerful it was to inquire into something they were interested in, they embrace this concept and eagerly discuss how they could take this into their future classrooms.

**Purposeful tensions.** Tensions occur when our teacher candidates encounter classrooms implementing an Industrial Model while learning about and being urged to implement an inquiry approach. In order to ensure these tensions are productive rather than merely frustrating, we created classroom engagements that intentionally allow them to think through the conflicts they would undoubtedly experience once they enter the classroom, encouraging them to consider their visions of their future classrooms as they participate in these engagements.

In mock faculty meetings, we ask our teacher candidates to take on different roles as they consider an issue commonly discussed in faculty meetings, such as choosing an assessment tool or selecting a core reading program. These discussions force them to look at an issue from multiple perspectives and encourage them to consider how they might negotiate this type of situation in the future.

Additionally, we have begun creating “Daily Dilemmas” in which we take a few minutes at the start or end of each class to have teacher candidates reflect on a dilemma they may face in their future classroom such as, “The principal tells you that you must not ‘waste’ precious instructional time reading aloud to your second graders. How do you respond?” These short reflections and the discussions that follow allow teacher candidates to recognize that they will, no doubt, encounter ideas and visions that run counter to their own. Having these discussions and talking about possible ways to negotiate these situations in a simulated and safe environment is intended to serve as a support for when they are forced to do so on their own.

### **Final Thoughts**

We want to make sure we provide teacher candidates with a foundation of discussions and readings that will prepare them to enter a school environment in which they would need to find ways to advocate for what is best for their students. We are committed to find the time and provide opportunities for students to discuss issues such as state standards and assessments, in regards to the affordances and limitations to teaching and learning. Ellie and Charlotte’s stories will linger with us and urge us to strive to provide opportunities for our students to develop a clearer vision of their roles as teachers as well as the roles they hope their students will play in their future classrooms and to deal with obstacles that will come their way.

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